

**Our Lady of the Wayside Church, Broughderg in the parish of Greencastle  
marks its twenty-fifth Anniversary**

*‘Our Lady of the Wayside, for the sake of the child in your arms, be with us now, lead us on to  
the end of the road, and be there to meet us when we all need you most,  
at the hour of our death. Amen.*

*- the words of a prayer inscribed on a plaque inside the church.*

When you read the reports on the opening of the Church dedicated to Our Lady of the Wayside at Broughderg in the parish of Greencastle you get a real sense of what the atmosphere was like on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1985.

‘The Herald’ reported - *The Blessing and Dedication of the Church – believed to be the second smallest in the Diocese – was indeed a day of great joy and celebration for Greencastle parishioners, who turned out in their hundreds led by their Parish Priest Fr. Seamus Shields.*

The Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Mass was con-celebrated by Bishop Edward Daly, retired bishop of Derry, Monsignor Joseph Donnelly Parish priest of Drumragh and Vicar Forane of the Tyrone Deanery, Fr. John J. Ryder P.Em (retired parish priest of Greencastle), Fr. Eugene Hasson Parish Priest of Greencastle, Fr. Vincent McCrory (a native of Broughderg and now retired from ministry), Fr. George Doherty CC Desertegney in the parish of Buncrana and formerly curate in Greencastle parish from 1954-57, Fr. Aidan Mullan, parish priest of Dungiven (who administered the first baptism in this church on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1985), Fr. John Forbes Parish Priest of Badoney Lower (Gortin), Fr. Michael Doherty Parish Priest of Melmount (Mourne) Strabane, Fr. John McDevitt CC Drumragh (Omagh), and Fr. Mark Monaghan SMA, Fr. Francis Bradley (native of Badoney Lower) was Master of Ceremonies and Fr. Martin McVeigh Parish Priest of Pomeroy in the Archdiocese of Armagh also attended.

Fr. Michael Doherty was MC at the opening ceremony and Fr. George Doherty also attended. He was Parish Priest of Dunamagh at that time. Interestingly neither Fr. John Ryder nor Fr. Eugene Hasson, successors to Fr. Seamus Shields as parish priest were present on September 1<sup>st</sup> 1985.

Altar servers were Francis Michael McKenna, Mark McBride, Kerry McGuigan and Kira Donnelly. The Lectors were Geraldine McNamee native of the townland of Crouck (who read from 1 Kings 8:22-23,27-30) and Sean Clarke from the townland of Evishession, read from Saint Paul’s Letter to the Corinthians 3:9-11,16-17, the psalm between the readings was sung.

The Prayers of the Faithful were read by Anne McDermott, Martina McBride and Helen McKenna.

The Offertory Gifts were presented by Caitriona McKenna (who was the first to be baptised in OLW on 4<sup>th</sup> October 1985, by Fr. Aidan Mullan who was a teacher in St. Columb’s College, Derry at that time and available for supply to parishes when needed) and Siobhan McArdle (nee Coyle) and Barry Coyle who were among the first young parishioners to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation when Bishop Daly administered the sacrament on Monday May 3<sup>rd</sup> 1986).

Fergal and Colette Keenan who were the first couple to marry at Our Lady of the Wayside were present in the church as were others and some people who made their First Holy communion here (no official records of the latter are kept).

The choir under the leadership of Sinead Donnelly sang many parts of the Mass adding to the prayerfulness and celebratory tone of the liturgy. They lead the congregation in song and music ministry every Sunday when parishioners gather to celebrate weekly Mass. They will share their gift with listeners to BBC Radio Ulster on Sunday September 12<sup>th</sup> when Mass will be broadcast from Our Lady of the Wayside at 10.15am.

The history of this church building is well documented in articles printed 25 years ago. Fr. Seamus Shields then parish priest had been involved in a serious road traffic accident earlier in his life and he attributed his recovery to the intercession of Our Lady of the Wayside to whom he maintained a deep devotion for the rest of his life. The location of Our Lady of the Wayside Church on a hillside in the Sperrin Mountains was the idyllic postcard scene last Wednesday evening – the sun shone brightly, temperatures were warm and there was no sign of rain – a direct contrast to the weather in 1985 when many parishioners recalled a blustery afternoon during a very wet year!

The report of the opening ceremony stated *“Every family in the parish was represented as well as six families from the neighbouring Archdiocese of Armagh,”* Last Wednesday evening’s congregation was similar in size and it seemed that every family in the parish of Greencastle was represented again. The Church was full half an hour before Mass. No formal invitations were issued but parishioners were encouraged to invite their own friends and relations. OLV Broughderg has been characterised over the past twenty-five years by its welcome for visitors and people in this locality would like to continue encouraging that tradition.

In anticipation of the anniversary The Parish Buildings & Maintenance Committee commissioned the repainting of the church outside and inside, the re-carpeting of the main building and the tiling of the porches which included the creation of a Marion mosaic.

To mark this milestone in the faith of the parish, the specially created OLV Anniversary committee enlisted the support of many throughout the community in the work of making a special tapestry 16’ by 11’ to hang in the sanctuary. The design was developed by Bro. Joe Connelly a member of the Christian Brothers’ Community and an artist who has worked on many projects in the Derry City area. A great amount of dedicated work was put into this project and the final product now on display for all to see has been so worthwhile. It will serve as a source of prayer and reflection in this church for parishioners and visitors alike and is also a metaphor for what Church and community is all about .... People serving God and working together for the growth and development of all.

The OLV Anniversary Committee also enlisted the support of the local Broughderg Community Association who provided refreshments after the anniversary Mass at their centre – the former Saint Mary’s Church. They offered a similar hospitality earlier this year when Bishop Seamus Hegarty, Bishop of Derry came to Our Lady of the Wayside Church to impart the sacrament Confirmation on 12 young parishioners on Sunday April 18<sup>th</sup> and again after the year 4 pupils at Our Lady of Lourdes Primary School Greencastle, celebrated their First Holy Communion on Sunday May 16<sup>th</sup>.

The volunteering attitude is alive and well in the hard-working community of Greencastle parish as was evidenced by the turnout of so many individuals to put the final cleaning and decorating touches to the church and its grounds in the two weeks prior to the anniversary. This kind of generosity nurtured the spirit and faith of the community as well as having obvious physical effects.

As the tapestry in the sanctuary suggests..... every stitch counts. Everyone’s contribution matters.

A considerable financial outlay was also involved and the parish finance Committee will be happy to accept any contributions anyone would like to make. A few people have already offered donations. Fr. Hasson acknowledged that his ability to stimulate fundraising did not possess the same kind of dynamism as that of his predecessor, Fr Shields and so is dependent upon the kindness of people!

The faith community will share next Sunday's Mass with listeners to BBC Radio Ulster at 10.15am and later this month (September 26<sup>th</sup>) the recently retired Auxiliary Bishop of Derry Bishop Francis Lagan will visit the community. All couples who have committed to Christian marriage at Our Lady of the Wayside over the past 25 years are especially invited to attend Mass here on that Sunday.

The parish website [www.greencastleparish.com](http://www.greencastleparish.com) contains many details and photos about the life of our faith community that surround this anniversary of Our Lady of the Wayside Church and allows people who live away from here to keep in touch. However as the custom has been Mass is scheduled for 11.00am every Sunday and this church is open for private and personal prayer at all times. Visitors from other faiths or none are warmly welcomed.