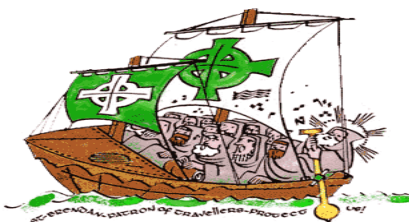


St. Brendan Division #1 - AOH, Berks County, PA
Celebrating 40 years of community service February 19, 2019



Serving the Irish American Community for over a century
INCORPORATED NOVEMBER 7, 1860 ---- RE-ORGANIZED FEBRUARY 16, 1979
Visit our Website www.berkscoaoh.com

Volume XXXI/Tóirt a Tríocha a Dó--Issue #2/Eagrán a Dó/Deireadh Fómhair/Sámhain/Mí na Nollaig--October/November/December 2021

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Joseph G. McCarthy



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I have good news for the division membership regarding a new meeting place to conduct our business. Since the closing of the Elks club, we have been looking for a permanent meeting place that meets our needs for staging of private meetings and provides better accessibility to the meeting area. The new meeting place starting in **October** will be **St. Ignatius of Loyola Church in Whitfield**. The meeting room reserved is in the school building across from the church. The parking lots are between the school and church. The meetings will continue to meet the **second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm**, and the dates for the remaining year are **10/13, 11/10, and 12/08**.

At our next meeting on **Wednesday, October 13th at 7:00 pm** our focus will be starting to develop a slate of officers for 2022. All positions are open, and it is encouraged that newer members or those longer-term members wanting to make a difference in our division step forward to assume an officer's position. Many of the current officers have held their respective offices for many years and they have performed admirably well in their respective positions. However, it's time for a transitional change to new leaders with new ideas and visions for division. The various positions do not command a lot of personal time and the current officers are willing to spend a lot of time to transition the responsibilities of the position over to you. The future of our division depends on the acceptance of other members to step forward and accept a nomination for an officer position. Key Positions open include **President, Vice-President, Financial Secretary, Recording Secretary, and Treasurer**. **Anyone having an interest in one of these offices or having questions on the responsibilities of the office, please call me directly at 610-678-4590 or e-mail me at shamokin71@aol.com.**

Len Weckel is planning and coordinating a soup kitchen at the Kennedy House for the weekend of November 20-21. The Soup Kitchen is now allowing sit in dining, but also allowing the organizations the option of staging either a sit-in or to go meal. Covid-19 guidelines will be still intact to protect our volunteers, and guidelines are

subject to change as this pandemic pans out for the rest of the year. Many volunteers will be needed to accomplish the soup kitchen activities. Please consider some volunteer time to help feed the needy of our community.

As the Christmas holiday season approaches, thoughts of having a Christmas party will be considered? We would like your opinion on whether, or not to have a party or forgo one for this year due to the uncertainty of Covid. This will be decided on at our October meeting. Another Christmas goodwill event our division started two years ago was a Christmas toy drive for local Catholic churches. The distribution of our last year toys was a very inspirational Christmas goodwill gesture! Many children and families benefited from our toy distribution to area churches. Also, there has been some discussion of staging a small Christmas party for one of the local Catholic Churches this year. A new community charity concept for our division, which needs further discussion and planning.

This year we will sell calendars starting in November. This could be a great holiday gift! Please consider buying a few calendars to support our charity efforts in providing food gift certificates for Christmas.

Hopefully this newsletter finds you and your family healthy and Covid-19 free. If anyone knows of a brother in need or sick, please contact us. Uncertainty still looms around us on predictions of increasing positive cases for the Fall, pending restrictions of activity, and warnings to continue social distancing and wear masks. Stay safe and healthy by following the commonsense CDC guidelines to prevent Covid-19 infection. I hope to see you at our October meeting!

Yours in Friendship, Unity and Christian Charity,
Kerry Williard, President

MEMBERSHIP

All members are reminded that membership fees for 2021 and/or 2022 are now being accepted. Dues remain at \$25.00 per year. You can forward dues to:

Joseph G. McCarthy, Financial Secretary
St. Brendan's Division #1,
437 Elmer Circle
Reading, Pa. 19605-9116

Please make all checks payable to AOH. Div. 1 Berks. For information on dues payments call Joe McCarthy at 610-927-5224. All inquiries will be held in strictest confidence.

As you by now know the division Financial Secretary is now responsible for the direct input of data. Member information, registration of new members, withdrawal

information and updating address, phone numbers and e-mail addresses must be completed before they will issue membership cards for the coming year. The National Secretary has requested that all changes or corrections be completed no later than the middle of November. We ask you to please, check your membership card and notify me a.s.a.p. if changes are needed in address, phone numbers (land & cell) and email addresses. In addition, all members who have served in the Military, if your card does not signify that you are a veteran, please supply me with your branch of service and dates of service and an updated card will be supplied.

As you may have noticed, the National Office is sending out direct e-mail notices concerning member participation in video conferencing and issues of importance asking for your input in addition to mailing the Hibernian Digest every other month. So, it is very important we have updated information on hand.

POST PANDEMIC NEWS

Now that the threat of Coronavirus has somewhat abated, despite the rise of concern over the **Delta** variant and possibly the **Mu** variant, we are doing what we can to get things back to normal. We have resumed in person meetings on the second Wednesday of the month. To make it more appealing, for those who have trouble driving at night, we have moved our starting time up to 7:00pm, which will have our meetings concluded while there is still some daylight. Depending on meeting agenda, meeting should last no more than an hour or less.

As mentioned in our President's message beginning in October, we will have a more permanent meeting place at St. Ignatius Loyola Parish School. The meeting room reserved is in the school building across from the church. The parking lots are between the school and church. The meetings will continue to meet the **second Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm**, and the dates for the remaining year are **10/13, 11/10, and 12/08**.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Prayers are requested for following person who have requested to be listed in our prayer list. Included in the list are AOH members, family of members and members of the LAOH, Berks County: Joanne Marnell, wife of Brother Joe Marnell, Deacon John Murphy, Henry and Eleanor Trexler, Michael Riley, Henry & Rita Mullen, Kathleen Fink, Julie Miller, Mary Collins, John Mackey, Mary DeMarco, Charles Fritz, Leontine Williard, wife of President Kerry Williard, Dennis Mulligan, Doug Carlson, Carey Carlson, Teri Brennan Carlson, Terry Morrison, Betsy Paolini, Carolyn Healey, Shay Mulligan and all members in need of prayers.

Special prayers are asked for the following deceased members and their families: Dr. Richard Flannery, Kathleen Creed, Joseph P. Riley, Craig Wolfe, Clare Flannery and all the deceased members of the AOH-LAOH of Berks County.

COMING EVENTS

10/13/21 General Membership Meeting
11/10/21 General Membership Meeting
11/11/21 Veteran's Day
11/20-21/21 Kennedy House Soup Kitchen Duty
11/25/21 Thanksgiving Day
12/08/21 General Membership Meeting
12/25/21 Christmas Day
01/12/22 General Membership Meeting
01/21/22 Right to Life March in Wash. D.C.
02/09/22 General Membership Meeting
03/02/22 Ash Wednesday - Lent begins
03/09/22 General Membership Meeting
03/17/22 St. Patrick's Day
04/13/22 General Membership Meeting
04/15/22 Good Friday
04/17/22 Easter Sunday

NEWSLETTER

If we have learned anything from the recent pandemic, it is the necessity to keep the avenues of communication open when we lose our ability to meet regularly. This newsletter is our main source of communicating with you as well as the National Hibernian Digest mailed every other month, so it is of great importance that keep you informed as to what plans are being made with you, the member in mind.

As with all things the cost of putting our newsletter out quarterly keeps rising with no end in sight. We direct you to the list of supporters on the last page of our newsletter. Thanks to their support our newsletter is made possible. If you would like to join our list of supporters for the first time, our rates remain the same \$12 for patron ads, and \$50 for business card ads.

BIRTHDAY GREETINGS

The names of members who are celebrating birthdays during the next two months are listed below. We have acquired the information from our membership applications, so if there are any corrections or errors please advise.

OCTOBER

6th Joseph P. George
18th James C. Burns
25th Fr. William Campion
12th Msgr. Francis Schoenauer

NOVEMBER

5th Patrick T. Barrett
11th Henry Trexler
30th Leonard J. Weckel
27th Robert J. Houlihan

DECEMBER

3rd Timothy Antosy
6th Henry J. Mullen
7th Joseph M.P. Marnell
8th Michael T. McFadden
13th Patrick H. Donahue
19th James E. Miller, JR
20th Kerry Willard

28th John J. Connors

MEETING NIGHT Just a reminder that St. Brendan's Div.#1 has changed our meeting to the second Wednesday of each month. For the past 40 years we had been meeting on the second Friday, however due to a drop in membership attending meetings we decided that perhaps changing to Wednesday would be more acceptable and increase member participation. We encourage all members who may be interested to join us.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Are you aware that St. Brendan's Division #1 is available on several social media platforms? Listed are the addresses where we can be found:

Facebook - <https://www.facebook.com/aoh.stbrendans>

St Brendan's Website - www.berkscoaoh.com

National AOH Website - www.aoh.com

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Have you ever considered running for an office in St. Brendan's? If so, now is the time to give it some serious thought. We are urging our members to give the idea some serious thought!

We need an infusion of new officers if we are to survive. Not that the current officers are doing something wrong, it is just that new ideas, and new faces helps breathe new life and many of our officers have been around a long time and for health reasons some of us would welcome the opportunity to see our division explore new horizons. At the same time our experience would provide assistance to our replacements as our division progresses into the future.

Come October we will be opening nominations for the following offices: President, Vice-President, Recording Secretary, Financial Secretary, Treasurer, Standing Committee Chair, Marshal and Sentinel. There are also several officers that are appointed by the President. So, if interested, please contact any officer re. questions and duties of officers. It can prove to be a very rewarding experience!

IRISH HISTORY

SAD SEPTEMBER AND A SONG

By Mike McCormack National Historian

One of Ireland's most enduring songs was first published in 1843 in the Young Irelander newspaper, *The Nation*, under the title *Clan Connail War Song*. Its words tell of a prolonged struggle which started in 159 and is recognized today as the last stand that Ireland made as a nation under her own laws. Led by Red Hugh O'Donnell, in alliance with the great Ulster Chieftains Hugh O'Neill, and Hugh Maguire, the struggle became *the Nine Years War*, and their opponent was none other than, Queen Elizabeth I.

The O'Donnells were clan chieftains of Tyr Connail (Donegal). Red Hugh, heir to the Chieftainship was captured by the British when just a boy of 16 and held in Dublin Castle as a hostage to insure Clan Connail's obedience. After 4-1/2 years in captivity, he dramatically escaped in January 1592 with Hugh and Art O'Neill - the only prisoners to ever escape Dublin Castle. They scrambled into the snow-covered Wicklow mountains where Leinster chieftain Fiach McHugh O'Byrne found O'Donnell near frozen to death holding the lifeless body of Art O'Neill. O'Byrne nursed the young prince back to health and sent him home. Red Hugh's escape sent a thrill through all Ireland as messenger rode north, south, east, and west with the news that the heir of Tyr Connail was safe.

Once back in Donegal, Red Hugh accepted the hereditary title of *The O'Donnell* and made an alliance with the two other great northern Chieftains, Hugh Maguire and Hugh O'Neill. For the next nine years, the three Hughs of Ulster decimated the queen's army in Ireland. They were a national force of 1,000 horse-soldiers and 7,000 foot-soldiers at a time when the entire English force in Ireland was less than 2,000. In 1596, O'Neill swept through the north and each blow was echoed by O'Donnell and Maguire in the west.

In 1598, a reinforced English army of 4000 foot and 300 horse arrived to capture The Maguire's fort at Enniskillen. The Irish met them on the Callan River at the Yellow Ford, and what happened next had never happened before in Ireland. On August 14, the English were outmaneuvered, outgunned and outfought. It was not the former undisciplined martial style of traditional Irish foes; the recognition of Irish supremacy caused panic among the English troops. The Battle of Yellow Ford resulted in 3,000 English casualties and the loss of all arms and supplies. More than a victory, it was a national triumph. The Queen's army had been destroyed; she was not on the brink of losing Ireland after Yellow Ford; she'd lost it and would spend a fortune to regain it.

In 1599, she sent Lord Essex with 16,000 troops. He foolishly lost much of his force chasing Fiach MacHugh O'Byrne into the Wicklow Mountains. After a comfortable summer in Dublin, he moved north in September, where he granted the Irish a truce and returned to Dublin. Elizabeth accused him of cowardice and Essex secretly returned to England to lead a rebellion against her. Essex ended up in the Tower, as Elizabeth poured men and money into the small remaining force she had in Ireland. Finally, she found the leader she'd been seeking. He was Lord Mountjoy, an efficient field commander whose campaign has never been forgotten: all things Irish - crops, homes, and cattle - were wantonly destroyed.

In September 1601, long-awaited Spanish aid arrived at Kinsale to help the Irish, but Mountjoy surrounded them. The Spanish Commander unwisely attacked, drawing the Irish into the battle prematurely to save him. The Irish

force was outnumbered, and their substantial losses included Hugh Maguire. It was the most decisive battle in Irish history; the new Irish nation was dealt a mortal blow in its infancy. The Irish retreated to Ulster as O'Donnell went to Spain to negotiate more aid. Mountjoy dispatched an agent to Spain who poisoned the 28-year old Red Hugh O'Donnell on September 10, 1602.

Mountjoy continued his 'scorched earth' policy, which tore at O'Neill since his countrymen were paying the price for his rebellion. When he heard of Red Hugh's death, he knew that all was lost. To end the nightmare, O'Neill surrendered. The old Gaelic system of law and government was broken. Then in 1607, London summoned O'Neill and O'Donnell's successor to answer charges of planning another rebellion. Knowing that English planters were ready to seize their lands, O'Neill and O'Donnell knew their destruction was at hand. Their only course was escape.

The hearts of the Irish were broken as the noblest princes of Erin - Ruari O'Donnell and his brothers; Conor Maguire, brother of the slain Hugh; and Hugh O'Neill and his three sons - sailed from Lough Swilly in French ships on September 14, 1607. They were followed by almost 100 other Chieftains in what became known as The Flight of the Earls. The last Irish defense against English tyranny went with them.

Three of Ireland's great tragedies: the Spanish landing in 1601 which precipitated the battle of Kinsale, the poisoning of Red Hugh O'Donnell in 1602, and the Flight of the Earls in 1607, all took place in the sadness of September. But the memory of Red Hugh, and what might have been, lived on. In fact, his memory remained so cherished by his countrymen that over 200 years later, when the Clan Connail War Song was first published, it immediately became one of Ireland's most popular songs. It remained a favorite through the years, and when the new Irish government was selecting a national anthem, it came a close second to the Soldiers Song. That it still holds a place in the hearts of the Irish around the world, is evidenced by the fact that it was adopted by America's largest Irish organization, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, as their official song, and so it remains today under its more popular title of **O'Donnell Abu**.



SOUP KITCHEN

We once again have the opportunity, to serve our community by operating the St. Peter's Soup Kitchen at the Kennedy House on Spruce St. in Reading. As we all know last year was a change in how we had to serve meals due to the Covid restrictions. We have been advised that those restrictions have been altered whereby the volunteer organization has a choice to serve a n on premise meal or continue with the pre-bagged meal we served last year.

No matter the choice we make, we are in dire need of volunteers to help prepare. either a hot meal or a prepared to-go meal. Please consider volunteering a few hours on either Saturday or Sunday, it sure would be appreciated.

Vice-President Len Weckel is once again coordinating our activity, and all are requested to contact Len and offer your services. He will establish a work schedule based on the number of volunteers who contact him. This year's date is November 20th and 21st from approximately 9am- 12 or 1pm. If you can help, please contact Len at BRYNLEN@aol.com

CHRISTMAS TOY DRIVE

As successful as last year's Toy Drive was, St. Brendan's Division #1 has decided to continue our efforts again this year. Our President Kerry Williard reported that the Toy drive was really appreciated by the recipients of the gifts donated and well received by the schools and families benefited.

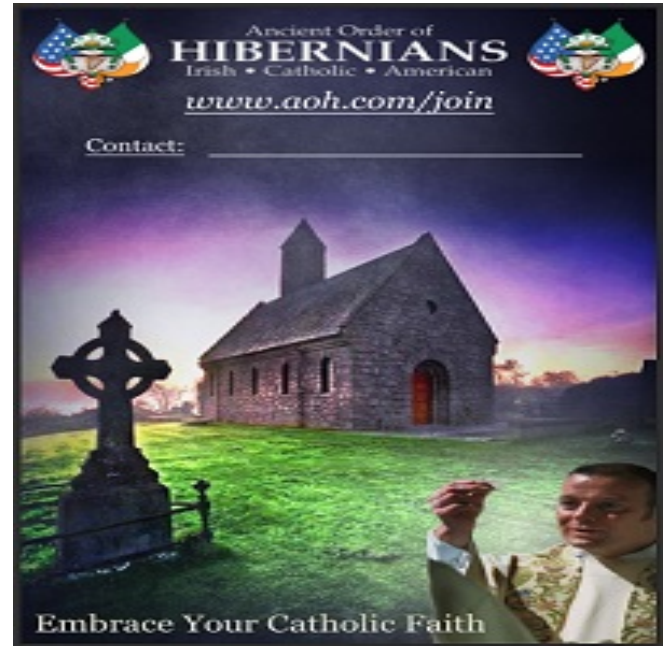
In the future, anyone wanting to donate a gift or monetary donation can do so at our meetings during October and November. We realize that there are many other Toy drives, however please remember, these gifts go to Catholic schools and parishes in our area only.

For questions re. donations and how the gifts are donated please contact President Kerry Williard at the following address shamokin71@aol.com.

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

As with any organization, membership is the lifeblood of the organization. We at St. Brendan's Division #1 are no different. We are in dire need of new members. Over the past four years we have been lucky to maintain our members and replace some of the leaders who have passed away. But the time has come that we have to increase our numbers if we are to continue our mission to keep our History, Culture and traditions alive in Berks County. We ask all members to Talk to neighbors, family members, or acquaintances who meet the qualifications for membership, about joining our ranks. Remember, to qualify for membership your must be Irish by Descent on either parent's side, at least sixteen years of age, and a practicing Roman Catholic. If you need assistance, please contact any officers or Brother Tom

Healey who has accepted the role of organizer of our division.



DIVISION CALENDARS

In an effort to bolster our division finances, and fund our charitable efforts and community activities, we operate a monthly calendar a few months a year as a fundraiser. We do this as an effort to maintain our low membership fees. For forty years we have operated this way and have been successful while other division have much higher fees to just exist. For this reason, we rely on you our membership to support these activities. The monies raised from Calendar sales, approximately three time yearly, brings in nearly \$2000 which goes to support our Hunger programs, Charitable donations and maintain our ability to keep you apprised of our activities.

Our next calendar will be out shortly for the month of December. They sell for \$10 and are good for the month they are issued, and each contain four three-digit numbers which are drawn nightly for exact match of the daily number. For availability of calendars and questions please feel free to contact any officers or myself at jgmccjr@comcast.net.

AOH CHRISTMAS APPEAL & "10" CLUB AOH

Each year we participate in the Annual "10 Club" sponsored by the Freedom for All Ireland Committee of the AOH in America. Our chairperson, the National Director for the Freedom for All Ireland Campaign asks each member to donate \$10, which is used to support the families and activities in the North of Ireland. Naturally the monies are used to make Christmas a little brighter for needy families, as well as charitable giving to various organizations in Northern Ireland who are working to maintain peace and stability in that part of Ireland. Please consider sharing with us this year when asked! Remember the third principle of our preamble in the Constitution &

By Laws state the purpose of our organization is "to aid and advance by all legitimate means the aspirations and endeavors of the Irish People for complete and absolute independence, promoting peace with justice and unity for all Ireland."

All donations are greatly appreciated and should be mailed to Joe McCarthy 437 Elmer Circle, Reading, PA 19605 please make all checks payable to AOH Div. #1 Berks.

ANNUAL CHRISTMAS PARTY

In the near future a decision on whether to plan our annual Christmas Party this year will be made at our October meeting.

Last year was cancelled due to Covid-19 protocols and with the Delta variant making it a public nuisance, it will be up to you to let it be known of your desire to participate if we make plans. Let us know of your intent.

VETERAN'S DAY



Please remember that Veteran's Day is just around the corner. If it wasn't for their sacrifices, we couldn't enjoy the freedoms we so

freely take for granted. Please pray for those who never returned and lie in foreign lands.

This year, more than ever, with the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, our nation is remembering the nearly 2,600 troops who paid the full sacrifice, as well as the nearly 60,000 wounded veterans of that conflict.

As a proud member of the American Legion much is owed to the men and women who sacrificed everything to defeat evil and should never be forgotten. Strengthened by their courage, heartened by their valor, and borne by their memory, let us stand for the ideals for which they lived and died.

What began as a proud force of 16 million American volunteer citizens who heroically defended our nation against the greatest threat to freedom the world has ever known, has now dwindled to a little more than 400,000. When we awake tomorrow, another 372 of our surviving WW11 veterans will join their brethren who have perished on the battlefield or in our own communities. It is feared that in ten short years they will all be gone. It is the mission of the American Legion that they will not be forgotten.

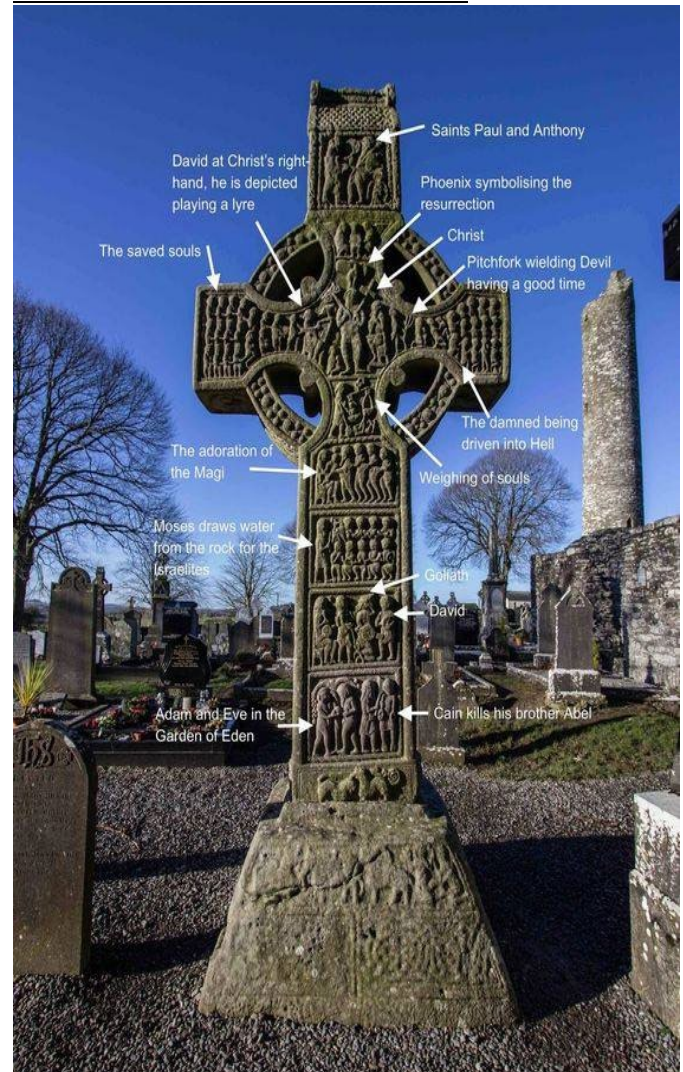
What is a veteran? Some veterans bear visible signs of their service: a missing limb, a jagged scar, a certain look

in the eye. Others may carry the evidence inside them: a pin holding a bone together, a piece of shrapnel in the leg, or perhaps another sort of inner steel: the soul's ally forged in the refinery of adversity. Except in parades, however, the men and women who have kept America safe wear no badges or emblem. You can't tell a vet just by looking.

Who is a vet? He/she is the cop on the beat who spent six months in Saudi Arabia, sweating two gallons a day making sure the armored personnel carriers didn't run out of fuel. He could be the barroom loudmouth, dumber than five wooden planks, but whose overgrown frat-boy behavior is outweighed a hundred times in the cosmic scales by four hours of exquisite bravery near the 38th parallel.

So, remember, each time you see someone who has served our country, just lean over and say, "Thank You." That's all most people need, and in most cases, it will mean more than any medals they could have been awarded or were awarded. Two little words that mean so much, "Thank You".

CELTIC CROSS AT MONASTERBOICE



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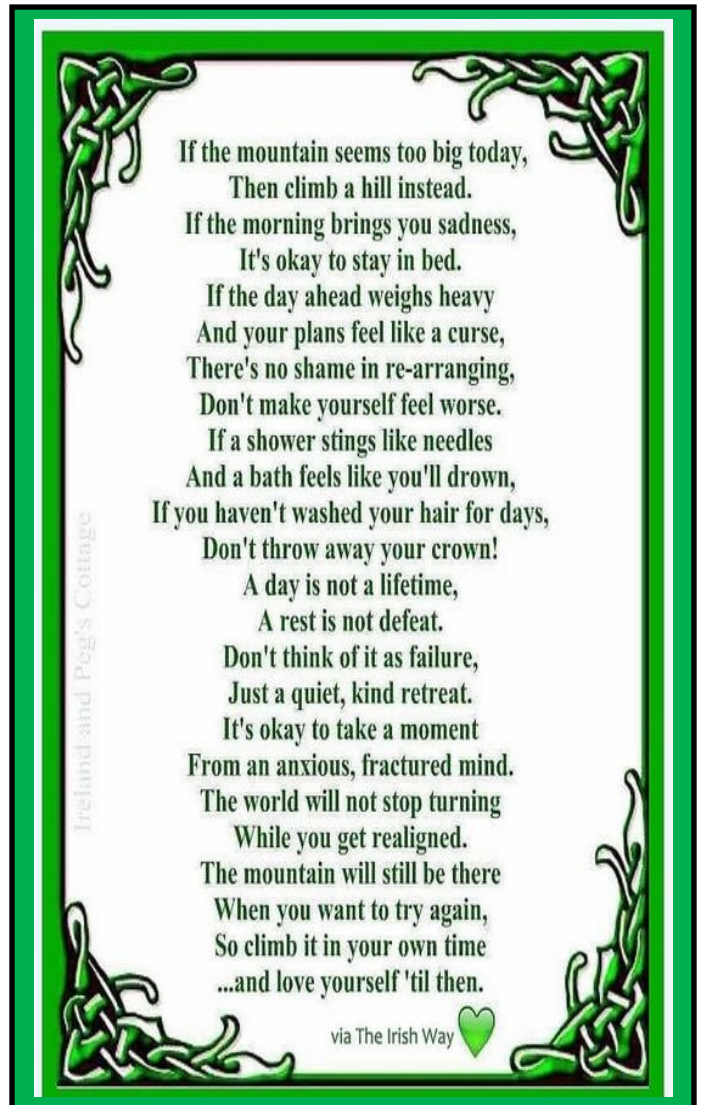
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04/21



HAPPY HALLOWEEN



HAPPY THANKSGIVING



**FROM THE
Officers and members of
St. BRENDAN'S DIV. #1
BERKS COUNTY, PA**