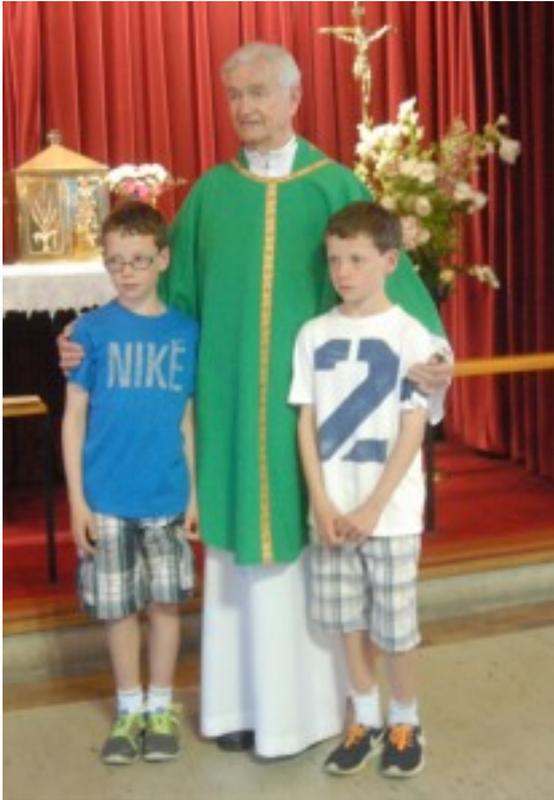


Fr Ray Liddane celebrates Diamond Jubilee



Altar boys Tommy and Harry Phelan with Fr Liddane. Marjorie Maloney, Vincent Walsh, Ena Walsh, Therese Flynn, Ann Butler and Louise Drohan. Margaret Barron and her son Matthew. Fr Liddane

Colin Everett Reports

Fr Raymond Liddane celebrated his Diamond Jubilee on Saturday the 20th of June in the church of St. Joseph and St. Benildus. He did so in fine style surrounded by his colleagues Fr. Liam Power, the parish priest, Fr. John, Chaplin of Waterford University Hospital, Bishop Alphonsus Cullinan, Retired Bishop Lee, Fr. John Treacy and Fr. Tom, friends, family members, parishioners and well-wishers. The church was packed.

Fr Liddane opened the celebratory mass by thanking everyone for attending and made a special note to mention his brother Alo who passed away a few years ago and his sister Sally, who passed away recently and sadly missed this fine occasion.

Fr Liddane was ordained on June 19th, 1955, by His Lordship, Most Rev. Daniel Coholan, Bishop of Waterford and Lismore.

He then spent five years in Middlesbrough before coming back to work in Dunhill and Fenor for two years. He moved to Ballybricken in 1962, then Tramore in 1968 before coming to the parish of St. Joseph and St. Benildus & St. Mary's in 1979 where he has lived and worked tirelessly for the community since.

His proudest achievement is the work he has carried out for Ballygunner National School. A school that was in danger of closing due to low numbers when he arrived, but with hard work and the help of the community it was built into what stands there today - a 26 classroom school with 680 students and 35 teachers.

The St John of God choir sang beautifully throughout, conducted by Sister Úna. Brother Ben played the organ with the Sunday choir singing as well.

At the end of the mass Bishop Cullinan joked he hadn't been born when Fr Liddane was ordained. This was received in good humour and got a great laugh from the audience.

The after party opened with a slideshow of pictures that Fr Liddane himself hadn't seen in many years I'm sure. It showed a fresh face Fr Liddane being ordained, then charted his life very nearly up to the present day. Mary Grimes provided the delicious food that fed upwards of 350 people. The cake cutting followed accompanied by more songs from the St John of God choir.

The night was wound up with more thanks from Fr Liddane and everyone slipped home, happy, well fed and with that comforting sense of community at ease with itself that comes after an evening well spent.