

CONFIRMATION IN MILLTOWN 2016.

April 5th 2016, saw the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation take place in St. Joseph's Church, Milltown. The ceremony began at 12 o' clock noon. Dr. Michael Neary, Archbishop of Tuam administered this special Sacrament and the concelebrating priests were Canon JJ Cribbin, PP - Milltown; Canon John D. Flannery, PE - Milltown; Fr. Pat Donnellan, PP - Islandeady and Fr. Ronnie Boyle PP - Letterfrack. Fr's. Pat Donnellan and Ronnie Boyle had a nephew, and a nephew and niece respectively, receiving Confirmation.

The church grounds looked resplendent in the brilliant sunshine as colourful bunting and both national and papal flags adorned the surrounding buildings. The sparkingly clean church interior, having been beautifully decorated with appropriate flowers and colourful banners allowed for comfortable viewing in prayerful surroundings for the very large congregation attending. On behalf of the parish, the Chairperson of the Pastoral Council, Maureen McHugh began proceedings and extended a warm welcome to Archbishop Neary and indeed everyone present and Canon Cribbin then prayed a special prayer of welcome. The Archbishop thanked them sincerely and he too, extended a warm welcome to everyone.

In total, 38 children received the Sacrament, 18 boys and girls from Belmont National School and 20 from Milltown National School. To praise from the Archbishop, the Confirmation classes of 2016, having been prepared diligently, under the direction and guidance of their class teachers, Eleanor Sheridan from Belmont National School and Nuala Dalton from Milltown National School, participated conscientiously, to the joy of their parents, guardians, family members and sponsors in all aspects of the ceremony.

There was inclusive involvement from both schools throughout all of the prayerful elements. Various gifts (a ball, a Bible, a tin whistle, a plant, a lighted candle and a Rosary beads) symbolizing the lives of the boys and girls receiving Confirmation were presented, along with the bread and wine as part of the offertory procession. This four-part Sacrament, (The Call of Candidates; The Renewal of Baptismal Promises; The Imposition of Hands in Prayer and The Anointing with the Oil of Chrism), held within the celebration of Mass and occurring directly after the homily, was superbly enhanced by both the joyful and solemn singing from all of the choir members to the accompaniment of harmonious church organ music and sweet violin and concertina playing under the direction of Eleanor Sheridan and organist Carmel O' Donnell. Some of the prayers and hymns were offered in Irish.

During the ceremony, each Confirmation candidate, received from Archbishop Neary, a gift of Rosary beads and as is traditional, each candidate was also invited to decide in prayerful silence whether or not; they intended to keep the age pledge of abstaining from alcohol and all drugs. In his concluding remarks the Archbishop, thanked everyone involved who, in preparing for this day, had shown great efforts especially, parents and guardians, grandparents, class and principal teachers from both schools, and parish priest, Canon JJ Cribbin. He thanked them for all of their generous service and example to the young people who had received Confirmation.

Opportunities for class and individual photographs followed immediately afterwards and following that, individual private family celebrations. So brought to an end, the Confirmation ceremony of 2016. The next one will take place in the parish in 2018.