

The Newsletter

January 2014

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Mrs Georgina Vanston and Dr Paddy O'Dwyer cut the cake at the Mountrath Senior Citizens' Christmas dinner

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

One evening, watching the RTE weather, I was surprised to see the forecaster talking about chaos theory; it is not the sort of thing you expect when you want to know whether it's going to be wet or dry tomorrow. Chaos theory says that one small thing happening in one small place can sometimes start a whole chain of events that might lead to consequences that no-one expected. The point being made was that it was simply not possible to predict whether it would be wet or dry more than a few days ahead because no-one knew what things would happen with the weather - a slight shift in wind direction, a slight change in the temperature, and a long-term forecast might turn out totally wrong. People trying to forecast weather weeks or months in advance were simply making guesses.

There are times when chaos theory could be used to describe the life of the church - no-one knows how things might turn out, small changes might have effects far away, or years down the road. Jesus tells his friends that the Christian life is like that, in Saint John Chapter 3 Verse 8, he says, "The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit."

One small event that occurred in November might have effects that change the whole Church of Ireland. The Revd Andrew Bowden from the Church of England came to Portlaoise on 12th November to speak to clergy from as far away as Sligo and Cork. His

theme was ordained local ministry, how the future of the church would depend upon local ministers, people from local communities proposed by those communities and ordained to work in those communities. Local ministers would continue in their ordinary day jobs, but would lead worship on Sundays and be there when people needed them. Stipendiary clergy, people like me, would become fewer and would be there to support the ordained local ministers.

When I drive around the parishes and see the former rectories at Offerlane, Seir Kieran and Borris-in-Ossory, I realize that perhaps such ideas should have been accepted years ago. Ordained local ministry would have ensured churches had their own minister without the cost of paying a stipend, which is the biggest burden on parishes.

Forecasting the future of the church is much harder than forecasting the weather, but there seem to be two options. One is to go down the gloomy way of those who say we need to close churches and to merge parishes and the other is to say that local ministers would allow strong local congregations to develop, churches at the heart of communities. Should I live another thirty years, I would love to return and see thriving local churches. Whether that happens will not be the decision of any bishop or diocese, it will be the decision of the people themselves.

Happy new year.



Church of Ireland News

Overwhelming Church Of Ireland Response To Typhoon Disaster Appeal

The Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal would like to thank all parishes and individuals who have contributed to the Philippines emergency relief fund. Nearly €120,000 and nearly £40,000 has been received by Bishops' Appeal for the Philippines and these figures are being added to daily. The money is being released to Christian Aid and Tearfund partners on the ground in different parts of the Islands and the feedback has detailed the shock and devastation of the people who, amidst their suffering, are full of gratitude for the international support.

With 13.2 million people affected by the typhoon, 4.4 million people left homeless and further millions attempting to survive despite the loss of livelihoods, it is devastation on a scale likened to that of the Tsunami in 2004. People are using what they can salvage from the vast amounts of debris to build makeshift structures and are moving as close to roads as possible so as to avail of emergency aid. Money donated is being used to provide basic food, water, water purification tablets, tarpaulin, soap, hygiene kits and medical supplies.

Bishops' Appeal again extends sincere thanks to all who have contributed and who continue to contribute.

Arrival of new Dean of Cashel

Gerald Field, who has been rector of Tullamore in the diocese of Meath and Kildare for the last 12 years will be instituted in Cashel Cathedral on 23rd February 2014 at 7 p.m. Canon Field was born in Birmingham and spent most of his formative years, education and ministry following ordination in the north west of England. He trained for ministry at King's College, London and the College of the Resurrection, Mirfield. He was ordained in 1977, serving in Blackburn, Manchester and Carlisle dioceses before moving to the Church of Ireland in 2001 to the Tullamore Union of Parishes.

Installation of Canon Harvey

The position of diocesan representative canon in St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, the national cathedral, became vacant with the retirement of Dean Knowles. The election of his successor took place at the Diocesan Synod in October. Canon Patrick Harvey, rector of Abbeyleix and Killermogh was elected, and he will be installed at evensong in Saint Patrick's Cathedral on Sunday, 19th January 2014. Patrick's grandfather, Bishop Arnold Harvey, was a former dean of St Patrick's. There are 26 seats in the chapter of Saint Patrick's Cathedral - the Dean, Precentor, Chancellor and Treasurer are joined by the Archbishop of Dublin, twelve diocesan canons, and nine canons elected by the chapter - the Rector being one of that nine.

The Archbishop of Dublin's Christmas Message 2013

The run-up to Christmas often leaves us somewhat breathless by the time we get there. Some of us are very well prepared and others of us find ourselves improvising and hoping and praying that we will somehow get there in the end. The Advent Readings have told us repeatedly to stay awake and to remain in a frame of mind where we expect eagerly something special and different to happen.

Christian teaching uses many different words to express this sense of what is special: peace and goodwill; incarnation and salvation; repentance and forgiveness. All of these point us towards what is different: the fact that God wants us to accept his friendship of us. And the person at the heart of this is Jesus.

One of the greatest gifts the modern world has given us is communication and connection with each other and

with people we will probably never meet in the flesh; yet we see and hear them on radio, television or on our phones. Worldwide communication has given us a stronger and a deeper sense of God's word and of God's world. It has given us the capacity to understand the religious commitment of people of World Faiths other than our own as well as the integrity and compassion of people of no expressed faith.

The peoples of the Philippines are uppermost in our thoughts and prayers at Christmas 2013 as are the peoples of Syria and of Gaza. They deserve a little forward planning and organization in terms of generosity and giving in this season of peace and goodwill.

*~The Most Reverend Michael Jackson
Archbishop of Dublin
17th December 2013*

Items for the February 2014 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY January 22nd AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 4th Sunday, January 28th .

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

Parish Notes

Covenant Service: There will be covenant services, committing the coming year into God's hands in each church of the five churches in which there is worship on the first Sunday of the New Year, Sunday, 5th January 2013. We hope people will start the year as they mean to continue and will be present to make New Year spiritual resolutions.

The Epiphany: The visit of the Wise Men will be commemorated with Holy Communion at Mountrath Church at 8 pm on Monday, 6th January

Plough Sunday: We continue the old tradition of the Sunday after the Epiphany being observed as Plough Sunday, the day on which there were prayers for the farming year. (Plough Sunday took its name from Plough Monday, the day when people traditionally returned to work after the Epiphany). Our service is on Sunday, 12th January at 7 pm.

Thursday Bible Club: Our Bible Club for children of National School age meets on Thursdays 16th and 30th January. The club is open to all children in the age group, no matter which school they attend. We are very grateful to Mervyn Tomb of the Faith Mission for the commitment and enthusiasm with which he leads each of the meetings.

Confirmation 2013: Our 2013 confirmation service is on Saint Peter's Day, Sunday 29th June at 11 am at Saint Peter's Church in Mountrath. Candidates are likely to come from four different schools, so it will not be possible to have preparation classes at Clonenagh National School, as we have done recently. As some parents are already coming into Mountrath to bring young people to the Bible Club, we shall have the confirmation classes in the upper room of the parochial hall on Thursday evenings when the Bible Club is meeting. Young people interested in joining should give their names to the Rector.

Gideons Speaker: Sunday, 30th December is a fifth Sunday of the month and there will be a group service in Roskelton at 11 am at which we shall welcome Mr Sam Harper from the Gideons. No-one can claim there is much else happening at eleven o'clock on the Sunday after Christmas, so we hope there will be a good congregation.

Sales: Thank you to everyone who contributed to the success of the Christmas sales for the school on Saturday, 7th December and for Clonenagh Parish the following Wednesday. We were blessed with very fine weather in early December,



Mrs Sylvia Stotesbury, chair of the Board of Management of Clonenagh National School hands a cheque for €32,000 to Mr David Bennett of the Faith Mission to purchase the former Mission Hall in Mountrath

Mission Hall: Clonenagh National School Board of Management were very pleased to be able to hand a cheque for €32,000 to Mr David Bennett of the Faith Mission to buy the former mission hall in Mountrath for development as a general purpose room for the school. The Board is very grateful to the Ossory and Leighlin Diocesan Board of Education for a grant of €20,000 towards the purchase of the hall, and to all the parents and friends who gave generously to provide the balance of the money needed to buy the building, which is ideally located for the school's purposes

Tractor run: In anticipation of a good day, thank you to all who worked for the success of the event on Saturday, 28th December

Stewardship: The Rector spoke at meetings in Abbeyleix and Bunclody in October and November on encouraging stewardship in parishes; responding to God's generosity to us by giving in accordance with what we have received and being able to pay the diocesan assessment and parochial bills in a pain free way. Weekly giving through an envelope scheme is an easier way for people to give than having col-

lections and then them being asked for a large amount in the autumn. It allows parishes a regular cash flow, taking the pressure off treasurers who often have to try to juggle funds and sometimes have to delay in paying bills because there are insufficient funds in the account. Very significantly, a well managed stewardship scheme allows parishes to recover an additional 45% on all giving by taxpayers, whether they be PAYE or self-employed – €5 a week becomes €7.25 when tax is recovered. At a time when parishes are under financial pressure, stewardship offers a way that is both Biblical and easier than the old way of doing things.

Christmas break: Canon Patrick Harvey in Abbeyleix will take calls from Saturday, 25th January until Saturday, 1st February when Dean Katharine and the Rector are away for a belated Christmas break.

Clonenagh Parish Fundraising Committee would like to thank everyone for their support throughout the year, and particularly at the recent Christmas Sale; €1300 was raised on the night.

Sustentation: Thanks to all who have paid their Sustentation, and a gentle reminder to anyone who hasn't! Please get it to Florence Peavoy as soon as possible.

Third Sunday Service: We welcome the Revd Ruth Noble, Rector of Mountmellick, as our preacher at the Third Sunday service at Lacca on Sunday, 19th January at 4 pm. We hope there will be a very good congregation to welcome the Revd Ruth and that the good attendances will continue in 2014. Tea, biscuits and chat will, of course, follow the service.

Thanks to everybody who contributed to the **Leprosy Mission boxes**, the total collected to date is €131.42.

On course: The Rector is attending a two day seminar organised by the Centre for Studies in Rural Ministry at Hawarden in North Wales on 21st -22nd January, but will have his phone with him as usual.



Services & Readings

December 2013

Christmas Eve 24th	<i>Isaiah 9: 2-7</i> <i>Psalm 96</i> <i>Titus 2: 11-14</i> <i>Luke 2: 1-20</i>	Seir Kieran 7.00pm Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 8.15pm Holy Communion	Lacca 9.30pm Holy Communion
Christmas Day 25th	<i>Isaiah 52:7-10</i> <i>Psalm 98</i> <i>Hebrews 1:1-4</i> <i>John 1: 1-14</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 10.30am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion
Fifth Sunday 29th	<i>Isaiah 63: 7-9</i> <i>Psalm 148</i> <i>Hebrews 2: 10-18</i> <i>Matthew 2: 13-23</i>	Mountrath 9.00am Holy Communion		Roskelton 11.00am Group Service

January 2014

First Sunday 5th	<i>Jeremiah 31: 7-14</i> <i>Psalm 147: 12-20</i> <i>Ephesians 1: 3-14</i> <i>John 1: 10-18</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Covenant Service	Seir Kieran 9.30am Covenant Service	Lacca 10.30am Covenant Service & Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Covenant Service	Mountrath 11.30am Covenant Service & Holy Communion
Second Sunday 12th	<i>Isaiah 42: 1-9</i> <i>Psalm 29</i> <i>Acts 10: 34-43</i> <i>Matthew 3: 13-17</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer		Mountrath 19.00pm Plough Sunday Farmers' Service
Third Sunday 19th	<i>Isaiah 49:1-7</i> <i>Psalm 40:1-12</i> <i>1 Corinthians 1: 1-9</i> <i>John 1: 29-42</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 4.00pm Evening Prayer
Fourth Sunday 26th	<i>Isaiah 9: 1-4</i> <i>Psalm 27: 1, 4-12</i> <i>1 Corinthians 1: 10-18</i> <i>Matthew 4: 12-23</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer		Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion	

Parish Diary

22nd Wednesday.....Closing date for February 2014 Newsletter items!