

## Mount Merrion

# PARISH NEWS

## “Courage! It is I! Do not be afraid.”

Matthew 14:27

### PARISH CONTACTS

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### PARISH WEBSITE

[www.mountmerrionparish.ie](http://www.mountmerrionparish.ie)



Find us on Facebook

“My prayer every day is very simple. I just rest in the presence of God, particularly each morning when I am awake very early. Instead of being annoyed that I can't go back to sleep, I remember that this is probably my only private time of the whole day so I literally place myself into a presence in the darkness. It's at this time that I reconcile everything going on within me and around me.



This is when I am most calm, and I hear the words of Jesus to Peter:

‘Courage. It is I, do not be afraid’ (Matthew 14:27).

I have celebrated many funerals over the past twenty-seven years and have always sought to find the right words to comfort the bereaved and place the one who has died within a prism of hope.

All those words are tumbling around inside me now, as if to say, ‘Do you feel that the same thoughts apply to yourself?’

It is time for me to literally practise what I preach.

I feel now that I am aboard a fast train with only one stop.

I'm not in a mad hurry to disembark. I'm like everyone else;

I only know this world and this life,

but I see no meaning in this life ending in a grave.

When the train stops, I will step onto that platform with hope and no fear.”

### Fr Tony

[from “Live While You Can: A Memoir of Faith, Hope and the Power of Acceptance”]

## Hello!

A very warm welcome to the Summer issue of the Parish News! Yet again the calendar has been packed with a huge variety of events over the last few months. We have captured a flavour of these many events in the following pages.... And we welcome you to explore the happenings!

A highlight was on May Day when the church was packed to capacity to host the launch of Fr. Tony's book "Live While you Can". What a wonderful evening of celebration marked with Fr. Tony's characteristic wisdom, faith and fun!

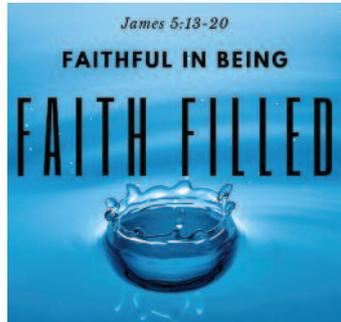
Wishing you all a wonderful summer!

**The Editorial Team**

### Hello Everyone!

It is hard to believe that the Summer is upon us!

As we have mentioned before in this newsletter, the purpose of the Parish Pastoral Council is to be a 'faith-filled' leadership group; a reflective, listening and praying group working with priests and laity, in furthering the mission of Christ in our own Parish. The Ministry of the Parish Pastoral Council is different from the 'active' ministries in the Parish in that it is not primarily a group of action. In essence, it engages in pastoral planning and considers what areas might we be called to consider in the coming months. Are there things we are doing that we should reconsider; are there things we are not doing that we should adopt?



Safeguarding representatives; ensuring that all our volunteers are garda vetted (as a compliant Parish, in accord with best practice); supporting the Parish self-audit due for submission (May 2019); and supporting the existing and new initiatives in the Parish closely supported by Fr. Tony. Franciscan priest, Richard Rohr tells us that a reliable sign that we have deepened and grown in wisdom, age and grace is when we are forgiving, compassionate and 'radically inclusive'. These values reflect an enlightened, psychologically mature and truly adult believer. And, we have been concerned therefore, **to ensure that Mount Merrion is a beautiful and welcoming Parish to ALL** and is representative of diverse groups each with its own voice which is mutually respected by all, regardless of practice tradition (within Catholicism); age be it young or old; gender; nationality; language; or how long or otherwise a person has been in the Parish. Though we may appear different, we are all

one and the same body, and if we hurt part of the body, we hurt the whole.



Looking forward, we are considering becoming an **Eco-Parish**, in support of the Pope's mission in Laudate Si and becoming engaged with the Diocese in becoming an **'Accompanying Parish'** over the Autumn and more of which will be discussed in due course.

We wish you a joyful Summer. May God continue to bless us and protect us all in our work, Parish and wider-community.

**Audrey, Clodagh, Jennifer, John, Kay and Martina**  
Parish Pastoral Council



# PARISH OUTREACH – SOCIAL JUSTICE INITIATIVES

## Children lose access to water, medicine, amidst civil unrest in Haiti

Haiti has been experiencing a period of significant civil and political instability recently. The root cause of the civil unrest and protests was dissatisfaction with the current president, and the ever increasing cost of living which has seen the local currency weaken significantly, increasing the price of basic daily provisions hugely, within what is already an extremely impoverished country.

With gang related criminal activity also increasing, we have consulted extensively with our contacts in Reconnaissance Group, a security risk management company. They have informed us that the level of instability on the ground remains significant. The US Department of State have also advised against all travel to Haiti.

In light of the above, Solèy Haiti has had to make the decision to defer the 2019 Solèy Volunteer Programme. While we are desperately disappointed that our 2019 Volunteer team will not get to experience what a wonderful country Haiti is with an incredible people; it has been made in the interests of volunteer safety, which is of paramount importance to Solèy Haiti.



The parishioners of Mount Merrion and Kilmacud Parishes have been phenomenal in their support over the last number of years. While the above news is disappointing the support of both parishes and the amazing level of funds raised in last November's collections will still be used for the purpose intended. The funds raised will still be sent to the community of Gros Morne and because of your support; 650 children will go to the Sports and Literacy Camps this summer, more than 28,000 meals will be served and almost 60 Haitians will be employed. Without a shadow of a doubt this situation highlights the desperate need of the Haitian people and that this need is greater than ever. Your generosity of support will still make a huge difference to the Haitian people this summer and we in Solèy Haiti are deeply grateful for that.

Solèy Haiti's commitment to Haiti, remains absolute. We look forward to hopefully coming back to speak in the parishes after the summer to inform you of the impact of your support this summer and of our plans for 2020.

Thank you  
**Patrick O'Neill, Chairperson, Solèy Haiti**



## UNIVERSITY HONOURS FR. TONY COOTE FOR HIS "OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO ALL"

Fr. Tony, a former chaplain at UCD for almost ten years, was conferred with an honorary doctorate by UCD in December 2018.

Friends and family gathered to celebrate the achievements of Fr. Tony, which include setting up UCD Volunteers Overseas with Professor Frank Monaghan, a student organisation working with communities in India, Haiti,



Fr. Tony pictured with his mother, Pat

Nicaragua, Tanzania and Uganda, as well as launching the 'Please Talk' campaign.

Founded in 2007 in UCD, the student-led mental health movement now reaches across 27 universities and colleges, and encourages students suffering from mental anguish to reach out for help.

Introducing Fr. Tony at the conferring ceremony, Professor Joe Carthy, College Principal and Dean of Science at UCD, praised the former UCD chaplain for his kindness and outstanding service to all.

"Tony has always given his life to support those in need, in communities in Ballymun, in UCD, in Mount Merrion, Ireland, Haiti, India and many other places," he said during his citation.

"The refrain from a well known hymn, sums it up: 'Ubi caritas et amor, Deus ibi est' 'Wherever charity and love are present, God is present', and Tony has brought that presence to every community he has worked in."

# Let's continue the Long Tradition of supporting our Parish

We would like to sincerely express our thanks to all who so generously contribute financially to the running of the parish each year. A special thanks to those parishioners who responded to the recent appeal for Family Offerings – both new contributors and existing contributors who increased their contributions.

## A strong heritage of financial support

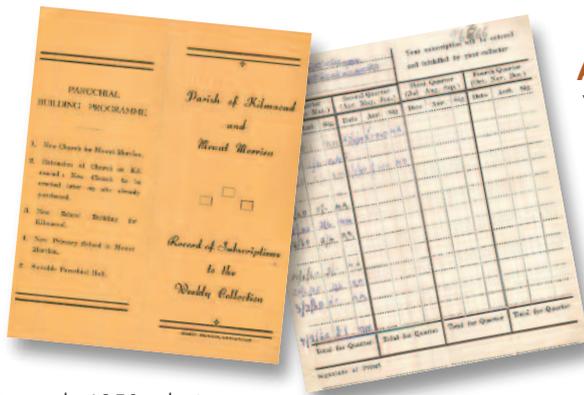
The parish has been very fortunate as it has enjoyed a long tradition of strong financial support from its parishioners. These contributions made it possible not only to build the church back in the early 1950s, but also to provide the funding for the running expenses and the provision of services to its parishioners.

In order to facilitate the ongoing liturgy and pastoral activities and to assist with the upkeep of the church and grounds, the parish continues to rely on parishioners' contributions. There is no central fund which finances these expenses. Without this funding the parish is not in a position to provide the setting and services which we all enjoy.

## Does all the money collected stay in the Parish?

This is a question we are asked frequently. The income from both collections at Mass plus the Christmas and Easter Dues do not form part of the parish funds. These funds are transferred directly to the Archdiocese. The first collection at Sunday Mass contributes towards the salaries of all the priests of the Diocese. The second collection contributes to the running costs of the Diocese, including Child Safeguarding Office, as well as other sections of the administration.

**So, the only money collected which remains in the parish is the regular contributions (Family Offering / envelopes), donations, shrine offerings, Parish Shop profits and Parish Centre.**



## An invitation to contribute

You don't need to attend the church weekly to contribute!

If you are not currently contributing, and are in a position to do so, we are inviting you to contribute to the parish. Or if you would consider increasing your current contribution it would be most welcome. It's easy and can be done



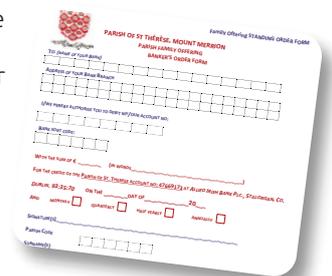
On the Parish website – use the 'Donate' button on the home page to make regular contributions or once-off amounts.



By Standing Order – forms available for download from the website or at the Church doors.



By Bank Transfer to the Parish Bank Account.



Remember if your total annual contribution is greater than €250 per year (€21 per month), the parish can benefit from [the Revenue tax refund arrangements] which is an important source of income every year.

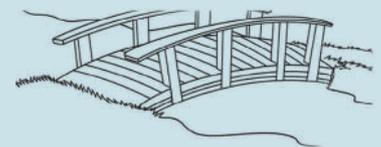
If you have any queries, just email or call to the Parish Office (details on the front page).

Thanking you.

**Fr. Tony, Parish Finance Committee**



## Mount Merrion LGBT Group



As some of you will know it was a wish of Fr Tony Coote that an LGBT Group be established in Mount Merrion, out of a desire for deeper inclusivity of all in our parish.

Fr Tony held three wonderful meetings at his home between October and December 2018 and as some parents and participants stated: *'We were profoundly touched by the depth of the sharing, open, honest and respectful atmosphere of the meetings. You are really prophetic to have initiated these meetings and each of us feels privileged to have been a part of them.'*

It is intended to continue the group from the Autumn with dates and venue to be confirmed, with details of how to go about getting in touch.

In the meantime, if you are interested you might like to read *'Building a Bridge'* by James Martin, SJ (How the Catholic Church and the LGBT Community can enter into a Relationship of Respect, Compassion and Sensitivity) available online.

**From parents of members of the LGBT community**

# The Launch of Fr. Tony's Book – *Live While You Can*



What an amazing celebration we had on the 1st May in the Church of St. Thérèse with the Launch of Fr. Tony's eagerly anticipated book *Live While You Can*. The preparations for the evening began in early April and despite the two-week break at Easter intervening, we still managed to pull together the event mainly owing to the hard work done by a core group of people. Obviously, the reason it was such a success was also due to the wonderful, enthusiastic community spirit that exists in Mount Merrion and Kilmacud and to the willingness and eagerness of people to assist in any way possible. We had a beautiful composite choir from all quarters (schools, sports clubs, church choirs), a mix of fabulous soloists, some poetry and reading and some celebs all of which combined to create a marvellous, relaxed, dignified and a palpable *love filled* ambience.

It was incredible to witness the euphoric atmosphere in the church and the delight and joy on everyone's face as they greeted Fr. Tony with a standing ovation when he arrived. Fr. Tony was only delighted with the rapturous reception – his beaming smile said it all. The main objective of the evening was to launch Fr. Tony's book – it was astounding to have sold out before the evening had officially started! Over 1,200 books sold on the night and with orders made for many hundred more. To quote Breda Purdue, the Group Managing Director of the publisher Hachette: "Well it was by far the best book launch in my 30 years in publishing!"

To all the people who helped, you know who you are, and you know what you did ... So Thank You! A huge thank you to Meabh Fitzpatrick Photography who captured so many precious and wonderful moments.

**Róisín Ní Chonchúir**



# Slender

*“Whether by fate, destiny or the hand of God, slender threads weave continuity to our lives. Over time...*

**Robert A. Johnson, Psychology scholar**

Following the visit of Pope Francis to Ireland last August and his desire to hear the voices of the voiceless, Fr. Tony was prompted to, amongst other initiatives, invite a small group to begin to find ways of more fully hearing the voices of women in our parish.

We began to meet and ponder together matters spiritual, matters of faith, church and our lives in general and to consider what might support or interest us and other women on our spiritual path. Various slender threads of interest and possibility began to emerge...

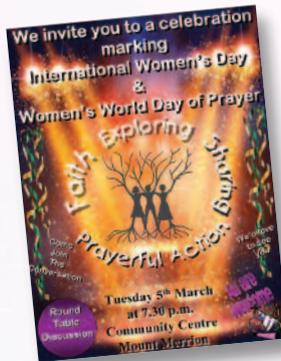
Initially, at a very beautiful Advent gathering in December, Fr Tony explored with us the Gospel message on **Advent as a time of ‘Waiting’**. He spoke about the enforced

waiting he had come to experience through his illness, referencing women’s waiting in pregnancy (admitting he in fact knows little of this!). He spoke about Mary’s strength and fortitude as she too waited – for the birth of Jesus and again later as she waited by the Cross as others left in fear. As always, his short homily nourished and encouraged us and it prompted a thread of thought about the women in scripture and in Jesus’ life.

We marked the Celtic festival of **Nollag na mBan** by a reflection and an Epiphany display in the Faith Space (near the Gathering Area of the church). The Faith Space installations: **‘What Would Three Wise Women Do?’** and then later; **‘What Women Contribute to the Life of the Church’** were designed to get us all thinking and a

suggestion box made it more engaging with many contributing responses, ideas & thoughts.

Heralding the Spring (although it didn’t feel spring-like on the night!), on **Oíche Fhéile Bhríde** in February, the group held a beautiful prayer vigil honouring and celebrating St Brigid including music and song from our Senior Choir. An evening of rich Celtic celebration – another slender thread.



Then in early March we invited one and all to a roundtable gathering of celebration and conversation marking **International Women's Day & Women's World Day of Prayer**. Conversations that night revealed heart-warming experiences of parish as a place of real community – of support, openness and welcome. It was widely felt that while women (and laity generally) are hugely involved at local level, leading and participating in parish groups, women in

the Church are not gifted the authority equivalent to their capability/skillsets. The vast majority of the group present that evening struggle to comprehend this fact and why it is that women may not yet, at a minimum, form part of the diaconate.



# Threads

*Slender threads are at work bringing coherence and they weave a remarkable tapestry"*

**Dr. Jesse Rogers, Jungian analyst & bestselling author**

At a subsequent broader gathering of parish our **invited speaker, Dr Jesse Rogers**, a lecturer in Sacred Scripture, on the topic "All of You are One in Christ Jesus", reminded us that there were many women leaders and deacons in the early Church about whom St Paul spoke in the highest terms. She also reflected on St Paul's image of Church as Body of Christ where there shall be no division between the member parts. Importantly too, those gathered were encouraged to retain focus on the Lord and His will in all endeavours.

We marked **Mother's Day** with a powerful and compassionate reflection written by a member of the group honouring the love, dedication, hard work, struggles, abuses, joys and sorrows of all mothers in their various situations across the world.



We hope the various slender threads of thoughts, ideas and leanings which have shaped and guided our way thus far will help us on our parish journey to "more fully hear the voices of women in our parish" and perhaps in so doing "weave a remarkable tapestry" as Robert Johnson suggests, or a cloak to "mind our lives" as John O'Donoghue invokes in his beautiful blessing "Beannacht";

***May the nourishment of the earth be ours,  
May the clarity of light be ours,  
May the fluency of the ocean be ours,  
May the protection of the ancestors be ours.***

***And so may a slow  
Wind work these words  
Of love around us,  
An invisible cloak  
To mind our life.***

If you have comments or ideas, or wish to be part of the evolving 'voices of women' parish group, please feel free to contact Vivienne or Rosemary in the Parish Office on **Tel: 288 1271** or **Email: parishoffice@mountmerrionparish.ie** or contact the Parish Group Co-ordinating Team on **Email: mountmerrionpgct@gmail.com**.



As Holy Week drew to a close, another thread of thought drew us to **Holy Saturday** and we women led 10am Morning Prayer that day. We remembered and 'waited with' the women in the time of Our Lord, who followed the suffering Jesus in his passion and death on the cross, who stayed with Him when others hid and who would find the stone rolled away and proclaim the Resurrection of Our Lord.





**Bless our Parish Holy Communicants and those Confirmed in 2019**





# Caroline's Corner



*"The whole idea of kindness, of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another."*

**Thomas Merton**

As I write today, I'm so aware of how different a year this has been for everyone, working and remaining supported by Fr. Tony in the background as he continues to make his own courageous journey. The words of Thomas Merton have been with me many times during the last months as we work together in the parish and continue to build on all the creative, collaborative and inspirational work of the last 10 years. "We are all part of one another and all involved with one another", a reminder and at times, a mantra I have repeated, that underpins the importance of community and support and kindness for and to each other.

Some events in particular in my work in the parish come to mind in this regard. An evening of reflection and prayer with Fr. Tony and friends back in November, Donal Dorr's wonderful challenging inputs in the Autumn, Mary and Deirdre Kennedy, sharing their story of faith and resilience and



*"In meditation we become aware of the present moment. We learn to let go into stillness and from this quiet place we can more open to the presence of the spirit moving in us, in our lives and in the world around us."*

life, the group who meet with Sr. Marie for reflection and Lectio on Thursday mornings and the small group of people who gather gently and quietly for Thursday morning meditation. These times have been truly invaluable where we have come together as community, gathered quietly and with openness to listen to each other, to pray together and to inspire and nourish one another with our faith struggles and sharing our journey.

We are coming now into the fullness of this season where everything in nature is at its fullest and most splendid all around us. May is the month of greenest grasses and flowers, trees lush and full. The time where all the possibility of spring has been realized. We have come to the end of a busy time in our school and parish life as the last of our celebrations of First Communion have taken place. The work of the last 8 months particularly in our schools with the confirmation and communion programs has come to fruition. There has been such great flexibility and collaboration and support from teachers, principals, parents and the parish office.

Finally I would like to say how much the commitment and involvement of everyone is appreciated and valued. So much of my work couldn't happen without the openness and generosity of people involved in the various projects I've been working on. Thank you to one and all.

**Caroline, Parish Catechist**

## WHY NOT DROP IN AND SPEND A LITTLE QUIET TIME WITH THE LORD?

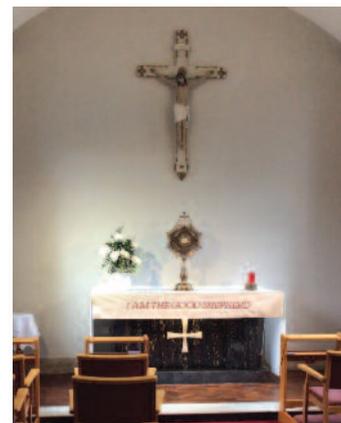
A reminder that our Blessed Sacrament Chapel is open (behind the gate to the right of the main altar) **EVERY DAY BETWEEN 10.00am AND 6.00pm**

You will find a peaceful, quiet place, where you can pause and sit for some prayerful intimate time with Jesus.

So pop in, even for a short time and thank God for the blessings in your life and pray for yourself, your family, our parish and the needs of the wider world.

Meditation takes place in this peaceful reflective space from time to time so keep an eye out for special notices.

*Volunteers are always needed. If you could commit to a regular hour each week at the same time, it would be most welcome.*



## Meditation

(a personal account)

Friday morning, ten past nine, the Chapel warm and welcoming, with chairs around a centre bright with candles and with flowers.

A reading, then a settling down, with breath becoming deep and calm; a gentle chime invites each one to put aside all worldly cares, allowing God to enter in, to lose all sense of space and time and in the stillness contemplate the miracle of being here, a feeling of being born anew, a gift from ever-loving God.

The closing chime seems extra loud and readmits the busy world, with challenges along the way, but Meditation brings with it the fortitude to face the day.

**Don Cockburn**

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam dilis*

# We are Family...

celebrating 25 years  
of the Family  
Mass Group

We are very lucky here in Mount Merrion to have a lovely community for families that flows from the parish schools into the church and back again. Our own children have been part of the choir for many years and both the children and the adults have made great friends in the family mass group.

The spirit of the group is one of encouragement and support for each child. The choir has an age range from 4 up to 15 and a Junior and Senior section, it got so big we had to split it!

The children don't just sing at mass they read prayers, carry up the gifts and even act out some of the gospels! The Nativity and the Children's stations of the Cross are a lovely way to bring our faith to life in simple language. The highlight of our week is watching the children grow in confidence to use their talents every Sunday in the warmth of such a supportive environment. Last August on a wet and windy day in the Phoenix Park, the children sang at the Papal Mass. A great honour and a fun day was had by all!



Walk While You Can Fund Raiser

The children dearly love Fr. Tony and this year the CD they recorded at Christmas raised an incredible €9,000 for the WWYC charities. They also fundraised for the Irish Guide Dogs association with Carol Singing at Christmas. Seeing young people giving generously of their time and talents to help others gives us badly needed hope for the future!



Children from the Family Mass Group in the 80's.



Photo of Original Mass Team in the 80's

L-R: Anne Williams, June Murphy, Margaret Bull, Patricia Curran, Barbara Kenny, Ursula Larkin, Orla Rutledge, Mary Carpenter, Jane McKinney RIP.



Limerick Festival

For those of you who come to the 11.15am mass on Sunday you will be no stranger to the beautiful music the choir produce each week under the direction of Susanne, Helen and Sorcha. The choir go from strength to strength under their lead and their efforts have resulted in fantastic success outside the parish at various competitions. On our recent trip to the Limerick Choral Festival the choir were incredible, both in their performances and their behaviour throughout. Winning second place, only pipped by the choir who won the overall festival, was a great achievement! The comments from the judges and the hotel below, show you how proud Mount Merrion Parish should be of them all and how well they represent us everywhere they go!

'We scored 86/100 – unreal from two of the toughest judges in Ireland!'

'Lovely, well presented young ensemble...sing with great sincerity and musical understanding, good energy and precise rhythm...lovely dynamic colour in adiemus and the music came alive-recorder fitted very well and was very well played'

John Fitzpatrick – Judge



Christmas 2018 with Fr. Tony

'Lovely, sweet sound. Well prepared, confidently performed. Sing with evident enjoyment and captured the essence of the pieces very well. Strong, polished singing.'

Blánaid Murphy – Judge

'What a pleasure the choir were as a group! They really were super well behaved kids!

Choral Festival Director & Hotel Management

The group has been in place for 25 years and it has to be said has received the utmost support from Fr. Tony during my tenure and many other parish priests before him. We are honoured to walk in the footsteps of so many family mass members before us who have done an amazing job at keeping the families coming in numbers each week over the years.

We have no doubt that the family mass will continue to provide an opportunity for the families of the parish to gather each week for many years to come. We would like to thank all of the parents who help in so many ways with the activities we are involved in. If you would like to get more involved please come up and chat to us after mass!

Best wishes for a lovely Summer break and we look forward to seeing you all again in September for more Fun, Faith and Friendship!

Cliona, Helen, Susanne, Emer, Caroline, Sarah, Maire, Fiona and Sorcha  
(Your Family Mass Team!)



'Thank you Brenda for all your help with the Family Mass over the years.'

## Pray While You Can



During Advent and the New Year, parishioners were invited to take a little time to pray for someone who might be unwell, feeling low or be in difficult circumstances ...

Names were written on a balloon card and hung from our Prayer Tree.

It didn't take long for the Prayer tree branches to be full!

## Bake Sale in aid of INMDA a wonderful community morning...



Save the DATE!

### 'Drink Tea for MND' –

Around 21st June –  
Contact 1800 403 403 or

Email: fundraising@imnda.ie.



**Walk While You Can** –  
Saturday 14th September  
5k, Phoenix Park.

**Cool Down Walk** –  
Sunday 22nd September  
Deerpark, Mount Merrion –  
IMNDA.

## THANK YOU

Many thanks to all who contributed to our Summer Parish News and to our dedicated team of Parish Deliverers. As always we extend a warm welcome to YOU should you wish to volunteer and share your gifts within a Parish Group or if you have ideas to share...

**Have a great Summer.**

Best wishes  
To  
Anne English,  
Principal of  
Scoil San Treasa  
&  
Ber O'Sullivan,  
Principal of  
Oatlands Primary  
School  
on your  
respective  
retirements ...