

Christmas vigil Mass at St Patrick's, Dumbarton - Thursday, 24 December 2009



Hundreds of people flocked to the Christmas Vigil Mass at St Patrick's Church, Dumbarton, on Thursday evening.

The Christmas Eve service is one to which parents and grandparents traditionally bring their children.

And despite sub zero temperatures and snow and ice creating treacherous underfoot conditions outside, the magnificent church, complete with a brightly lit Christmas tree

and Advent candle, was this year once more packed to capacity.

Hundreds of people joined in prayer and songs of praise and Christmas carols as Canon Gerry Conroy, the parish priest, celebrated the Mass.

Earlier Canon Conroy had unveiled and blessed the magnificent Nativity scene, which has been deftly constructed by church workers in the Lady Altar, one of the two side altars, at the front of the church.

Children, some of them dressed as shepherds, brought Offertory gifts to the altar including Peace, Love, Hope, Sharing and Themselves.

The church music group, led by Mrs Pauline Gilmartin, sang Christmas carols during the Mass, and at the end of the service the congregation sang *Away in a Manger* before the children flocked to the crib.

A special guest at the end of the service was Santa Claus, who distributed sweets to the children who gathered on the altar steps.

Canon Conroy thanked everyone for coming to the Christmas Mass and he praised all those who helped to make the service so fulfilling and successful – the liturgy group, the readers and Eucharistic ministers, the music group, the pass-keepers, altar servers, bell ringers and the cleaners and others who prepared the church.

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