

## *Ballineaspaig Parish Bulletin*

Parish Office: (021) 4344452

Parish E-Mail: [holyspiritparishcork@gmail.com](mailto:holyspiritparishcork@gmail.com)

Parish Web Site: [www.dennehscrossparish.ie](http://www.dennehscrossparish.ie)



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### **Ballineaspaig Parish wins Gold!**



It was in the year 2000 that our parish started on our journey to becoming an Eco parish. The catalyst was a retreat, which was given by Fr. Fachtna O' Driscoll, SMA. One of Fr. Fachtna's themes was that our faith was not just a personal, comforting relationship with God, but was something to be lived out in our world.

Following the retreat, a number of parishioners got together to see how we could follow through. We formed ourselves into the "**Faith in Action Group**" – with the objective of just that: putting what we believed into action.

In the first couple of years we focussed on issues such as the plight of refugees and asylum seekers – educating ourselves and other parishioners through talks – and campaigning.

Another area was that of Fairtrade, which we have publicised and promoted – an activity which is continuing in the parish. We became Ireland's first Fairtrade parish in 2006.

We also developed links with Turkwel Parish in Kenya. The link is a twofold one, through prayer for each other and through practical help by supporting them financially. Our most recent parish venture in Turkwel was the building of a Maternity Unit. When the proposal was put to you, your response was so generous that the necessary €95,000 was contributed in 12 weeks and the Maternity Unit was built and opened within a year.

Gradually our focus extended to Creation, the environment and climate action. This is where we were greatly influenced by Eco-Congregation Ireland (ECI). The vision of ECI is to promote the celebration of the gift of God's creation under four headings: Spiritual, Community Outreach, Practical and Contact with the Developing World.

We applied to ECI for recognition as an Eco parish in 2015 and became the first Catholic parish in the Diocese to receive an Eco Award. This coincided with the publication of *Laudato Si'* by Pope Francis, which gave us the stimulus to intensify our promotion of environmental awareness and responsibility for planet earth, our commitment to social inclusion and our connection with the developing world. Everyone in the parish has supported the activities and responded generously and enthusiastically.

Last year, ECI introduced a new Gold Award. We are delighted to report that our application for this award was successful. Last Wednesday, a virtual ceremony was held to honour the first recipients of this inaugural Gold Award: Ballineaspaig Parish, Cork; Westport Eco Congregation Co Mayo; and SAGE - Shankill Action for a Green Earth, St Anne's Parish, Co Dublin. If you would like to read the three successful Gold Award submissions, visit the Eco-Congregation Ireland website here - <https://www.ecocongregationireland.com/2021/04/05/eco-congregation-ireland-launches-gold-awards/>.

As soon as possible, ECI will present us in person with our award. We look forward to inviting you to join us then in a joyous celebration of this wonderful achievement by Ballineaspaig Parish.

*Faith in Action Group*

### **A 'Meitheal' for the Meadow**

We are establishing a parish **Mini Wildflower Meadow** on the grassy area adjoining the Parish Centre, contributing to the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan.

**Come and join us on Wednesday, 16 June, from 2.30 – 3.30pm to find out what is happening, and to help with weeding and tidying, and some planting.**

**If possible, bring an implement with you for weeding. No expertise needed.**

Please text or phone Máire (086 152 2729) or Theresa (086 600 8013)

to let us know you're coming, so that, if we need to change plans due to weather, we can let you know.

*Faith in Action Group*