

# The Newsletter

January 2015

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Mrs Georgina Vanston and Mr Paddy Darcy 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

Christmas will barely be past before the Cadbury's Creme eggs appear in the shops, and perhaps an egg is a good way to think about a new year – a new opportunity and all the possibilities that opportunity brings.

The "Irish Farmers' Journal" had a supplement on agriculture in 2015, we think ahead in our everyday lives, so perhaps we should think more about what our hope for the future of our churches might be. The three letters of "egg" can help us think about our churches in this coming year.

"E" can make us think of expectation; what do we expect in our churches? The expectation in our diocese is for further decline. At the diocesan synod the bishop talked of how many churches there were for such a small population; expect talk to grow of church closures. Is that our expectation? Why has our church got into this attitude when the church in the Bible is full of life and growth? If we are not going to take note of the church we meet in the New Testament, then we must ask ourselves what we believe the church is about.

"G" can stand for growth. Growth begins with our own faith. The church in the Bible would never have taken off without the disciples responding in faith to Jesus and then the Holy Spirit. If our faith matters enough to come to church

at Christmas, then why not Christmas and Easter? And if Christmas and Easter, why not every month? And if every month, then why not every Sunday? Like grains of barley, growth begins as something invisible, something hidden from sight, but once established it becomes something visible and something that leads to more growth. Growth starts with ourselves.

"G" can stand also for giving. Giving is about much more than what we put on the collection plate, it is about having a generous heart. God's grace, God's generosity to us, is shown in his sending of his Son Jesus to be born in Bethlehem and to die at Calvary, how much generosity do we show in response to that grace? How generous are we with our time? How prepared are we to make time to attend worship even when it doesn't suit us? How generous are we with the talents God has given us? How ready are we to step in and help with things?

In 2015, we should take our church as seriously as our farm, or our work, or our household. Expectation, growth and giving: 2015 can be a good year



# Church of Ireland News

## **The Revd Hilary Dungan Appointed Interim Chaplain of TCD**

The Revd Hilary Dungan has been appointed interim Church of Ireland Chaplain of Trinity College, Dublin, following the departure of the Revd Darren McCallig who has taken up the post of Chaplain of St Alban's in Copenhagen in the Diocese of Europe. She will occupy the post from January until June 2015.

Hilary's association with academic life at TCD began in 1989 with an evening diploma course in Biblical & Theological Studies which she undertook whilst earning her living as music teacher in Brook House School, Bray and as a church musician. The diploma was followed by a two-subject degree in Biblical & Theological Studies and Classical Civilization which led to a B.A.

Hilary then entered the Theological College and while there also attended the Irish School of Ecumenics. She was ordained to the Priesthood in St Patrick's Cathedral, Armagh, for the Curacy of St Mark's Parish, Armagh. In 2003 she was instituted incumbent of Portlaoise (Maryborough) Group of Parishes where she served until her retirement in 2011. Since then Hilary has been taking services as required, including the recent four month coverage of a rector's sabbatical, and is on the rota for mid-week services at St Ann's Church, Dawson Street. Hilary is also a

continuing education student in piano and chamber music at DIT's Conservatory of Music and Drama.

Commenting on the appointment, Archbishop Michael Jackson said: "I am delighted that the Reverend Hilary Dungan has accepted my invitation to be interim Church of Ireland chaplain of Trinity College, Dublin with effect from mid-January 2015 until June 2015. Building on the creative and pioneering work which the Reverend Darren McCallig has done while chaplain, Hilary will bring a warm personality and an open interest in people to this job along with her considerable musical capacity".

## **Archbishops' Christmas Day Message on RTE 1 TV**

The annual Christmas Day Message by the Church of Ireland and Roman Catholic Archbishops of Armagh, The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke and The Most Revd Eamon Martin, will be broadcast on RTE One Television at 12.15pm on Thursday 25th December. This year, the Archbishops' theme will be on life as a gift and building a culture of life and the message will feature interviews with those who have given and received blood and organ donations.

Following the broadcast from 12.15 to 12.30 on Christmas Day, the Archbishops' Message will also be available to view on the RTE Player.

# Parish Notes

**Holy Baptism:** On Sunday, 7th December at Saint Peter's Church, Mountrath, Ethan Peter Kavanagh of Derrymore, Mountrath.

**The Sunday after Christmas:** The Christ whom we remember arriving as a baby in Bethlehem is alive and present with us each and every day and our regular Sunday worship continues. There will be four services on Sunday, 28th December. The Rector will take the services at Seir Kieran at 9.15 am, Annatrim at 10.30 am and Mountrath at 11.30 am while Mervyn Tomb will take the family service at Lacca at 10.30 am

**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, 4th January 2015. We hope people will start the year as they mean to continue and will be present to make New Year spiritual resolutions.

**The Epiphany:** On 6th January at 8 pm at Mountrath church, there will be a service of Holy Communion to mark the visit of the Wise Men to the Infant Jesus.

**Farmers' Service:** Our annual service of prayers for the farming year and the blessing of the plough takes place on Plough Sunday, 11th January 2015, at Mountrath Church at 7 pm, when we shall welcome the Revd William Bennett, Rector of

Newcastle, Co Wicklow, as our preacher. There were eighty people at last year's Farmers' Service, so we look forward to another good crop of farmers at this year's service. Do tell friends and neighbours about the service, at the last service we welcomed people from as far away as Aghade in Co Carlow.

**Thursday Bible Club:** Our Bible Club in Mountrath had over twenty on its roll and an average attendance of 15-16 during the autumn. We are grateful to Mervyn Tomb of the Faith Mission for his work and pray it will continue to be blessed and pray for the family service he has begun at Lacca on the fourth Sunday of each month.

**Rector away:** The Rector is away from Saturday, 17th January until Saturday, 24th January, enjoying the mountain air in Austria. Hospital calls will be taken by the Revd Brian O'Rourke in Portlaoise and other pastoral calls will be taken by Canon Patrick Harvey.

**Third Sunday Service:** We welcome Sam Harper as speaker at the Third Sunday service in Lacca on Sunday, 18th January at 4 pm. There were 175 in the congregation when Sam spoke at the harvest about planting the right things in our lives, so let's have a good congregation this month. To paraphrase his harvest sermon, may he meet lots of cabbages and not Brussels sprouts!

**Good wishes:** It is good to see the church's ministry in our area being renewed. We send good wishes to the Revd Alec Purser who was introduced as priest in charge of Stradbally on Friday, 5th December, and to Nicola Rowan who was licensed as a diocesan lay reader at a service at Saint Canice's Cathedral on Sunday, 30th November. We look forward to the arrival of the Revd Brian O'Rourke as rector of Portlaoise and Ballyfin Union of parishes on Friday, 9th January and we pray for the appointment of an incumbent to Rathdowney.

**Stewardship and tax-effective giving:** Tax refunds in our group of parishes amounted to almost €15,000 and it is important that we keep up the progress. If we move to giving through planned and good stewardship of what God has given us throughout the year we can move away from the idea of the annual "bill" for "sustentation."

**Lent series 2015:** "Who are we?" is the theme of our Lent series for 2015. Inspired by Herbie O'Driscoll's hymn, "Who are we, who stand and sing?" the series will look at what it means to be God's people.

**Confirmation 2015:** Bishop Michael has chosen Annatrim as the venue for the confirmation service this year which will be on Sunday, 28th June at 11 am. People who would like to be confirmed at that service are asked to contact the Rector.

**Laois Men on the Western Front:** A four day visit to Flanders and the Somme for a tailored tour in the footsteps of men from Co Laois, April 20th- 23rd 2015. As of 22nd December, there are just four places left for a tour that includes one night in Ypres (to attend the Last Post ceremony) and two nights in Cambrai. Accommodation is in 3 Star hotels where the price includes bed and breakfast in twin or double rooms. We will be met at Brussels Airport and travel will be in two nine seater minibuses with Lieutenant Colonel Ian Gumm as our guide. The cost for the four day three night tour is £399.00 GBP per person (plus Aer Lingus flights to and from Brussels). A single supplement of £80.00 GBP will apply. Contact Ian Poulton if you are interested in joining a tour that will be a very special experience.

**Thank you** to everyone who supported the Pre-Christmas sale and made it a great success.

**Thanks** to everybody who contributed to the **Leprosy Mission boxes**, the total collected to date is €297.

*~Olga Telford*

### **Clonenagh National School Notes**

The fifth annual vintage tractor and car run organized by the Parents' Association takes place on Sunday, 28th December, departing from Sheeran's Pub in Coolrain at 1.30 pm. Do come along and support the event, which is an important fund raiser in our calendar.

Our school nativity celebration on Sunday, 14th December brought

a congregation of 240 people to Mountrath church. This was one of the biggest attendances in recent years and we are grateful to all of the staff who put so much effort into preparing for the evening.

The voluntary contribution we ask from parents is quite low compared to that asked for by other Church of Ireland schools, many of which ask for €200 or more, but because it is voluntary and not compulsory, it counts as a charitable donation and gives us the chance to raise some extra money for our school. We are going to ask parents who pay the voluntary contribution to pay the €120 contribution for the school year 2014-15 between January and June of 2015 and the €120 contribution for the school year 2015-2016 between September and December 2015. This would mean the contributions for two school years were paid in a single calendar year and that €240 would have been paid during 2015. If people were prepared to give €10 on top of that, it would bring the total up to €250 for the year and allow the school to claim back income tax on donations given by those who are income tax payers - at a rate of 45 cents for each Euro given. If there were thirty families who were prepared to give €10 on top of their voluntary contributions in 2015, the school might receive more than €3,000 extra in tax refunds from the Revenue Commissioners. A letter will be going out in the new year.

### **Mothers' Union Notes**

On Friday, 16th January at 8 pm, the Revd Margaret Sykes will be introduced as priest in charge of New Ross and commissioned as diocesan president in succession to Mrs Maureen Lanigan, Driving from Co Laois to New Ross on a Friday evening in January is probably not something many people are going to contemplate, but do remember the Revd Margaret in your prayers.

Our branch meets in the parochial hall on Monday, 26th January at 8 pm when Mrs Valerie Cooper will give a talk and demonstration on aloe vera.

There will be a diocesan Mothers' Union lunch in the Hotel Kilkenny at 1 pm on Monday, 2nd February. If you would like to attend, please let Jean Treacy know, 085 707 4805.

In March, our speaker will be Miriam Poulton, a fourth year medical student at Trinity College, Dublin, who will talk about medical work in Kenya, where she worked in a clinic in summer 2014.

### **Mountrath Local History Society**

Interested in local history? Would you like to help preserve local stories for future generations?

Mountrath Library has set up a local history society and the next meeting will be on Thursday, 15th January at 6 pm in the library. For more information, ask at the library desk or call Aoife at 057 875 6378.

# Smiles

## Scottish humour for the New Year

At an auction in Glasgow a wealthy American announced that he had lost his wallet containing £10,000 and would give a reward of £100 to the person who found it.

From the back of the hall a Scottish voice shouted, "I'll give £150!"

\* \* \*

A Scots boy came home from school and told his mother he had been given a part in the school play. "Wonderful," says the mother, "What part is it?" The boy says "I play the part of the Scottish husband!" The mother scowls and says: "Go back and tell your teacher you want a speaking part."

\* \* \*

Jock was digging peat at his croft when a passing American tourist asks, "How much land do you have here?" "About two acres" Jock replies. "You know back home it takes me a day to drive around my ranch!" the American boasts. "Aye", says Jock "I once had a car like that."

\* \* \*

Sandy came into the office an hour late for the third time in one week and found the boss waiting for him. "What's the story this time. Sandy ?" he asked sarcastically. "Let's hear a good excuse for a change." Sandy sighed, "Everything went wrong this morning. The wife decided to drive me to the quay. She got ready in ten

minutes, but then the ferry didn't turn up. Rather than let you down, I swam across the river, ran over the mountain, borrowed a bicycle and cycled the 20 miles through the glen to this office."

You'll have to do better than that. Sandy, "said his boss, disappointed. "No woman can be ready in ten minutes."

\* \* \*

Dr. McGregor was attending a dinner party and watching the host expertly carve and slice the large turkey for his guests. "How am I doing. Doc? Pretty good? I think I'd make a really good surgeon," said the host proudly.

When the host was through piling up the sliced turkey on the serving platter, the good doctor observed, "Anyone can take them apart. Now let's see you put it back together again."

\* \* \*

Dr. McGregor was trying to comfort a sick patient who seemed nervous about his ailment.

"You know. Sandy, you shouldn't be nervous. I've had the same thing myself" "Yes," replied Sandy, "but you didn't have the same doctor!"

\* \* \*

Sandy's wife called Dr. McGregor and explained that her husband was very ill.

"I know this is a lot to ask, Doctor." pleaded the woman, "but we live far from town and the car is broken and Sandy is sick. Is it possible for you to come out here to Glencoe?" "No problem," boomed Dr. McGregor. "I have another patient to visit in the Glen. I'll just kill two birds with one stone! "

# Services & Readings

December 2014						
<b>Fourth Sunday 28<sup>th</sup></b>	Jeremiah 31: 15-17 Psalm 124 1 Corinthians 1: 26-29 Matthew 2: 13-18	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.15am Holy Communion	<b>Annatrim</b> 10.30am Holy Communion	<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Family Service	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Holy Communion	
January 2015						
<b>First Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	Jeremiah 31: 7-14 Psalm 147: 12-20 Ephesians 1: 3-14 John 1:10-18	<b>Roskelton</b> 9.30am Covenant Service	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Covenant Service	<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Covenant Service & Holy Communion	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 11.00am Covenant Service	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Covenant Service & Holy Communion
<b>Second Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	Genesis 1: 1-5 Psalm 29 Acts 19: 1-7 Mark 1: 4-11	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Holy Communion		<b>Annatrim</b> 11.00am Holy Communion	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Mountrath</b> 7.00pm Plough Sunday Farmers' Service
<b>Third Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	1 Samuel 3: 1-20 Psalm 139:1-5,12-18 Revelation 5: 1-10 John 1: 43-51	<b>Roskelton</b> 9.30am Holy Communion	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 11.00am Holy Communion	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Lacca</b> 4.00pm Evening Prayer
<b>Fourth Sunday 25<sup>th</sup></b>	Jonah 3: 1-5,10 Psalm 62: 5-12 1 Corinthians 7: 29-31 Mark 1: 14-20	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.15am Morning Prayer		<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Family Service	<b>Annatrim</b> 11.00am Morning Prayer	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Holy Communion

# Parish Diary

## December

28th Sunday.....Clonagh N.S. Tractor Run (page 5)

## January

15th Thursday.....Mountrath Local History Society meeting (page 6)

**21st Wednesday.....Closing date for February 2015 Newsletter items!**

26th Monday.....Mountrath Mothers' Union meeting (page 6)

**Items for the February 2015 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY January 21st AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 4th Sunday, January 25th .**

**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@clonagh.com](mailto:newsletter@clonagh.com)

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

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