**Bohola/Shraheens Newsletter**

**Stephen O’Mahony PP – 094-9384115/086-8226405 –** [**boholaparish@gmail.com**](mailto:boholaparish@gmail.com) **(email for newsletter)**

<https://www.mayo.ie/news/category/connect/parish-news/bohola-parish-news/>

**2nd Sunday in Ordinary Time – 17th January 2021**

###### Masses for the Week

**Masses listed below will be live-streamed on the *Bohola Post Facebook Page* and broadcast locally on *Radio 105.5 FM*.**

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| **Sunday, January 17th.** | **10.00am** | Kathleen & Bernard Molloy, their son, Frank **& deceased of Molloy & Moran families.**  **Eileen Tierney, Ardgullen, her husband, James & Tommy Quinn.**  **Mary Commons, Listrisnane.** |
| **Monday, January 18th.** | **2.00pm** | Funeral Mass of Nigel Mullahy, New York and Barleyhill. |
| ***Due to Covid-19 restrictions Mass will be celebrated privately on other weekdays.***  ***The Mass for All the People of the Parish will be offered during the week.*** | | |
| **Wednesday, January 20th.** | **6.00 – 8.00pm** | **Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament (private prayer).** |
| **Sunday, January 24th.** | **10.00am** | **For all the People.** |

***Recent Deaths:*** Please pray for the happy repose of the souls of the following:

*Nigel Mullahy*, New York and Barleyhill, son of Tom and Kathleen Mullahy and brother of Linda Walsh, Barleyhill, who died suddenly on Tuesday last, January 12th. Nigel’s remains will arrive in Bohola church at 2.00pm on this Monday for his funeral Mass with burial immediately afterwards in St Joseph’s Cemetery.

*Joe Maguire*, Swanlinbar, Co Cavan who died on Friday, January 8th and whose funeral took place in Corlough, Cavan on Monday last. He was brother of Sheila Butler and uncle of Breda Carney, Shraheens.

*Bobbie McDonnell*, who died recently in Australia. She was the wife of the late Pat McDonnell and sister-in-law of the late Jack McDonnell, Toughnane.

*Martin Howley*, Bletchley, Buckinghamshire, England and formerly of Straide, who died recently. He was first cousin of Tom Howley, Carracastle.

*Anthony (Tony) Joyce*, Rathfarnham, Dublin, who died on Saturday, January 9th and whose funeral took place in Rathfarnham on Wednesday last. He was brother of Canon Michael Joyce, Swinford and former P.P., Bohola.

We extend sympathy to their families and pray they are at peace.

***Private prayer and Adoration:*** As lockdown continues the church remains open every day for private prayer. *Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place every Wednesday evening from 6.00pm to 8.00pm, also for private prayer*. As Covid-19 numbers remain high, let us pray for each other for the Lord’s protection, for all who are ill and for all on the frontline battling the disease in our hospitals and care homes. Please also remember in your prayers all who have died and all the bereaved.

***Offertory Donations:***

This Week: €555.



Thanks for all your generous contributions to both the Offertory and the priest’s Christmas collection.

***New Pilgrim Path Website of the Week, January 17th:*** For nearly three thousand years, men and women from diverse lands and cultures have been lifting their hearts to God by praying and singing the psalms. “The Psalms: 150 Ways of Praying” is a short introductory online course from the superb ‘Pathways to God’ website. It explores why these beautiful and timeless songs have such universal appeal and shows how the psalms can set us on a pathway to deeper prayer. For these, and other wide ranging spiritual resources especially useful in times of pandemic, visit [***www.newpilgrimpath.ie***](http://www.newpilgrimpath.ie)**.**

***Age Action’s Getting Started KIT:*** Now more than ever it is important to have internet skills and to keep in touch with family and friends so Age Action is offering 5 hours of free remote tutoring by phone / video call to help older people use their smartphone, computer, tablet or ipad. The programme called Getting Started KIT takes place in your own home at a time that suits you and includes a free guide. For further information, call 091 527831, e-mail [*gettiingstartedgalway@ageaction.ie*](mailto:gettiingstartedgalway@ageaction.ie) or see the following link: [*https://www.ageaction.ie/how-we-can-help/getting-started-kit*](https://www.ageaction.ie/how-we-can-help/getting-started-kit).

***Priesthood in Achonry Diocese:*** *“Behold the Lamb of God.”* Could it be that you are being called to be a shepherd for the Lord as a priest, a deacon or in the consecrated life? Speak to your local priest, call your Diocesan Vocation’s Director or email the National Vocations Office on *info@vocations.ie*. For further information contact our Vocations Director, **Fr Paul Kivlehan, The Presbytery, Ballaghaderreen, Co. Roscommon. Tel.094-9860011, Mobile 087-3683535, E-mail** [***pkivlehan@achonrydiocese.org***](mailto:pkivlehan@achonrydiocese.org).

***COVID-19 Support Line for Older People:***ALONE contact number is ***0818-222024***. Professional staff are available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line is open seven days a week, 8am to 8pm.

***It’s better to sit in a boat thinking about God than sit in a church thinking about fishing!***

***Mother & Baby Homes***

***A Reflection by Bishop Paul Dempsey, Achonry Diocese***

***14th January 2021.***

I am conscious as I write these words that I have no idea, nor can I even imagine what it must have been like for a young girl in Ireland to have become pregnant outside of marriage just a few decades ago. So many were abandoned by their families, their communities, their parishes, their priests, their Church, and the men who were responsible for their pregnancy. The loneliness, the shame, the fear, the angst, the sheer terror is beyond my comprehension. The Commission of Investigation into Mother and Baby Homes Report goes to three thousand pages. It would be impossible for me to cover all the issues it raises. However, the general tenor that emerges within its pages is of a society that was cold and uncaring. We could all too easily blame “society,” but as a member of the Church, and a leader in that Church, I face the difficult reality that it was a society which was deeply influenced by the Catholic Church.

In their apology, the Bon Secours Sisters, who ran the Tuam Mother and Baby Home, stated that they “did not live up to their Christianity.” It seems that so many during that period of Irish life “did not live up to their Christianity,” even though we were a nation that prided ourselves on being a good Catholic country. It seems that we may have been good Catholics, but we were not such good Christians. The question has been asked: “How could this happen?” How could we be so cold, so cruel to our daughters, our sisters, our friends, our neighbours? One explanation was that the Church had a distorted view of sexuality that seemed obsessive. Instead of seeing sexuality as a beautiful, sacred gift, created by a loving God, it was considered something secretive and taboo, something not to be talked about. Anyone, who through human nature, was viewed to have made a mistake, was shunned. Sins of a sexual nature seemed to be the only sins one could commit, there was little focus on other immoral issues such as domestic abuse or fraud. There is no doubt, and it is truly shameful, that the Church during this time lost its focus, which should always be Christ. When the Church fails to focus on Christ, all sorts of distorted practices emerge. It seems that one of those distorted practices was exercising an unhealthy power over people’s lives, especially in the most intimate areas of life.

Unfortunately, we cannot change the past, but we can learn from it. This, perhaps, is where we can draw some hope. The Tánaiste, Leo Varadkar, stated that; “we should not lose sight of the more hopeful story that is told in the Commission’s report as well. It tells the story of a country that has changed and progressed, that got better, kinder and more compassionate, more loving, less judgmental and less misogynistic as the years passed.” I believe this is generally true, but in my own ministry over the years, I have come across many people who lament the direction our country has taken. They feel it has become far more secular, with fewer numbers attending Mass and they believe there is an agenda to rid society of the influence of the Church. In the light of the Mother and Baby Homes report and the numerous reports that preceded it, is it any wonder people would want to rid the country of the Church that is portrayed? I believe there is a more hopeful message in there for the Church too. The publication of so many painful reports has exposed us to the truth. Jesus Christ tells us; “The truth will set you free” (Jn.8:32). It is important to acknowledge that it was the “secular” world that has called the Church to account and made us face the truth. Surely this is a good thing and God has to be at work in it?

In my experience the Church has become a more humble, more compassionate community today. It no longer holds an unhealthy, powerful grasp on society. The Church has its teaching, a teaching that is inspired and revealed by Christ, an ideal that followers of Christ aspire to but do not always attain. It is a teaching that is proposed, not imposed. It is also important to state that so many people in parishes, priests, sisters, members of parish pastoral councils, and numerous others reach out and serve the needs of so many in such generous ways in communities right across the country today. Their work is critical to the lives of so many people and is to be commended. Our position as Church was never to be at the centre of society in, as Pope Francis puts it, a “self-reverential” manner. I believe this is a moment of fundamental call and challenge to those of us who hold the Church close to our hearts. There are justifiable concerns and fears about the future, but we must remember that the Church is not dying, it is a model of Church that is dying. The dying process is painful, but the potential for new life always gives hope. This is Christ’s Church, not ours, he is in charge, “we are ministers, not messiahs” as St. Oscar Romero reminds us.

It is hugely positive that the real-life stories, the experience, and the pain of so many has now been heard through this report. The State has apologised, as have religious orders who were responsible. I too, as a Church leader, wish to apologise to all those who were treated in such an undignified and demeaning manner. However, as has been said many times, apologies can be easy, action is more challenging. I hope and pray that those who wish to find their true identity that might bring the peace they are searching for, can be given the means to do so.

As I conclude, there is one concern I wish to raise. I heard several politicians making statements this week about our past and how the poor treatment of women and children must never happen again. Related to this, over the past few years when I worked in parish, I was in regular contact with people in a Direct Provision Centre. I saw how women and children and others, were cramped into tight living spaces, lacking basic human dignity. I have been thinking about them these days. As we have been told, we cannot change the past, but we can change the present. I urge those in power, in the light of the Mother and Baby Homes Report, to focus on improving the living conditions of those in our Direct Provision Centres. I would imagine this real action to improve the lives of mothers and children today, would be a fitting tribute to those who suffered in Mother and Baby Homes in the past.

*+Paul Dempsey,*

Bishop of Achonry.

For those affected by these issues please see:

[***www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-counselling-service/counselling-service-for-former-residents-of-mother-and-baby-homes***](www.hse.ie/eng/services/list/4/mental-health-services/national-counselling-service/counselling-service-for-former-residents-of-mother-and-baby-homes)