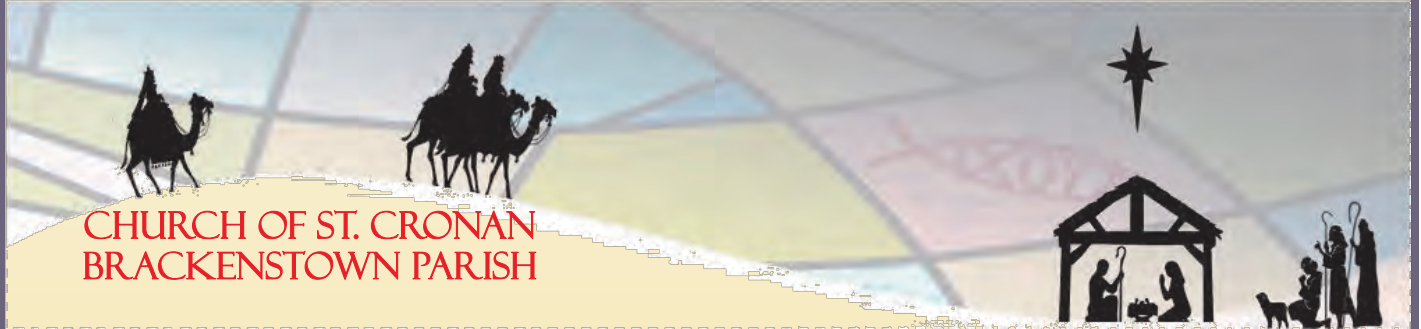


CHRISTMAS 2016 & NEW YEAR PARISH NEWSLETTER



CHURCH OF ST. CRONAN
BRACKENSTOWN PARISH



CHRISTMAS DAY MASS INTENTIONS ARE
FOR THE NAMES ON THE
PARISH CHRISTMAS MASS CARDS

CHRISTMAS WEEK MASS INTENTIONS

- Mon 11am:** Patrick O'Donoghue, Patrick & Kathleen Boylan (A)
- Tues 10am:** Johnny O'Sullivan (A)
Pray for: Patrick O'Donoghue (A)
- Wed 10am:** Sandra Brophy (A)
- Thurs 10am:** Robert Barr (RD)
Pray for: Katrina Harford (A)
- Fri 10am:** Margaret Kenny (A) & Christopher Kenny (RD)
Pray for: Paula O'Keeffe (A)
- Sat 10am:** Jim Reid (1st A)

NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS INTENTIONS

- 6:30pm:** Eddie & Alice Farrell (A)
- 9:00am:** Altar List of the Dead
- 11:00pm:** Thomas Lawless (A)
- 12:30pm:** Katherine Mallin (3rd A)
- PRAY FOR**
Paula O'Keeffe (1st A)
James Murtagh (1st A)
Margaret Harford (10th A)
James & Gerard McGrath (Rem)
Vera McCann (RD)

NEW YEAR'S WEEK MASS INTENTIONS

- Mon 10am:** Noel Hoey & Maisie Ward (A)
- Tues 10am:** Laurence Wolohan (A)
- Wed 10am:** Mick Dignam (A)
- Thurs 10am:** Thanksgiving for those who supported the family of the late Paddy Harrington
- Epiphany Vigil 7:30pm:** Hannah O'Connell (2nd A)
- Fri (Epiphany) 10am:** Catherine White (A) Pray for Hannah O'Connell (2nd A)
- Epiphany 7:30pm:** Peter Harford (A)
- Sat 10am:** Mary McManus (MM)



Please take this Newsletter home

May you have a Happy and Blessed Christmas

The year gone past has been a strange one! It seemed that every month another part of my life was disappearing with so many people from the world of music, television and film dying. It's as if those things that define you are going away one by one and yet it's just the reality of time moving on. But on the other hand it was also a very inspiring year as Pope Francis had made it a Jubilee of Mercy and through his various addresses and the events that took place it renewed the true message of the Gospel and mission of the Church to open the world to God's love. The most memorable part for me was the Pilgrimage to World Youth Day with a group from the Parish and Pope Francis telling us "Not to be couch potatoes, but to find real happiness and fulfilment in living the Gospel, particularly in the service of others."

As we celebrate the Feast of Jesus' birthday I hope that it is a good time for you with family and friends. The message of Jesus is one of peace and I pray that your family will be blessed with peace now and in the year ahead. I also pray for peoples for whom the peace of Christmas is not their reality, particularly the people of Syria and especially the residents of Aleppo and for those within our own country who are homeless or living in temporary accommodation that we will work towards a lasting solution to homelessness. I pray for peace for all whom will find this a tough Christmas, the first without a loved one or knowing it is the last with someone they love. The name given to Jesus was Emmanuel which means God-With-Us. I hope and pray this is the reality that you are blessed with this Christmas time. Look after yourself and those around you.

With kind regards, Fr. Paul

thank you!

Throughout the year here in St. Cronan's there are so many people who are very active in the various ministries that allow us as a Parish to live as an active community of faith. As in any year there are people who have to take a break after many years of generous service and to them we express our gratitude and thanks.

This year we invited people to get involved as Child Safeguarding Representatives, as members of the Family Mass team, as part of the delivery team, as singers in our choirs, to be part of the management of the Pastoral Centre, Newsletter distribution team and as members of the new Funeral Ministry which you will begin to see in the new year. We had a very positive response to all of these ministries and training has been in progress.

To all who give their time as Sacristans, Office assistants, Church carers, flower arranging, hospitality, Altar Servers, Ministers of the Word and Eucharist, Ministry of Music and animation, Baptism, Do This in Memory and Come Follow Me Sacramental Preparation Programmes, Legion of Mary, collectors and counters, laundry, Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and various prayer groups, your dedication to your ministry is deeply appreciated.

Finally there are two committees who work very hard to ensure that the Parish works well: the Finance Committee and the Parish Pastoral Council. And I take this opportunity to sincerely thank Peter and Fr. Joseph for their care and dedication to all that they do in sharing their faith and ministry with the Parish.

To Louise our Parish Secretary who works so efficiently and professionally and on whom many demands are made, thank you for your dedication and commitment. To Christie who keeps the Church and grounds so well maintained, thank you.

May the Lord bless you for your goodness.

Fr. Paul



St. Cronan's Church - 40 Years of Praise and Worship to God

Next year we will celebrate 40 years since our Church was opened. In that time many people and families have celebrated important moments in their lives, within its walls. There will be a meeting in January to look at ideas to mark this occasion and to ask ourselves the question "What does it mean to be Church today? And what shape will that take for us in the next 40 years?"

Above is the artists impression of the Statue of St. Cronan that we have commissioned and on Pentecost Sunday Bishop Field will bless and dedicate it as part of our celebrations.

The World Meeting of Families



In August 2018 an important event in the life of the Church will happen in Ireland, mostly centred in Dublin. The World Meeting of Families is a gathering of families from all over the world to share experiences and to pray. We will have various occasions during 2017 to prepare for this event and strengthen family ministry here.

PARISH PASTORAL CENTRE

The Pastoral Centre is really coming into its own and often we stop and think how did we get on without it!

It provides a place where people can come together and chat over a cup of tea. It facilitates adult faith development in Scripture course, prayer groups, talks and presentations.

It reaches out to the community to provide support like the Forget Me Not Café which supports families and individuals facing Dementia and takes place on the last Tuesday of every month. There is Bingo on Sunday nights which is becoming popular and we hope in the new year to offer meditation and mindfulness and other initiatives to support positive mental health. Please look at the Parish Website for more details.

REFLECTING BACK OVER 40 YEARS

By the mid 1960s the population in the Fingal area was steadily expanding. This expansion centred in Swords. New families were settling in the hinterlands of Swords Village at a fast rate. Their spiritual, educational and social activities needed to be catered for and an extra parish complex was the obvious answer. So when, in 1972, Fr James J. Alston, then Parish Priest of St Colmcille's, Swords, was able to buy a nine acre site on the Brackenstown Road on behalf of the Archdiocese, there was great rejoicing. This site was to be utilised for building a new church and school.

At this point in time the location of the site was very rural. There were a few houses on the Brackenstown Road, a total of 7 between Knocksedan Cross and Windmill Lands. Brackenstown Road was a narrow rural by-road. There were no streetlights, no footpath, no bus route. Cattle and sheep grazed on the fields where the church and school are now built. The nearest shopping location was in Swords Village.

The territory of the new parish ran from St Columba's Church of Ireland almost to Knocksedan. Fr Finbar McHale was appointed Parish Priest of the new parish. He succeeded in finding a house to rent in St Columba's Heights, right on the eastern perimeter of the designated church and school site. From here he initiated all the preliminary plans and arrangements for the fledgling parish.

The residential estates of Glassmore and St Colmcilles were already up and running. Windmill Lands and Rathbeale estates were following close behind. The development of St Cronan's estate was well advanced. School accommodation for the children of the new parish was now a priority. Temporary accommodation was used at first, until the Junior School moved to its permanent accommodation in October 1974. The Senior School opened in 1975, courtesy of its junior neighbour, where 3 free classrooms were made available to it. By September 1976 the building designed for the Senior School was partially complete.

Meanwhile, the construction of the new Parish Church was moving along steadily. The school served as a parish Mass Centre until December 1977. In December 1977 the new church of St Cronan was blessed and dedicated by Archbishop Ryan. This was a wonderfully joyful occasion. The solemn procession formed up Glassmore Park and approached the church via the pathway behind what is now the BASE building. The Parish Choir provided the main body of the sacred music and the brand new Senior School Choir sang 'Abide with me' as a communion piece. An unforgettable occasion!

While buildings were important, people, both clerical and lay, took priority in the development of the parish. Brackenstown was blessed with its original Parish Priest. Fr McHale was farseeing and energetic.

In 1974 he was joined by his first curate, Fr Denis Henry, and, in 1979, by Fr John Delany. Two new presbyteries, adjacent to the church and on the parish site, were completed in 1977. One became the Parish Priest's residence, while the second was shared by the curates.

Meanwhile, also on the parish site, two vibrant schools were growing. St Cronan's Junior School had reached its planned potential by 1978 as a sixteen teacher school. The neighbouring Senior School, also originally planned as a sixteen teacher school, officially opened in the autumn of 1979. The founding Principal in the Junior School was Ms Siobhan Garvey (now deceased) while the founding Principal in the Senior School was Mr Harry Smyth. Both schools quickly outgrew their planned capacity, and pre-fabricated classrooms were introduced. Every summer holidays, one or two extra 'prefabs' had to be added on. A 'special needs' unit is now well established in the Junior School, necessary additional changes had to be made to accommodate it; some permanent, some temporary, but hopefully these additions will soon be made permanent. Just at the moment plans are well advanced for the re-building and re-construction of the Senior School.

Aine Shields



CHRISTMAS REFLECTION

In the Infant Jesus, the Christmas Word has been proclaimed to you. And that proclaimed Word has three stages: First, the anxious waiting. It is expressed by the lips of a Hebrew prophet, Isaiah: all those endless days when a people walked in darkness, when the land was deeply shadowed, when joy was indeed there but ambiguous and muted, when the experience of God's people stressed a yoke that weighs, a bar across the shoulders, an oppressing rod. But He will come.

Second, the actual coming. It is expressed in the simplest of narratives: a journey and a birth, shepherds watching and angels singing, good news, great joy, to be shared by all. He has come.

Third, the theological reflection. In this child so anxiously awaited, so simply come, in him God's grace has been revealed, salvation has been made possible for all, we are to give up everything that does not lead to God, and wait in hope. He will come again.

Christmas is an invitation for each one of us to discover in ourselves a dimension of goodness, which we call Jesus Christ. It's an invitation to let that dimension shine forth into the darkness of today's world.

Christmas celebrates the fact that the infinite God, at a point in time, crossed an unimaginable border and personally entered our world. The Christmas image of Jesus is that of a light shining in the darkness. Christmas celebrates the fact that when Jesus entered our darkened world hope also entered.

What Jesus was to the world of His time, he wants us to be to the world of our time. We too must be a beam of light in the midst of darkness. We, too, must be a ray of hope in the midst of despair.

Christmas is an invitation for each one of us to be for the world what Jesus was to His world: a beam of light in the midst of darkness, a ray of hope in the midst of despair.

If Jesus is to be born into today's world, it must be through us. We must be the beam of light in the midst of darkness. We must be the ray of hope in the midst of despair.

To the extent that we heed the invitation of Christmas, to that extent will the world receive the gift of Christmas: peace on earth and goodwill toward all.

Blessed Christmas to You All!
Fr. Joseph Njanackal, C.S.T., C.C.

FAMILY PRAYERS



For placing the Baby Jesus figure in the Crib: God our Father, you sent Jesus your son, born of Mary in the stable in Bethlehem. As we celebrate this great event and place this figure of the Infant Jesus in our crib, we ask you to bless our family, friends and community. We pray for peace and goodwill among all peoples. We pray for compassion and care for all who are in need. We pray that we may be open to your Son being born in our hearts and strengthening the bonds of family and friendship between us. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Before the Christmas Dinner: Bless us Lord as we sit on this Christmas Day around the table. Bless each one here and those who cannot be with us. Bless those who supplied and prepared the food, mindful that there are many who will go hungry. Bless us with the peace, joy, love and hope that your Son Jesus brings into the world. Amen.

For the New Year: May God make your year a happy one! Not by shielding you from all sorrows and pain, but by strengthening you to bear it, as it comes; not by making your path easy, but by making you sturdy to travel any path; not by taking hardships from you, but by taking fear from your heart; not by granting you unbroken sunshine, but by keeping your face bright, even in the shadows; not by making your life always pleasant, but by showing you when people and their causes need you most, and by making you anxious to be there to help. God's love, peace, hope and joy to you for the year ahead. Amen.

EPIPHANY

EPIPHANY GIFTS

You are invited to bring along any unwanted Christmas gifts until 10th January.

These gifts will then be passed onto Alice Leahy's Trust, a day-care facility for the homeless based in the Iveagh Trust Buildings. The kind of things that are useful are: chocolates, sweets, scented candles, toiletries, scarves, gloves etc.

Bring them to the crib in the Church and the Pastoral Council will pass them on. Thank you.



CHALKING THE DOOR

We are always invited to make room for God and God's blessing in our homes. Chalking the door is a European tradition, taking place on the Feast of the Epiphany, to remind us of God's presence in our lives.

So you are invited to chalk the following inscription above a doorway in your home:

20 + C + M + B + 17

The letters C M B come from the traditional (9th century) names for the three kings: Caspar, Melchior & Balthazar. They can also represent the phrase "Christus Mansionem Benedicat" which means "May Christ bless this house!"

As you mark the different parts of the inscription you may wish to use the following prayer:

The three Wise Men,
[C] Caspar, [M] Melchior, [B] and Balthazar
followed the star of God's Son who became human
[20] two thousand, [17] and seventeen years ago.
[+ +] May Christ bless our home
[+ +] and remain with us throughout the new year. Amen.

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

The Parish Pastoral Council is made up of a group of parishioners, who along with Peter, our Parish Pastoral Worker, Fr. Joseph and Fr. Paul work together as partners to further the mission of Christ in Brackenstown.

We meet monthly, our meetings always beginning with and ending in prayer. The first item on our agenda is always Safeguarding of which, thankfully, there have been no issues but we monitor the implementation of both state and diocesan policies as they evolve and change.

The current PPC was formed during Fr. John's tenure as parish priest and one of our first initiatives was organising a parish mission. This took place in March 2013 led by members of the Redemptorist order and was well received and a great success. Under the leadership of Fr. Paul, our annual retreat is now embedded in the parish calendar. Over time we have changed the format slightly to include both clergy and lay speakers and added workshops etc.

In 2013 we organised a Parish Forum and in 2015 a Parish Survey, ideas from which helped us plan for the needs of the parish.

We meet regularly with PPC members from our sister parishes in Swords, River Valley and Drynam and also represent the parish at Deanery meetings and other events in Bishop Field's area.

We are very aware that Brackenstown is now very much a multi cultural parish and we try to ensure that all in our parish are represented and welcomed.

The early part of 2016 was very busy. Our annual retreat, this year led by the Capuchin Franciscans was perhaps our most successful to date. We set about planning the opening of our parish pastoral centre, invited parishioners to a meeting, the ideas from which formed the basis of what proved to be a memorable day in Brackenstown. On Saturday 4th June, an army of parishioners, armed with brushes and hoes, Mr. Sheen and Henry the Hoover, had our church and grounds gleaming and the following day as we basked in glorious sunshine, with many of our parishioners in their national dress, colour parties from Brackenstown 164 Scouts and the Order of Malta, we welcomed Archbishop Diarmuid Martin to concelebrate mass and officially open and bless the centre. As many of you gathered for refreshments it quickly became clear that our pastoral centre is more than just bricks and mortar, but a vibrant and welcoming addition to our parish.

One week later, our then Deacon, Br. Martin Bennett celebrated his first mass following his ordination, accompanied by many of his Capuchin brothers.

We are currently working on plans for 2017, which will include a week of guided prayer, our annual retreat and in consultation with parishioners, events to mark the 40th anniversary of the opening of our church.

Having served two terms as members of the PPC, 2017 will also see the majority of the present PPC stand down, (or as Fr. Paul puts it, redeploy) and preparations for the formation of a new council will begin early in the New Year. We thank all the parish ministries, Louise, our parish secretary, Peter, Maureen and Georgina our parish pastoral workers, Fr. Joseph and in particular Fr. Paul for all the help, support and encouragement offered to us. We especially thank all of our fellow parishioners for your help, support and prayers over the last number of years and ask that you will continue to do so.

And finally may we take this opportunity to wish each and every one of you a very happy, holy and peaceful Christmas and every blessing in 2017. May God Bless You.

Parish Pastoral Council



Parish Finances

The Parish Finance Committee would like to thank all parishioners for their ongoing financial support of the Parish. In particular we thank you this year for your support which enabled the Parish to build St Cronan's Parish Pastoral Centre without recourse to any borrowings. The final construction & fit-out cost was €465,530 and the 6th and final instalment was paid in December 2016.

In this newsletter we would like to explain how the various collections are used. There is also an explanation of the benefits to the Parish of the CHY tax scheme. Related to this is the introduction of a voluntary envelope system for the First Collection. Brackenstown is one of only two Parishes in Dublin which are piloting this scheme. The envelope system has the potential to substantially increase the amount that is recovered by the Parish by way of the CHY tax refund scheme. It is not an extra collection but just a way of including in the CHY scheme the money that you are already contributing to the First Collection. Thank you if you have already signed up for a box of First Collection envelopes for 2017. The scheme is only of added benefit to the Parish in respect of those parishioners who pay income tax. We invite those who would like to participate in this scheme to return a sign-up form as soon as possible. There are forms available on the tables at the back of the Church.

Parish Accounts

The Dublin Archdiocese has recently moved to using the calendar year as its accounts year. The Parish Statement of Receipts & Payments for 2016 will be available in Spring 2017.

Parish Income

THE FIRST COLLECTION at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days together with Christmas and Easter dues are for the support of priests of this parish, priests of poorer parishes and the sick and retired priests of the diocese.

THE SECOND (SHARE) COLLECTION is for the diocesan building fund and diocesan pastoral services.

THE FAMILY OFFERING is the main source of income to meet the running costs of the Parish. It pays for the day to day expenses of running the parish as well as maintaining the church buildings. These expenses are in the region of €10,000 per month. Contributions to the Family Offering are either by the weekly envelope collection, bankers' standing order or direct annual contribution

CHY tax refund scheme. If you make a donation of €250 or more in any calendar year, then the Parish can reclaim the tax on your donation. This means that a donation of €250 could be worth an extra €112.32 to the Parish or a donation of €1,000, an extra €449.38 at no cost to you. This applies to donations made through the Family Offering, Christmas and Easter Dues and First Collection envelope. Our Parish has benefited greatly from the tax relief scheme; in 2016 we received €29,765. This is of great practical benefit to the parish, enabling us to carry out some projects that would not be possible otherwise. During 2016 the scheme funded;

- The Pastoral Centre garden landscaping (€9,980)
- The final payment for the Pastoral Centre construction (€9,287)
- The upgrade to the internal & external Church lighting (€5,157)
- The anti-woodworm treatment and kneeler repairs to the church seating (€3,500)

First Collection Envelope System

Some questions that have been asked:

Q. What if I don't come to Mass in St Cronan's Church every week?

A. That is okay, you can place your envelope in the First Collection the weeks you are here. If you go to Mass elsewhere then you can support the first collection in that Parish in the usual way.

Q. But if I don't contribute here each week then my total for the First Collection for the year won't reach €250.

A. That may not matter either as the total of €250 includes Christmas & Easter dues and Family Offering.

For example If someone contributed the following in 2017;

Christmas Dues €50

Easter Dues €50

Family Offering €100

Then their total for the year would be €200 and we cannot reclaim the tax on this. However if we now add in the First Collection for 10 weeks at €5 per week then their total reaches €250 and so we can now claim the tax back.

Paddy O'Byrne, Parish Finance Committee.



PARISH DIARY

DATE	EVENT
JANUARY 2017	
14th JAN	DTIM Mass 6:30pm
15th JAN	DTIM Mass 12:30pm
18-25 JAN	WEEK OF PRAYER FOR CHRISTIAN UNITY
21st JAN	Come Follow Me Mass 6:30pm
22nd JAN	Come Follow Me Mass 5:30pm
THE PARISH DIARY IS AVAILABLE ON THE WEBSITE	



Please note one Month's Notice to be given & a copy of baby's Birth Cert is required when booking a Baptism.

The next Parent Preparation Meeting is Thursday 2nd February 2017 at 8pm in St. Cronan's Parish Centre.

Dates for Baptisms:

11th February 12:30 pm
12th February 1:45 pm
25th February 12:30 pm
26th February 1:45 pm



EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

Mon: 10.30 am – 11.30 am
Wed: 6.00 pm – 11.00 pm
Fri: 10.30 am – 5.45pm
Sat: 10.30am – 11.30am

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament takes place the last Sunday of every month from 4pm–5pm. Can you stay one hour with me? We encourage new people to come and join us.

THE ROSARY

Why not start the New Year with Joy and Peace? Book the 'Rosary Statue' for a week and notice the difference praying the Rosary brings. It is simple.... Just leave your contact details with a member of the Legion of Mary in main porch after Saturday evening or Sunday morning Masses and arrangements will be made to suit you.

THANK YOU

Christmas Floral Demonstration raised: €428.50
St. Vincent de Paul Annual Collection raised: €7830.00
Thanks to everyone for your support.

Brackenstown Bible Study 2017



During 2016 we ran two very informative and enjoyable Scripture study courses. In spring we followed Jeff Cavins 8 week DVD study "Unlocking the Mystery of the Bible". In the autumn we completed Jeff Cavins 13 week "The Bible Timeline Reading Plan". During 2017 we will study Jeff Cavins 23 week DVD course "The Bible Timeline; The Story of Salvation". The course will consist of 12 classes in the spring and 11 classes in the autumn. This is the foundational study in *The Great Adventure* Bible Study Series that has helped hundreds of thousands of Catholics learn to read the Bible. *The Bible Timeline* is a fascinating study that takes participants on a journey through the entire Bible. They will go deep into each period of salvation history and discover the amazing story woven throughout all of Scripture. Using a unique color-coded system, they will learn the major people, places, and events of the Bible and see how they all come together to reveal the remarkable story of our faith.

Venue: St Cronan's Parish Pastoral Centre.
Bookings: by 09/01/17. Limited to 35 people
Contact: Louise 01-4401188;
Email: brackenstownparish@gmail.com

Course Duration: Spring classes commence Monday 30/01/17; twelve sessions. Autumn classes commence Monday 04/09/17; eleven sessions.

Course Cost: €20.00 to cover the cost of the DVDs & the study book
Course Time: Monday evenings from 7.30 to 9.00 p.m.

We wish all our parishioners a very Happy & Holy Christmas & Every Blessing for 2017

The next edition of the Parish Newsletter will be issued on the weekend of 7th/8th January

Any items for publication must be in the Parish Office by the Tuesday lunch-time 3rd January 2017

PARISH INFORMATION

Mass Times:

Sunday: 6:30pm (Sat. Vigil); 9:00am, 11:00am, 12:30pm & 5:30pm

Weekday Mass:

Monday to Saturday 10:00am

Holyday Mass:

Vigil 7:30pm; 10:00am

Confession:

Saturday 10:30am to 11:00am and 6:00pm to 6:20pm
After 10:00am Mass on the Thursday before the First Friday

Fr. Paul Thornton, Adm,
Fr. Joseph Njanackal, C.S.T., C.C.
Peter Siney, Pastoral Worker
Louise Donnelly, Secretary

01 8401661 – 087 7404729 – pauljthornton@gmail.com
01 8408926 – brackenstownparish@gmail.com
089 4614226 – peter.siney@dublindiocese.ie
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Best wishes to all Parishioners from the
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Please do not hesitate to call us should you need our advice or expertise.

All enquiries to: Mary McCormack (Managing Director)
Tel. No: 00353-1-8079631
Email Address: mccormackm@tara-winthrop.com

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