

The Newsletter

February 2015

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Charlie Peavoy in the Clonenagh National School Annual Tractor Run in Coolrain on Sunday 28th December 2014.

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

Sitting with friends at eight o'clock in the evening on 19th January, after two days of skiing in Austria, there was suddenly a feeling of cramp in the back of my right leg. Standing up from the table, I tried to walk it off, though the pain did not go away altogether. During the night the pain worsened and by morning it was difficult to put weight on my right leg.

Going to the doctor in the town in the hope he might prescribe a pain killer turned out to be an alarming experience. He examined my leg and took note of where it was painful and said it was necessary for me to go to the hospital. "Do you have a car?" he asked. I explained we had flown to Austria from Dublin. "OK", he said, "I will call an ambulance".

Ten minutes later, an ambulance was sat parked outside of the surgery waiting to take me to a hospital twenty miles away. The journey was quick. The doctor's letter said I was to be checked for thrombosis, he thought there may be a clot in my leg.

At the hospital accident and emergency unit, I was taken for an ultrasound scan. The doctor doing the scan thought there was clot at the back of my knee, but a colleague would need to look. It was an hour and a half before the colleague was able to come and perform a scan himself. He said a specialist would need to look at it. I was wheeled

down to the radiology suite where a doctor did a third ultrasound scan, but was not sure, so summoned a consultant who repeated the scan and decided there was no cause for alarm, that the pain was muscular.

The whole experience lasted only from nine o'clock in the morning until half past two in the afternoon, but seemed much longer. It was a time for thinking about things and my main thought was that I would not be able to fly and trips to see my mum and dad would become few and far between, unless I were to move to England. Being unable to fly to other places did not matter, being unable to fly to Bristol would have been troubling.

Sometimes it is the unexpected and unlikely moments that are the times when we really think about things, when we really think about what it is that matters to us. The season of Lent, beginning on 18th February, is a season for us to think. As we recall Jesus spending forty days in thought and prayer, there is the opportunity to think about what comes first in our lives and what we could do without.

I am glad to say that the prescription pain killers worked well and that no further hospital visits were necessary.



Church of Ireland News

Rathdowney Institution

The Revd Richard Seymour-Whiteley will be instituted as Rector of Rathdowney at 7pm on Sunday, March 22.

In his address to the Commemoration, IFA President Eddie Downey said fair reward and decent income for farmers remained at the forefront of IFA's agenda.

Templemore Introduction

The Revd Alison Seymour-Whiteley will be introduced as priest-in-charge of Templemore parish on Friday, 20th March at 8 pm.

During the event there was an ecumenical prayer service led by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Dublin, the Most Revd Dr Diarmuid Martin, Archdeacon Rountree and the Revd Dr Michael Barry, Moderator of the Presbyterian Church.

Prayers at the IFA Anniversary

Over 1,700 people attended an event to mark the 60th anniversary of the IFA's foundation as the NFA in the National Convention Centre, Dublin. The Archbishop of Dublin was represented by the Archdeacon of Glendalough, the Ven Ricky Rountree, at the special commemoration.

The Irish Farmers Association was founded in 1955 as the National Farmers' Association and has been one of the most effective groups in influencing policy and protecting the development of agriculture in Ireland. It sees itself as having a vital role in the future development of agriculture as a world player in providing food and related products on a global scale.

The event was addressed by IFA President, Eddie Downey, EU Commissioner for Agriculture Phil Hogan, and Minister for Agriculture Simon Coveney. Tributes were also paid tribute to former IFA Presidents and activists and there was a visual presentation of the history of the association. The MC for the day was Mary Kennedy of RTE.

Arrivals in the Diocese

The Revd Brian O'Rourke was instituted as Rector of Portlaoise and Ballyfin parish on Friday, 9th January. On Sunday, 11th January, the Revd Mairt Hanley was instituted as Rector of Baltinglass. On Friday, 16th January, the Revd Margaret Sykes was introduced as priest-in-charge of New Ross/

Parish Notes

Holy Baptism: At Annatrim from 6.30 pm to 7.45 pm. All young Church on Sunday, 11th January people of National School Age are 2015, Laura Annie Treacy of Loran, welcome at the club. Pike of Rushall, Co Laois.

Family Services

One of the things for which the Rector hoped five years ago was that having a Holy Communion service for all the family in one of the churches each week, people with young families might attend that service on a weekly basis. The reality in our own parishes is that people generally attend only their own church, except on the fourth Sunday of the month when the family service taken by Mervyn Tomb at Lacca attracts people from a number of churches. In order to try to build up the congregations each Sunday, the Sundays for our family services are going to change slightly, from the beginning of February,. There will be a Family Communion service in Mountrath on the first Sunday of the month; in Annatrim on the second Sunday; in Roskelton and Borris-in-Ossory on the third Sunday; and a Family Service at Lacca on the fourth Sunday. Mervyn Tomb will join us as speaker at the Family Communion in Mountrath on Sunday, 1st February. At a time when weekly attendance at church has become uncommon, it is hoped everyone will at least try to attend once a month.

Bible Club

The Thursday Bible Club meets in the Parochial Hall in Mountrath on Thursdays 6th and 20th February

Third Sunday

The fifth of our series of six Third Sunday services held over the winter months takes place on Sunday, 15th February at 4 pm at Lacca. We are very grateful to those who provide the tea and buns for our post-service refreshments each month and are grateful to Mr Sam Harper for having taken the service in January.

Lent 2015

The season of Lent begins on Wednesday, 18th February. Herbie O'Driscoll's hymn, "Who are we who stand and sing?" provides the theme for our services this year (No 532 in the hymn book). Each Wednesday evening through Lent, there will be a service of Holy Communion with hymns and an address based on our theme: Ash Wednesday, 18th February - Mountrath - Who are we? Wednesday, 25th February - Lacca - What this bread and wine we bring? Wednesday, 4th March - Seir Kieran - Who Stand and sing? Wednesday, 11th March - Annatrim - What command does Christ impart? Wednesday, 18th March - Roskelton Who are we who say one Creed? Wednesday, 25th March - Borris-in-Ossory - What the word we hear and read?

Welcomes

A large congregation gathered in Portlaoise on Friday, 9th January to

welcome the Revd Brian O'Rourke as new Rector of Portlaoise and Ballyfin. We wish the Revd Brian well in his new sphere of ministry and pray God will bless him in his work. In the coming weeks, it will be good to welcome the Revd Richard Seymour-Whiteley as new Rector of Rathdowney and his wife as priest in charge of Templemore. The Revd Richard and the Revd Alison are coming from England, but formerly served in Clogher diocese, so are familiar with the ways of the Church of Ireland.

Attendance at church

For the third Christmas in succession, our Christmas congregations totalled 400, but Christmas attendances do not really tell us very much. Looking at the preachers' books, the books in the vestry in which are recorded the congregations each Sunday, there is a clearer picture.

In alphabetical order, the totals for the year, the number of Sundays on which there were services, and the average attendances, were as follows: Annatrim, 870 over 27 Sun-



John Lalor and Joyce Lalor in the Clonenagh National School Annual Tractor Run in Coolrain on Sunday 28th December 2014.

days, an average of 32; Borris-in-Ossory, 507 over 25 Sundays, an average of 20; Lacca, 1,342 over 28 Sundays, an average of 47; Mountrath, 2,181 over 52 Sundays, an average of 42; Roskelton, 513 over 24 Sundays, an average of 21; and Seir Kieran, 515 over 48 Sundays, an average of 10. Lacca and Mountrath numbers were boosted by a very large harvest congregation of 175 at Lacca, and the 180 people at the confirmation and the 240 at the school nativity service at Mountrath; the averages for the other churches are probably more representative of typical Sunday numbers.

What the numbers show us is that, on a typical Sunday, only around a third of our parishioners attend church, or putting it the other way, two-thirds of parishioners do not come. It is a matter for reflection and prayer.

Fundraising Committee meeting in the parochial hall on Tuesday February 10th at 8pm. This meeting is to finalize the Christmas sale and to make plans for the forthcoming Golf Classic.

Clonenagh National School enrolments for September 2015 take place now. Please contact the school on 057-8732516 or email: school@clonenagh.com and an application form will be sent to you. Closing date for receipt of application forms is Friday 27th February.

South Offaly Ploughing Branch will hold their 19th annual ploughing match on Sunday 15th February in Ballynamona, Rath, Birr, commencing at 12 noon. Many attractions on the day including trade stands, tug o war, vintage display & children's activities. A great day out for all the family.

Mothers' Union Notes

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.

GFS meetings: Friday 30th January, 13th February and 27th February; 19.15 to 20.45, Parochial Hall, Mountrath.

Smiles

Smiles for Valentine's Day

A woman walks into a post office and notices a middle-aged, well-dressed man standing at the counter methodically placing "Love" stamps on bright pink envelopes with hearts all over them. As he seals each envelope he sprays it with a puff of perfume.

The woman's curiosity gets the better of her, so she goes up to the man and asks what he is doing. The man replies, "I'm sending out 1,000 Valentine cards signed, 'Guess who?'"

"But why?" she asks.

"Because I'm a divorce lawyer," the man replies.

* * *

After she woke up, a woman told her husband, "I just dreamed that you gave me a pearl necklace for Valentine's day. What do you think it means?"

"You'll know tonight," he said.

That evening, the man came home with a small package and gave it to his wife. Delighted, she opened it - to find a book entitled "The meaning of dreams"

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To Be 8 Again...

A man was sitting on the edge of the bed, observing his wife, looking at herself in the mirror. Since her birthday was not far off he asked what she'd like to have for her birthday.

"I'd like to be eight again", she replied, still looking in the mirror.

On the morning of her Birthday, he arose early, made her a nice big bowl of Rice Krispies, and then took her to a

theme park. What a day! He put her on every ride in the park; the Death Slide, the Wall of Fear, the Screaming Monster Roller Coaster, everything there was. Five hours later they staggered out of the theme park. Her head was reeling and her stomach felt upside down.

He then took her to a McDonald's where he ordered her a Happy Meal with extra fries and a chocolate milk shake.

Then it was off to a movie, popcorn, a soda pop, and her favourite sweets, M&M's. What a fabulous adventure! Finally she wobbled home with her husband and collapsed into bed exhausted. He turned to his wife with a big smile and lovingly asked, "Well Dear, what was it like being eight again?"

Her eyes slowly opened and her expression suddenly changed. "I meant my dress size, you fool!"

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WHAT IS THE RIGHT AGE TO GET MARRIED?

"Twenty-three is the best age because you know the person FOREVER by then." Camille, age 10

"No age is good to get married at. You got to be a fool to get married." Freddie, age 6

HOW CAN A STRANGER TELL IF TWO PEOPLE ARE MARRIED?

"Married people usually look happy to talk to other people." Eddie, age 6

"You might have to guess, based on whether they seem to be yelling at the same kids." Derrick, age 8

Services & Readings

February 2015						
First Sunday 1st	<i>Deuteronomy 18: 15-20</i> <i>Psalms 111</i> <i>1 Corinthians 8: 1-13</i> <i>Mark 1: 21-28</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 Family Communion
Second Sunday 8th	<i>Isaiah 40: 21-31</i> <i>Psalms 147: 1-12, 21c</i> <i>1 Corinthians 9: 16-23</i> <i>Mark 1: 29-39</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion		Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	
Third Sunday 15th	<i>2 Kings 2: 1-12</i> <i>Psalms 50: 1-6</i> <i>2 Corinthians 4: 3-6</i> <i>Mark 9: 2-9</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Family Communion	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Family Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 4.00pm Evening Prayer
Fourth Sunday 22nd	<i>Genesis 9: 8-17</i> <i>Psalms 25: 1-9</i> <i>1 Peter 3: 18-22</i> <i>Mark 1: 9-15</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer		Lacca 10.30am Family Service	Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion

Parish Diary

January

26th Monday.....Mountrath Mothers' Union meeting (page 6)
30th Friday.....GFS meeting (page 6)

February

2nd Monday.....Diocesan Mothers' Union lunch (page 6)
10th Tuesday.....Fundraising Committee meeting (page 6)
13th Friday.....GFS meeting (page 6)
15th Sunday.....South Offaly Ploughing match (page 6)
18th Wednesday.....Closing date for March 2015 Newsletter items!
27th Friday.....Closing date for Clonenagh N.S. enrolment (page 6)
27th Friday.....GFS meeting (page 6)

Items for the March 2015 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY February 18th AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 4th Sunday, February 22nd .

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