

## NEWS

# Tributes paid to Milltown parish priest Fr JJ Cribbin

• Ballyhaunis native was a star forward for Mayo

By Billy Coss

THE death occurred peacefully at Mayo University Hospital last Friday (May 8) of the Very Reverend Canon JJ Cribbin, parish priest of Milltown and formerly of Main Street, Ballyhaunis.

Fr JJ commanded great respect in the communities in which he served with such enthusiasm and commitment. His first appointment was as Prefect of Studies in St Jarlath's College, Tuam before he was based in many parishes in the Archdiocese including Taugheen in the parish of Crossboyne, Breaffy, Castlebar, Athenry and finally Milltown.

Lines of people paid their respects on Saturday afternoon as the funeral cortege moved from Castlebar through Breaffy, Ballindine, Ballyglass, Milltown, Irish town and into Ballyhaunis. In accordance with HSE and Government guidelines, a private funeral took place for family members only in St Patrick's Church, Ballyhaunis on Sunday.

People from Milltown, Ballyglass and the parishes where he served were able to join in via webcam and parish radio. Burial took place in the local cemetery in Ballyhaunis.

An outstanding footballer in the 1960s and '70s, JJ possessed a sharp eye for goal, a quality that he showcased when the Mayo senior team won the National League title in 1970. In delivering his Homily, Archbishop of Tuam Michael Neary paid tribute to JJ's prowess on the field of play and also his deep faith.

"I hope you won't think it improper if I mention that 50 years ago on this very day and date Mayo defeated Down in the National League final. That day the corner-forward scored 2-1. It was our own JJ.

"On the 21st June, 1970 JJ knelt before Archbishop Cunnane in the Cathedral in Tuam and was asked a number of

questions regarding his intentions to carry out the priestly ministry, promising to do so with the help of God and with the prayers of the people of God. JJ responded with the very generous yes to all those questions. Incidentally at that very moment Mayo were playing Roscommon a couple of hundred yards down the road in Tuam Stadium. JJ was to be a member of that team but his priorities were for priesthood.

"In his priestly ministry JJ was totally focused on the Lord as his goal. Nothing would distract him from proclaiming the word of God to the people of God. He had the ability to isolate the important from the unimportant and this was very significant at a time when there was so much confusion in society and in the Church itself.

"The past few years have been very difficult as he carried the cross of ill-health. Yet until very recently he continued to minister during this time and his devotion to priesthood has left a deep impression on the people he served, particularly in Milltown and Ballyglass. For the last few months he has been very much in the minds, and hearts and prayers of the people that he served."

Tony Murphy, chairman of the Milltown Church finance committee, paid this tribute to Fr Cribbin: "He was respected by all in the parish as a sincerely devout person who had a lifelong commitment to his ministry. He also, on a human level, offered friendship and moral support to older people and those living alone, and he did a lot of good work that was unseen but was very important to the people he visited. Not every community would have a PP in their midst for 22 years, so he was a constant kindly presence in daily life here and he will be much missed."

Milltown Pastoral Council chairperson Maureen McHugh said: "Fr JJ was brilliant at looking after the needs of his parishioners and was always there for them. House calls on First Fridays were a priority to him, even during his illness. Visits to schools, hospitals and nursing homes



THE late Fr JJ Cribbin, parish priest of Milltown.

**Not every community would have a PP in their midst for 22 years, so he was a constant kindly presence in daily life here and he will be much missed**

were also important to him. He will be sorely missed by all his parishioners in Ballyglass and Milltown."

Now-retired Milltown NS principal Tom Casby spoke about his relationship with Fr JJ and his immense contribution to the local school.

"It was with great sadness that I learned of the death of Fr JJ. As former principal of Milltown NS, it was my privilege to have worked with him for over 20 years. To lots of people he was the 'teak tough' corner forward, who never lost his love for Mayo, but to me he was the priest and friend that I most remember. He was generous to a fault, having no interest in material things or honours. To refer to him as 'Canon' was a test to his humility. His generosity

of spirit in dealing with staff and children in the school was ever present."

Fr JJ Cribbin was predeceased by his parents Anthony and Maria and his brother Tom, and is deeply regretted by his brother Tony, sister-in-law Anne, nieces Louise, Cliona and Aine, nephew Tony, grandnieces and grand-nephews, Archbishop Michael Neary and the priests of Archdiocese of Tuam, his former parishioners, his great friends Val and Maise Jennings, and his wider circle of relatives and friends.

*Ar dheis Dé go raibh a anam.*

**\* See Herald Sport page 58 for Fr JJ Cribbin's days as a free-scoring forward for St Jarlath's, Ballyhaunis and Mayo.**



GERALDINE Mannion has retired from Tuam Library and Galway Library Services.

## Retiring librarian will be missed by public and colleagues

By Slobhán Holliman

TUAM Library and Galway library services have sadly bid farewell to long-standing librarian Geraldine Mannion who has retired.

Unfortunately, due to the coronavirus restrictions, plans by staff to mark Geraldine's contribution to the library had to be put on hold and no doubt many library users will be saddened not to be able to say goodbye also.

Geraldine is a native of Creagh, Ballinasloe and while she only spent the past three years in Tuam Library, she has worked in Galway Public Libraries for most of her career.

Her library career saw her work in many libraries includ-

ing Galway city, Clifden and the county's Mobile Library service.

Geraldine had a hugely positive impact on Tuam Library during her time here and will be sorely missed by members and all of her colleagues in the library service.

She worked for most of her career in Galway city, where she ran the Children's Library. Here she met and went on to marry Gabriel Mannion from Corofin, who also worked in the city library, and who retired only last year.

Geraldine will be fondly remembered for her work with children and her much-loved weekly story and rhyme times in the city library. She continued her passion for children's activities during her time at Tuam Library.

## In brief

### New Croí service responds to Covid-19 in the West

LOCAL heart and stroke charity Croí is responding to the increased needs of those living with heart disease and stroke as a consequence of COVID-19 by launching new community support services in the west of Ireland.

Since the beginning of the coronavirus crisis, Croí has been experiencing an ever-increasing demand for information, support and advice from heart and stroke patients and their carers and will now be operating a new information hotline.

HeartLink West will provide free support from a community based, multi-disciplinary health team, led by three highly experienced cardiac nurse specialists.

Concerned individuals can connect with the services through a telephone helpline and daily 'virtual health chats'. Those who call the helpline can speak with nurses, dietitians and exercise specialists.

"Our health team of community nurses, dietitians and exercise specialists are receiving phone calls, emails and significantly increased web and social media correspondence from all over Ireland – with the greatest demand being from the west of Ireland," says Croí CEO Neil Johnson.

"Many people are afraid to visit their doctor or hospital, despite having symptoms that warrant attention, and this will lead to adverse or worse outcomes," Johnson added.

HeartLink West is available Monday to Friday from 9am to 5:30pm and can be reached on (091) 544310 or by email at [healthteam@croi.ie](mailto:healthteam@croi.ie).