

The Newsletter

September 2012



Young people from Tambwe in Rwanda carrying freshly harvested pineapples

The Tambwe farmers' co-operative involves 13 families who work around ten hectares of land. Pineapple growing has been a great success, providing incomes that allow all the children from the families to attend primary school.

One-half of the money raised by the bishop's vintage run through the diocese of Cashel and Ossory will go to the diocese of Shyogwe to support the Ruyumba model farm, where members of communities will learn livestock rearing and crop growing skills, and to educate people about fruit growing, to allow other communities to develop like Tambwe.

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

Annatrim, Borris-in-Ossory, Lacca, Mountrath, Roskelton, Seir Kieran.

Rector's Letter

Clergy in rural parishes don't often get the chance to hear anyone else preaching. Perhaps it's because such opportunities are rare that I hope to hear something worthwhile when the odd moment comes along that I don't have to listen to myself.

During the summer, there were moments when I heard the worst and the best of preaching.

The worst was when I heard a sermon on John the Baptist. "Where would Jordan's banks be today?" asked the preacher, "Would they be sitting in a coffee shop drinking a latte?" If I had been a stranger in the church, I would have got up and left; the preacher had simply refused to understand what it meant for John the Baptist to be the person he was.

John went out to the Jordan and preached in the open air because he was turning his back on the society of his time; he thought that society was corrupt and sinful. John was the sort of man who would have been asked to leave a polite coffee shop. He is wild and outspoken and it costs him his life. A preacher pretending John was someone who would sit in a coffee shop and drink a cup of latte coffee flies in the face of all we know about John.

The best of preaching came from the Venerable Alan Synott at the institution service of the Revd Michael Stevenson, the new rector of Bunclody. Alan preached on God's choice of people for tasks, using the story of Samuel anointing the young David as king following the death of Saul. The story, and the preacher, emphasised that God does not judge by outward appearances, God judges by what is in a person's heart. It was a sermon that was clear and simple and that made a plain point.

In all of us, there is always a temptation to be like the first preacher; to try to fit God into our way of seeing the world, to pick the bits of God that suit us and to ignore the bit that don't. We all like things our own way .

There are times when we need to take seriously Alan Synott's words about God seeing beyond the outward appearances, about God seeing what is in our hearts. A God who is not aware of all the things we are thinking—the bad stuff as well as the good—would not be much of a God.

Each time we meet for Holy Communion, we acknowledge that God is not someone who fits in with us; he is a God who knows what we are like—and he expects us to change. Next time we say the Collect for Purity, it should make us think.

Almighty God, to whom all hearts are open, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hidden; Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love you, and worthily magnify your holy name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

God bless.



PS. With the help of Mr Ivor Clegg, we are going to try to develop a new look newsletter—all contributions, welcome!

The Bishop's Vintage Tour

Bishop Michael is undertaking a vintage pilgrimage through the diocese to raise money for two Bishops' Appeal projects in Africa. The Rector visited one of these last year – the training farm in Rwanda supported by CMS – and hopes to return there in November.

Our harvest offerings this year will go to support the projects, and we hope that the proceeds of the first two of the services might be presented to the bishop on 20th September as he travels through the parishes. We need volunteers, with suitable vehicles, to transport him from Wheeler's farm on the Ballyfin road, to the border of Offerlane and Aghaboe parishes near Cuddagh.

The timetable is:

10.30 Portlaoise and Ballyfin Union
12.00 Clonenagh Group
13.30 Rathdowney Union
15.00 Abbeyleix & Killermogh Union
16.30 Stradbally Union

The projects are:

CMS Ireland: Shyogwe Diocese, Rwanda

For most people living in Rwanda, agriculture provides them with the means to survive. As part of their commitment to holistic mission and as a reflection of their motto 'A holy soul in a healthy body', the Diocese of Shyogwe, are seeking to develop their demonstration farm, based at Ruyamba. Through this institution the diocese will provide training to local farmers to ensure that they are able to increase their yields, form cooperatives and provide income for their families. Practical education providing practical skills.

Your support will enable the diocese to undertake some much needed refurbishment at the centre and will help towards paying training costs. This training will include advice on crop diversification, ensuring a stable income all year round for the farmer.

The support from Ireland will be absolutely crucial as Shyogwe Diocese develops the work of the farm, providing education for life and hope for tomorrow for some 10,000 people living in Rwanda.

USPG Ireland: The Diocese of Swaziland

The Diocese of Swaziland has oversight of 26 Anglican schools, with an average roll of 450 students, half of whom are classed as orphans and vulnerable children. 75% of these schools have little or no electricity supply, nor a regular, reliable source of running water. As many schools are situated in very remote areas many children walk more than 5km to reach school and it becomes hard for schools to attract and retain staff. There is no possibility of meetings between staff and principals of schools, but as many schools are struggling with the same issues, they would benefit from the advice and experience of peers.

Your support will help the diocese hold a training event for school principals, allowing them to share together, receive training and plan solutions for the common problems they face. Secondly, money raised will be used to carry out a survey of the state of school buildings and then cover the subsequent costs of repairs and upgrading as required.

Parish Notes

Harvest Festivals

Our harvest festival season begins on Sunday, 16th September when we shall be welcoming the Revd Ruth Noble as our preacher at Seir Kieran and Borris in Ossory. Last year, there was a clash of dates with a neighbouring parish, so this year we have switched around the services, we shall be giving thanks in Seir Kieran at 4 pm and at Borris in Ossory at 7 pm.

The harvest festival service at Lacca is traditionally one of the biggest events in our calendar. It takes place this year on Sunday, 7th October at 4 pm. Mervyn Tomb from the Faith Mission will be our speaker and we hope for a very large congregation.

Following the summer that has passed, and in a world filled with want, it is appropriate that everyone should be present to give thanks for what we have.

Eco-toilets

We are in the process of placing eco-toilets at Lacca and Annatrim churches. Problems of location and the cost of water, septic tanks, etc, meant conventional toilets were not an option. We are grateful to Michael Elliott and John Hancock for going to Dublin to check out the composting toilets we are installing. One wonders if there is a Green prize to be won for having such toilets?

Holiday Care

The Rector is in south-west France, just north of Biarritz on holiday for nineteen days – Monday, 17th September until Friday, 5th October. Dr Stanley Monkhouse will look after Portlaoise Hospital calls and Canon Patrick Harvey will look after other calls.

Bible Series

Our Wednesday evening series on the Bible began back in June and concludes this month. We were very pleased to welcome Bishop Michael as our speaker when we looked at the Gospels on 8th August. The two remaining dates in the series are Wednesday, 5th September, when we shall look at the General Letters (Saint James to Saint Jude) and Wednesday, 12th September, when we conclude by looking at the Revelation to Saint John. The services are Holy Communion with a sermon of twenty minutes and are at 8 pm.

Attendances

Sunday congregations in our churches for the period January-June 2012 were the following averages:

Seir Kieran	12
Borris in Ossory	19
Roskelton	20
Lacca	30
Annatrim	31
Mountrath	35

This approximates to a total attendance of 117 people on the first and third Sundays and 78 on the second and fourth Sundays – there is considerable room for improvement.

Offerlane Sunday School?

We have around twenty children in Offerlane parish at the moment and, now we have toilets arranged, it would be good if we were able to establish a Sunday School in the new year. If it ran for half an hour before church each Sunday and we had two volunteers to lead it each week - the demands would not be great. Do think about it!

Clonenagh National School

This year we welcome new pupils; Keisha, Stephanie & Rooksanah Ohens, Freda & Noelle Byrne Dwane, Ciara Peavoy, Luiza Kazakevica, Oluwatomi Orelaja, and Joshua Dempsey.

We also send best wishes to our outgoing sixth class as they begin a new journey in their education; Rachel Honner, Jayne Caldbeck, Laetitia Wrest, Tara St Leger, Dylan Mulhall, Wesley Senior, Adam McCormack & Fionn Marum.

We welcome Ms Andrea Downes to our staff as our new learning support teacher from September 2012.

As the time draws near for our Parents Association to rotate I wish to thank our soon to be outgoing committee for all their dedication and commitment in raising much needed funds for our school and pupils. The committee was chaired by Evelyn Bennett with members Jillian Hayes, Catherine Russell Jacob, Nicola Walsh, Simone Cooper, Margaret Parkinson, Joe Shirley and Noel Wrest.

As you may be aware building works continue at the school and we look forward to a new mainstream classroom and storage room. The school has been very fortunate given recent years to receive funding for same and thus we are grateful to be in this position as we continue to endeavour to develop our school in the educational interests of our current and future pupils.

School re-opens on Friday 31st August.

~Ms Stone, Principal

GFS

Mountrath Girls' Friendly Society begin a new year on Friday, 14th September at 7.15 pm at the Parochial Hall. Our last year was very successful and we look forward to a good year ahead.

Mothers' Union

All members of the Mothers' Union are invited to attend a service to celebrate "Your Gifts" which will be held in St Michael & All Angels Church, Abbeyleix on Friday 14th September 2012 at 7.30pm. The speaker will be Vivian Kityo, General Trustee of Mothers' Union from Kampala, Uganda. A cake per car please.

This evening will be the branch's meeting for September and it is hoped as many as possible will attend.

Helen Thompson

After an illness borne with great spirit and dignity, Helen Thompson of Kilmurray, Stradbally, and formerly of The Castle, Borris in Ossory, died on 23rd July. Following prayers at the Thompson family home, Helen's funeral service took place at Aghaboe Church and Helen was laid to rest in the adjoining churchyard. Our condolences to John and all the Thompson family circle in their time of sadness.

Holy Baptism

Daniel Croke of Portlaoise was welcomed into the church through the sacrament of Holy Baptism at Lacca Church on Sunday, 5th August 2012

Items for the October 2012 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY September 19th AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 4th Sunday, September 23rd.

PLEASE make your item as ready for publication as possible, and most importantly, please ensure that you spell names correctly.

Ideally, items should be submitted by e-mail to- newsletter@clonenagh.com

Otherwise to- Ivor Clegg, Cloncourse, Mountrath, Co. Laois. 057-8621277/087-2522162

This Newsletter and many older editions can be downloaded directly from www.clonenagh.com

Smiles



I think it refers to the Olympic Motto – not, unfortunately, to his actual sermon

Mother to young daughter after first day at school: “Well, dear, what did they teach you today?”

Daughter: “Not much. I’ve got to go back again tomorrow.”

A second year student explaining to a first year student how to write essays: “When you take stuff from one writer, it’s plagiarism, but when you take it from many writers, it’s called research.”

A burglar had entered a clergyman’s house at midnight, and was confronted by the clergyman. Drawing his gun, he threatened: “If you move, you’re dead. I am looking for money.”

Did you try to contact someone over the summer and get one of those annoying ‘out of office’ messages, like:

1. I am currently out of the office at a job interview and will reply to you if I fail to get the position. Please be prepared for my mood.

2. You are receiving this automatic notification because I am out of the office. If I was in, chances are you wouldn’t have received anything at all.

3. Thank you for your e-mail. Your credit card has been charged £5.99 for the first 10 words and £1.99 for each additional word in your message.

4. Thank you for your message, which has been added to a queuing system. You are currently in 352nd place, and can expect to receive a reply in approximately 19 weeks.

5. I will be out of the office for the next two weeks for medical reasons. When I return, please refer to me as Lucille instead of Steve.

“Let me put on a light, and help you,” said the clergyman, “I’ve been looking for money around here for ages, and not had any success.”

Sergeant: Why is it important not to lose your head in an attack?

Recruit: Because that would leave me with no place to put my helmet.

And as the US presidential election draws closer:

American teacher to students: “Be diligent and steadfast, and you will succeed. Take the case of George Washington, our first ever president. Do you remember my telling you of the great difficulty that George Washington had to face? The big problem that could have been the end of his political career?”

“Sure,” said a student. “He couldn’t tell a lie.”

Church of Ireland News

Archbishop retires this month

The Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, the Most Reverend Alan Harper, OBE will retire on Sunday, 30th September 2012.

Archbishop Harper, who is 68, has been a bishop for 10 years having served as Bishop of Connor from 2002 to 2007; he was elected as Archbishop of Armagh in January 2007 and enthroned in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh on 16th March 2007. A former Chairman of the Historic Monuments Council for Northern Ireland, he was awarded an O.B.E. for services to Conservation in Northern Ireland in 1996.

Archbishops of Armagh are elected not by electoral colleges, comprised of bishops, clergy and lay people, as is the case with the other dioceses, but by the bishops alone. The Church of Ireland House of Bishops will meet at the beginning of October to select a successor to Archbishop Harper.

Bishops' Appeal News

Since the beginning of 2012 a substantial sum of money has been allocated by Bishops' Appeal to projects in 17 countries. The three main projects for 2012 have already received €33,000 each: Mother's Union for their literacy programmes in Burundi, Tearfund for their community development programmes in Myanmar and SAMS for their higher education and youth leadership training in Peru. Further money has been released to a food security project in Uganda (€21,650), HIV/AIDS programme in India (£19,434), two separate school building projects in Rwanda (16,672), a skills training programme in Palestine (€19,710), a community project in Ethiopia (€16,633) and a disaster preparation and

prevention project in El Salvador (€22,705).

At the late-June Bishops' Appeal committee meeting, £30,000 and €15,000 was released for poverty alleviating projects around the globe:

£10,000 was assigned to USPG Ireland for two community run HIV/AIDS education programmes in Swaziland. One of the programmes will focus on training grandmothers as educators who can then teach their grand daughters about healthy living using traditional customs and family roles to break the cycle of HIV/AIDS in the little Southern African kingdom. Currently, approximately 43% of the population is HIV positive. In order to break the poverty cycle for the upcoming generation, education on how to prevent contracting the virus is crucial.

Christian Aid received €15,000 for a project in Cambodia seeking to conserve and manage natural resources, improve food security and to enable rural communities to become more resilient to natural disasters. The money will be spent on community pump wells, ponds, fish, pigs, cows and biogas tanks.

£20,000 was allocated to Dr. Graham's Homes in India for a restoration project after a girls' boarding house was severely damaged in an earthquake. The homes have provided education and care to mainly impoverished and deprived Anglo-Indian children since 1900.

The total amount of money allocated in the first half of 2012 is therefore €223,830 and £49,434. This does not include the ongoing fundraising throughout many dioceses, not least the four dioceses with specific 'Educate for Life' link projects supporting initiatives that lift people out of poverty.

Services & Readings

September 2012						
First Sunday 2nd	<i>Song of Solomon 2: 8-13</i> <i>Psalms 45: 1-2, 6-9</i> <i>James 1: 17-27</i> <i>Mark 7: 1-8, 14-15, 21-23</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Morning Prayer	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion
Second Sunday 9th	<i>Proverbs 22: 1-2, 8-9, 22-23</i> <i>Psalms 125</i> <i>James 2: 1-10, 11-13, 14-17</i> <i>Mark 7: 24-37</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion		Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30 am Morning Prayer	
Third Sunday 16th	<i>Proverbs 1: 20-33</i> <i>Psalms 19</i> <i>James 3: 1-12</i> <i>Mark 8: 27-38</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Lacca 10.30am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion	Seir Kieran 4.00 pm Harvest Festival	Borris-in-Ossory 7.00 pm Harvest Festival
Fourth Sunday 23rd	<i>Proverbs 31: 10-31</i> <i>Psalms 1</i> <i>James 3: 13 - 4: 3, 7-8a</i> <i>Mark 9: 30-37</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer		Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer		Mountrath 11.30 am Morning Prayer
Fifth Sunday 30th	<i>Esther 7: 1-6, 9-10, 9: 20-22</i> <i>Psalms 124</i> <i>James 5: 13-20</i> <i>Mark 9: 38-50</i>	Mountrath 9.00 am Holy Communion		Annatrim 11.00am United Service		

Parish Diary

- August 31st.....Clononagh National School re-opens (see *Page 5*)
 5th Wednesday.....Bible Series (see *Page 4*)
 12th Wednesday....Bible Series (see *Page 4*)
 14th Friday.....Girls' Friendly Society (see *Page 5*)
 14th Friday.....Mothers' Union (see *Page 5*)
 17th September - 5th October...Rector away (see *Page 4*)
19th Wednesday..Closing date for October 2012 Newsletter items! (see *Page 5*)
 20th Thursday.....The Bishop's Vintage Tour (see *Page 3*)

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