

The Newsletter

February 2014

Rector:

*Canon Ian Poulton,
Clonenagh Rectory,
Portlaoise Road,
Mountrath.*

Phone: 057-8732146

Diocesan Reader:

*Mabel Peavoy,
Shannon Road,
Mountrath.
Phone:057-8732331*

Parish Archivist:

*Vicky Knowles,
Clonin School,
Mountrath.
Phone: 057-8732846*



Joyce Lalor of Knocknagad
driving a Massey Ferguson 35X
in the School Tractor Run

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

Spending a Sunday morning lying on a hospital trolley was not something that ever happened to me before, and I hope it will not happen again. It seemed strange that a grazed shin should lead to the point where I needed to have intravenous antibiotics. The doctors seemed to differ about the origin of the problem, one felt it was probably a random thing, a matter of sheer chance; another thought it was possible that the infection had become established and spread because I might have become rundown and my immune system might have become depressed. The Bible offers a perspective on both explanations.

I don't believe that God ever desires anyone to suffer illness; instead there are random, chance things that overtake us. Writing in Chapter Ten of the First Letter to the Christians at Corinth, Saint Paul warns them about the temptations they may face and warns the that unexpected things can catch them out. "If you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall!" he says in 1 Corinthians 10:12.

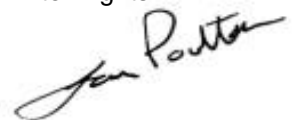
If temptations can catch us unexpectedly, then so can many other things in life, including illness. Our lives are much more certain than the lives of people in former times, when, before the days of antibiotics, even simple illnesses could prove fatal, and because of that sense of certainty, we are taken aback when things we don't expect happen. In the old Book of Common Prayer, in the Communion of the Sick, there was a note saying, "If the sick

person hath not before disposed of his goods, let him be admonished to make his Will. But men should often be put in remembrance to settle their temporal affairs whilst they are in health". If a clergyman stood in the pulpit today and talked about the need for people to make their wills, we would think him odd. We would feel more certain about our lives than those who would have first read those words, but we need to be wary of the random and the chance moments.

Perhaps being in hospital was not random or chance, but was a result of becoming rundown and unable to fight the infection. Cold and tired after a funeral the previous Tuesday, I had driven from Roscrea to Bunclody to attend a diocesan finance meeting. The Parable of the Talents in Saint Matthew Chapter 25 teaches us to use wisely and well those things God has given us, including our time and our health. The man given two Talents in the Parable would not have earned two more if he had spent one on things that were unnecessary.

Perhaps there is a need for all of us at times to look at what we do with what we have, to ask whether we are living wisely and well.

I hope to be back to full health by the beginning of February, and whether it was random chance or depressed immunity, I am not again driving to Co Wexford on cold winter nights.



Church of Ireland News

Northern Province Church of Ireland Bishops Meet With Northern Ireland's Political Leaders

The bishops from the Northern Province of the Church of Ireland had the opportunity to meet with the leaders of the five main political parties in Northern Ireland in a series of individual meetings on Wednesday 15 January 2014. These were informal discussions exploring themes of peace making, reconciliation and working together for the good of the whole community. The bishops welcomed the opportunity to meet and discuss these topics with them.

The Bishops of the Northern Province (The Province of Armagh) of the Church of Ireland are:

The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke, Archbishop of Armagh and Primate of All Ireland, The Rt Revd Harold Miller, Bishop of Down and Dromore, The Rt Revd Ken Good, Bishop of Derry and Raphoe, The Rt Revd Alan Abernethy, Bishop of Connor, The Rt Revd Patrick Rooke, Bishop of Tuam, Killala and Achonry, The Rt Revd John McDowell, Bishop of Clogher, and The Rt Revd Ferran Glenfield, Bishop of Kilmore, Elphin and Ardagh

The bishops met with the five Party leaders of the Northern Ireland Executive: Alliance; DUP; SDLP; Sinn Fein and UUP. These meetings had been planned for a number of months in order to provide an opportunity for bishops elected to the Northern Province in the last two years to meet with the political leaders.

Church Leaders Encourage Politicians To Sustain Momentum Generated By Haass Talks

Church leaders are encouraging politicians to sustain the momentum and energy generated by the Haass talks in Northern Ireland. In a joint statement from the leaders of the Roman Catholic, Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist Churches together with the Irish Council of Churches they applaud the 'strenuous and sincere efforts put in by all involved in seeking to find solutions to some of the most contentious issues we face'.

They also recognise the 'profoundly challenging' nature of the issues to be addressed but firmly believe that 'a peaceful and reconciled society is possible'.

The church leaders say that that while the deadline for the Haass negotiations may have passed, the responsibility to work for the common good remains and they encourage the Executive 'to keep going with the work that has begun so that an acceptable process may be developed'.

The leaders also make clear that the responsibility does not only lie with political leaders but is shared by every individual. 'As Christians we emphasise the value of building trust, in a spirit of generosity and forgiveness. We encourage every member of our community, church and parishes to be instruments of reconciliation and peace-building'.

Parish Notes

Bob Stanley

Funeral: Tuesday, 14th January 2014 at Borris-in-Ossory Church, Bob Stanley of Springhill. Born on Christmas Eve 1936, Bob Stanley spent his entire life in the place he loved. A farmer's son, he continued to work the land he knew from boyhood days. Bob worked hard all his life, even in the years of his supposed retirement it was rare not to find him busy doing something, though not too busy to provide a warm welcome and a cup of tea in the kitchen; he was a good friend and a good neighbour to all around him. Bob delighted in the natural world, watching the passing seasons, the growth of the crops, the flight of the birds; for him, each thing pointed to God as creator. Feeling himself part of God's creation, Bob had a sense of being part of something far greater than anyone could imagine. Reading his Bible, saying his prayers, attending church on Sundays were important things for Bob; his faith filled him with a great of hope. Even when told of his terminal illness, there was no sense of fear but a feeling of being called home.

Bob was never afraid of death; he would talk of "going up the road to Kyle", to the place where he had spent many hours working to help in its restoration. After his funeral service his mortal remains were taken up to Kyle. In the pouring rain, a man at the gate said, "happy the corpse the rain falls on". Bob would have been happy, not because he reached Kyle, but because he was certain of his place in heaven.

February Series: In the summer of 2010, we began to hold regular Wednesday evening services. The opportunity of

attending a midweek Holy Communion service was intended to encourage spiritual discipline. In a community where many members of the Roman Catholic community attend Mass every day, it was hoped to encourage the practice of weekly Communion - a practice that was part of the spiritual life of John and Charles Wesley.

Borris-in-Ossory was chosen because it was easily heated, was of a compact size, had a car park, and was on the main road.

During February, we have a short four-part pre- Lent sermon series on when we shall look at the question, "What do we really believe?"

The services will be on Wednesdays, 5th, 12th, 19th and 26th February at 8.00 pm in Borris-in-Ossory.

On Wednesday, 5th, the question will be, "what do we really believe about ministry?"

On Wednesday, 12th, "what do we really believe about worship?"

On Wednesday, 19th, "what do we really believe about church buildings?"

On Wednesday, 26th, "what do we really believe about the church?"

Confirmation Classes: Confirmation this year is in Mountrath on Sunday, 29th June at 11am. Classes between now and Easter will coincide with the Bible Club, Thursdays 13th and 27th February and March.

Select Vestry: The Select Vestry of Oflerlane Parish meets at Annatrim Church on Tuesday, 4th February at 8 pm.

GFS: Our GFS branch meets on Fridays, 7th and 21st February in the Parochial Hall at 7.15 pm. We have twenty girls in the branch this year and are grateful to our leaders for their time and commitment.

Bible Club: Our Thursday Bible Club continues in February, meeting on Thursdays 13th and 27th February. We had a total of nineteen different young people who attended the club during the autumn. It would be good if we could get everyone to attend at the same time. In a parish where our scattered community makes holding a regular Sunday School impractical, the club gives the opportunity of regular Bible teaching.

Third Sunday Service: Thank you to everyone who came along to Lacca on Sunday, 19th January to welcome the Revd Ruth Noble from Mountmellick as speaker at the service. A congregation of fifty-five people on a Sunday afternoon in January was excellent. Our Third Sunday service in February will be on Sunday, 16th February at 4 pm.

Christmas services: Thank you to everyone who supported our services at Christmas. The two hundred and forty people at the school service on 15th December was the biggest number yet and the aggregate attendance at the six Christmas Eve/Christmas Day Holy Communion services was 411; the Christmas Eve congregation of over a hundred in Lacca being of particular note. The sermon themes of "surprise" and "joy" are thoughts to carry with us all through the year.

Tractor run: Clonenagh National School Parents' Association ran a very successful tractor run from Coolrain on Saturday, 28th December with over eighty

entrants taking part in the day. We were very blessed in having clear and dry weather in the midst of the storms at the end of December.



Congratulations to Emily Dunne (nee Lalor), Camross, who recently received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Counseling and Addiction

Engagements: Christmastime questions regarding marriage resulted in the engagements of John Hargroves and Avril Williams of Castletown and of Roy Treacy of Loran and Averil Atkinson of Durrow. We wish both couples well as they prepare for their respective marriages later this year.

Thanks: Thank you to Canon Patrick Harvey for his ever attentive care of the parish during the Rector's absence at the end of January.

Condolences: Christmas Eve was a sad time as many of us gathered at Aghancon to bid farewell to Ned Whitten. We offer our condolences to the Whitten family and, in our own parishes, particularly to Jackie McBryde, secretary of the Select Vestry of Borris-in-Ossory-Seir Kieran, and Caroline Senior in Mountrath.

Plough Sunday: A congregation of eighty-four people listened to Mr Richard Codd speaking on keeping our eyes ahead and not looking back at our Plough Sunday service in Mountrath on Sunday, 12th January. Thank you to everyone who made the service possible, particularly to Mr Charlie Peavoy for again bringing along the plough to the service.

Lent 2014: A late Easter means a late start to Lent this year. Saint Ciaran's Day falls on Ash Wednesday, so there will be Holy Communion in Mountrath on Ash Wednesday morning at 10.30 am and then the first service of our Lent series in Seir Kieran that evening. The Lent services will then be in Annatrim on 12th March, Borris-in-Ossory on 19th March, Roskelton on 26th March, Lacca on 2nd April, and Mountrath on 9th April.

The **Mothers' Union** meet at Loran, home of Willie and Jean Treacy on Monday, 27th January at 8 pm when the speaker will be Ann Talbot. Last year Ann, who is a part-time farming journalist as well as a farmer, and her husband Robin published a book called "A Year On Our Farm" telling of twelve months in the life of their beef farm at Coole, Ballacolla. It promises to be a fascinating evening and everyone interested will be welcome.

Clononagh Parish Fundraising Committee meeting will be held in the Parochial hall on Tuesday 11th February at 8pm. It would be nice to see all members present at our first meeting of the new year.

South Offaly Ploughing branch will hold their annual ploughing match in Grange, Clareen on Sunday 16th of February, Commencing at 1pm. Many attractions for all the family including vintage & horse ploughing, tug of war, bouncing castle & much more. A great day out for all the family.

Clononagh National School: Enrolments for September 2014 take place now. Please contact the school on 057-8732516 or email: school@clononagh.com and an Application Form will be sent to you. Closing date for receipt of Application Forms is Friday 28th February, 2014.



World Day of Prayer Ireland

Streams in the Desert

On the 7th of March, people around the world will gather to worship together following the same order of service as prepared by the Christian women of Egypt.

In Mountrath, the service will take place in St. Fintan's Church at 8.00pm.

Earlier on the same day, a Children's Service will be held in St. Peter's Church at 10.30am.

More information and locations for other services may be found at www.wdopi.org.

Smiles

A young clergyman, fresh out of training, thought it would help him better understand the fears and temptations his future congregations faced if he first took a job as a policeman for several months. He passed the physical examination; then came the oral exam to test his ability to act quickly and wisely in an emergency. Among other questions he was asked, "What would you do to disperse a frenzied crowd?"

He thought for a moment and then said, "I would pass an offering plate."

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The Sunday school teacher was carefully explaining the story of Elijah the Prophet and the false prophets of Baal. She explained how Elijah built the altar, put wood upon it, cut the cow in pieces, and laid it upon the altar. And then, how Elijah commanded the people of God to fill four barrels of water and pour it over the altar. He had them do this four times. "Now, said the teacher, "can anyone in the class tell me why the Lord would have Elijah pour water over the cow on the altar?"

A little girl in the back of the room started waving her hand, "I know! I know!" she said, "To make the gravy!"

The Sunday School teacher was describing how Lot's wife looked back and turned into a pillar of salt, when little Jason interrupted, "My mummy looked back once, while she was driving," he announced triumphantly, "and she turned into a telephone pole!"

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A Catholic priest and a Methodist minister from two local churches were standing by the side of the road, feverishly pounding a handmade sign into the ground with a large rock. The sign read: The End is Near! Turn Yourself Around Now Before It's Too Late!

As a car sped past them, the driver yelled, "Leave us alone, you religious nuts!" A moment later, from around the curve they heard screeching tyres and a big splash. The pastor turned to the priest and asked thoughtfully: "Do you think the sign should just say 'Bridge Down'?"

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A nurse at a hospital received a call from an anxious woman. "I'm diabetic and I'm afraid I've had too much sugar today," she said. "Are you light-headed?" the nurse asked. "No," the caller answered, "I'm a brunette."



Congratulations to John Lalor, Knocknagad, on celebrating his 90th Birthday recently, surrounded by all his family.

Services & Readings

February 2014

First Sunday 2nd	<i>Malachi 3: 1-5 Psalm 24: 1-10 Hebrews 2: 14-18 Luke 2: 22-40</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>Isaiah 58:1-12 Psalm 112:1-10 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 Matthew 5:13-20</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion		Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	
Third Sunday 16th	<i>Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 119:1-8 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 Matthew 5: 21-37</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 23rd	<i>Genesis 1: 1 - 2: 3 Psalm 136 or Psalm 136: 1-9, [23-26] Romans 8: 18-25 Matthew 6: 25-34</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer		Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion	

Parish Diary

- January 27th.....Mothers' Union meeting (*page 6*)
 4th Tuesday.....Offerlane Select Vestry meeting (*page 4*)
 7th Friday.....G.F.S. (*page 5*)
 11th Tuesday.....Clonenagh Fundraising Committee meeting (*page 6*)
 13th Thursday.....Bible Club (*page 5*)
19th Wednesday.....Closing date for March 2014 Newsletter items!
 21st Friday.....G.F.S. (*page 5*)
 27th Thursday.....Bible Club (*page 5*)
 28th Friday.....Closing date for Clonenagh N.S. enrolment (*page 6*)

Items for the March 2014 Newsletter need to be with the editor by **WEDNESDAY February 19th AT THE LATEST**, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 4th Sunday, February 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

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www.clonenagh.com