

# A SAVIOUR IS BORN FOR US

## Christmas Message 2014

*They say the Celtic peoples have a sensitivity for spiritual realities beyond this physical world, and that there are places where the spiritual world is very close and breaks through into our awareness. I think that is not only true of places. I think it is also true of times: times like Christmas. I like the poet Patrick Kavanagh's childhood memories of Christmas:*



***One side of the potato pits was white with frost -  
How wonderful that was, how wonderful!  
And when we put our ears to the paling-post  
The music that came out was magical.***

***The light between the ricks of hay and straw  
Was a hole in Heaven's gable.***

*Just as heaven spoke to Patrick Kavanagh through the ricks of hay and straw, or a green stone lying sideways in a ditch, I think heaven speaks to us through children's drawings hung on a Jesse tree, through the light of pink and purple candles on the Advent Wreath, and through the sculptured wood and straw of George Patrick Henry's wonderful crib.*

*The atmosphere of the Midnight Mass is an experience of the spiritual world we touch when we gather as a community, at the meeting place of night and Christmas morning, for the Mass which our people in the early Irish Church tell us is the meeting place of the heavenly and earthly Church.*

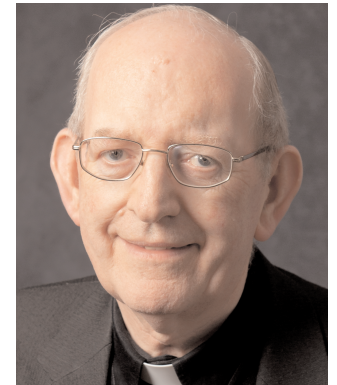
*As I look back over eight Christmases in Greenlough, I am thankful for the privilege of being here in the land of my ancestors, in a place which cherishes the closeness of the earthly and the eternal, where the Old Chapel still stands as an icon of persistent faith, while a living community builds every day a Church of young and old in which so many play an active part, as Pope Francis says: to spread the joy of the Gospel.*

## Sonas na Nollag - A very happy Christmas

*We are blessed in our time to have a Pope who leads us with joy and confidence, and to have in the diocese of Derry a new bishop from beside the Bann who has made his home among us and makes us feel at home in our local Church.*

*We are also blessed here on both sides of the Bann to have the presence of the Cistercian monks in Portglenone, rooted in an ancient spirituality which holds earth and heaven close. Willie John McCann captured it in a poem, when*

***In the silence of St. Stephen's night ...  
I heard an ancient bell;  
In barren silence broken  
The matins hour tolled,  
Calling the Cistercians  
Through centuries to prayer;  
Then I prayed,  
With ageless men,  
In Portglenone - before the dawn***



*Just as the bell called the monks to prayer, Christmas calls our people overseas in spirit or perhaps happily in person back home to be with family and friends. It adds greatly not only to the family celebrations but also to the community celebrations and to the Christmas Masses to have our returned exiles and also our young people who are away during the year studying or at work back among us.*

*Christmas is a time for giving thanks. Greenlough would probably be classed as a small parish, but it feels like a big parish because so many people are actively involved in the parish in so many ways: in sport, in community activity, and in all the aspects of parish life - individual commitments and in various groups - altar society and church cleaners, counters, Bethany bereavement group, building committee, finance council, parish pastoral council and associated groups: building faith community, ecumenism, marriage and family life, children and young people-handing on the faith-social issues, St. Vincent de Paul and all the carers and helpers who improve the quality of life especially for older people and the sick.*



# Christmas Day 2014

## Greenlough Parish - Tamlaght O'Crilly

*The community as a whole deserves our gratitude: when there is a bereavement or other distress in a family, people don't have to be told what to do - they gather round and provide comfort and support, in all sorts of ways making real the vision of being a community of healing, comfort and consolation. That caring attitude is also expressed in the great generosity with which parishioners respond to Trócaire and the various collections and fund-raising events for charities, and in supporting young parishioners who generously volunteer to go out to Africa or Eastern Europe to assist in house-building, the building of schools, and other projects for those in need.*

*Is cainteoir Gaeilge mé, agus is cúis áthais i gcónaí dom a oiread spéis is atá sa Ghaeilge sa pharóiste. Deirtear '**Sé do bheatha, a Mhuire** roimh achan Aifreann leis na freastalaithe. Tá daoine a labhraíonn Gaeilge liom go rialta, agus tá daoine atá líofa sa Ghaeilge agus atá ag obair trí mheán na Gaeilge: ag cruthú cláracha don raidió agus don teilifís, ag teagasc agus ag cur an chultúir dúchais chun cinn ar bhealaí éagsúla. Molaim sibh.*

*As I enjoy another Christmas in Greenlough, I wish all of you good health, happiness, and every blessing during 2015.*

*I síth agus i muintearas Íosa.*

*Fr. Oliver Crilly PP.*



## Christmas Day - 25th December 2014

*A Saviour has been born to you*

*The angel said: "I bring you news of great joy, a joy to be shared by the whole people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord." The message of Christmas is a message of joy. Many of us experience it as such but we very soon go back to our ordinary ways of living. As Christians the joy of Christmas is given to us in faith so that others may experience joy also because of us. We cannot afford to go back to joyless living. We need to stretch ourselves to let the joy of this very special time grow and develop in our daily lives so that the world can be filled with the radiance of Christ. We do this through the quality of joy that we develop in marriage and family life. We do it also through the sense of joy that we work at in our faith community. This week we can practise joy in our lives so that it will become infectious for all those around us.*

**Fr. Johnny Doherty, C.Ss.R.**



*Merry Christmas; Sonas na Nollag;*

*Priecīgus Ziemassvetkus*

*Milad Majid; Wesolych Świat Bozego Narodzenia*