

The Newsletter

March 2015

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*



*A team at the South Offaly Ploughing Championships
on Sunday, 15th February.*

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

Matrices came to mind. Matrices were numbers written in grids and we were supposed to be able to do sums by using them. I never understood matrices, or the point of doing them. The school maths teacher used to try to explain them by saying that we should imagine we were milkmen delivering pints of milk to a block of flats -each number was the number of bottles and its position in the matrix was the flat to which the bottles had to be delivered - it still didn't make any sense. The maths teacher's efforts at teaching us to understand the point of matrices were probably about as successful as some of my own efforts to teach the point of things.

One of my favourite moments of the week is spending an hour on Thursday mornings with 5th and 6th Class students in Clonenagh National School. We use the Church of Ireland religious education course "Follow Me", but sometimes there are times when we digress, when there are other questions to be answered. Sometimes there are questions to which there are no answers, like why good people often suffer bad things, but sometimes there are questions that prompt discussion.

One morning there was a question about the point of doing some subject or other and we talked

about the various things being learned. It was not easy to say why everything being taught was important, but the explanation that came to mind was that learning was like part of the fitness training we would go through in preparing to play a sport. Whether rugby or soccer or hurling or hockey, overall fitness was important. Similarly, school lessons were part of getting fit for whatever we would do in the years to come.

Doing things for the sake of discipline has always been part of the life of the church. In the time of Jesus, boys would have learned the Scriptures by heart. There must have been times when they wondered about all they had to learn, but the learning process taught them the need for being disciplined in their faith.

This time of year, as we go through Lent and come to Holy Week, discipline should bring us to church, perhaps it won't always make sense, perhaps there are things we will not understand, but like learning matrices or doing fitness training, it is part of the whole. Discipline shapes our faith, without discipline our faith becomes unfit and weak and not strong enough for what might lie ahead.



Church of Ireland News

Small Schools Response

The Church of Ireland Primary Schools patrons have made the following statement on the Government report on small schools:

"We note with great interest the confirmation by the Minister for Education and Skills of the publication of the Value for Money (VFM) Report on Small Schools (Primary) and will give it our close consideration. We welcome the invitation by the Minister for Education to enter into a dialogue regarding the future sustainability of smaller rural schools. As Church of Ireland patrons we look forward to engaging with the Minister in further discussions on this matter in due course and in particular on the detail of a proposed voluntary amalgamation protocol for small primary schools within a certain radial proximity. In particular, we are encouraged by the indication of alleviations in teacher appointment and retention thresholds for one teacher schools in isolated locations."

CICE merger

Despite opposition, the incorporation of the Church of Ireland College of Education into Dublin City University has proceeded. This brings to an end the long relationship with Trinity College, Dublin. A statement was posted on the Church of Ireland website on Ash Wednesday, it included:

"On 27th January 2015 the Church of Ireland College of Education (CICE) and Dublin City University (DCU) signed an inter-institutional linkage agreement. Reflecting the growing partnership between the two institutions, this signing

means that CICE becomes a college of the university and that DCU will become the sole accrediting body for all CICE's undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. CICE and DCU welcome this agreement which arises against the background of the incorporation of the Church of Ireland College of Education, Mater Dei Institute of Education and St. Patrick's College Drumcondra into Dublin City University. The incorporation will lead to the creation of an internationally-significant Institute of Education that will become the fifth faculty of the university."

New Director of Church Missionary Society

CMS Ireland announced the appointment of Jenny Smyth as the society's new Mission Director. Jenny took over from Ronnie Briggs, who stepped down from the post on 6 February as he and his wife, Maggie, prepared to return to Kenya as CMS Ireland Mission Partners. Jenny brings with her a vast and varied experience of global mission and of CMS. She served as a CMS Britain Mission Partner in Uganda for eight years before joining CMS Ireland in 1996, when she married Billy. Jenny and Billy then served together as Mission Partners in Uganda (first in Kampala, then in Arua) and in Yei Diocese, South Sudan. They returned to Ireland in 2006, with their children Abigail and Caleb. Jenny served as a Trustee on the CMS Ireland Board for five years before joining the staff team in November 2013, as Partnership Coordinator for DR Congo, Egypt, South Sudan and Zambia.

Parish Notes

Family service: Our new series of family services began on Sunday, 1st February in Mountrath when Mervyn Tomb spoke on worship, wonder and wisdom and continued on 8th February in Annatrim when we looked at anagrams of the name "Levi". On Sunday, 1st March, it is Saint David's Day and we will be looking at the ancient Celtic saints, at their love of Scripture, their life of prayer and their willingness to go wherever they believed Jesus was calling them.

Lent services: Our Lent series, inspired by Herbie O'Driscoll's hymn "Who are we?" continues on Wednesday evenings through March. We welcome Bishop Michael to preside at the Saint Ciaran's Day Patronal Festival in Seir Kieran on Wednesday, 4th March by reflecting on the words "Who Stand and sing," and looking at a history of church music. On Wednesday, 11th March at Annatrim, the question is, "What command does Christ impart?" and then on Wednesday, 18th March, at Roskelton, we ask "Who are we who say one Creed?" before concluding the series on Wednesday, 25th March in Borris-in-Ossory when we think about the Bible by asking, "What the word we hear and read?"

World Day of Prayer: The World Day of Prayer for 2015 is on Friday, 6th March and has been prepared by the women of the Bahamas. Clonenagh National School will be preparing a young people's service

for 10.30 am, at which everyone is welcome, and our ecumenical service takes place in Mountrath at 8.00 in the evening. It would be good to see a few more men supporting the occasion!

Third Sunday: The final Third Sunday four o'clock service of the season takes place at Lacca on Sunday, 15th March, and, it being Mothering Sunday, will have a family theme. Thank you to everyone who contributed to a very successful series. Services on the third Sunday of the month at Lacca return to the usual 10.30 slot until the autumn.

Saint Patrick's Day: We mark our national saint's day with Holy Communion in Mountrath at 10.30 am on Tuesday, 17th March. We do try to make an occasion of it, including singing three hymns, and it would be encouraging to see a few more people in the congregation. If we do not attend church on Saint Patrick's Day, what are we celebrating that day?

Memorial service: There will be a memorial service for Betty, sister of Martin Jestin, who died in New Zealand in January at Saint Mark's Church, Borris-in-Ossory on Sunday, 8th March at 3 pm. Fr Walter Cooke of Castletown, who served in New Zealand for 52 years and was a friend of Betty, will speak at the memorial service.

Mothers' Union: Miriam Poulton, a fourth year medical student at Trinity

College, Dublin is our speaker at the Mothers' Union meeting on Monday, 23rd March at 8pm. Miriam spent five weeks in western Kenya on an overseas elective in the summer of 2014 and will talk about the work in the clinic there and her experiences.

On Monday, 23rd February at 8pm we welcome Helen Gee from Gee's Jams in Abbeyleix as our speaker. Everyone is welcome.

Palm Sunday: Palm Sunday this year is a fifth Sunday of the month and services will begin with Holy Communion in Mountrath at 9 am, followed by a group service for Palm Sunday in Roskelton at 10.30. On the evening of Palm Sunday, we begin our series of Holy Week services in Seir Kieran at 7 pm.

Holy Week Services: Our Holy Week theme for 2015 is five objects, each evening we will look at the Holy Week story and look at the significance of one of the objects in the story. Beginning with "A Cloak" in Seir Kieran on Palm Sunday we continue:

Monday, 8 pm Roskelton – A Table
Tuesday, 8 pm Annatrim – A Coin
Wednesday, 8 pm Borris in Ossory – A Cup
Maundy Thursday 8 pm Mountrath – A Spear

Good Friday: Good Friday: Our services on Good Friday begin at 10 am with the Stations of the Cross from The Hollow to Roskelton. At 2 pm we keep the Last Hour in Mountrath, a service of Bible reading, hymns and quietness; attendance at

this service has grown, it provides an opportunity for silence in a world filled with noisiness. On Good Friday at 8pm we gather in Lacca for a dramatized reading of the Passion story with all the old favourite hymns.

Easter Eve: Our celebration of the Resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ begins at Annatrim on Easter Eve, Saturday, 4th April, at 8.15 pm when the sun has set and we gather for the Easter Vigil and the First Communion of Easter Day. As part of our service we decorate a cross with flowers, acknowledging the new life for us that came through Jesus' death on the cross. Our Easter Eve services continue at 10 pm at Seir Kieran, the founding place of Ossory diocese and the most ancient Christian site in our dioceses. As has been our practice in recent years, we shall light the Easter Fire on the monastic site where Saint Ciaran, a contemporary of Saint Patrick, lit the Easter fire sixteen centuries ago.

Easter Day: Our Easter morning Holy Communion services will be at 8.15 am at Borris- in- Ossory and then at 9.30 at Roskelton, 10.30 at Lacca and 11.30 at Mountrath.

Lay readers: We are very pleased that Mrs Gillian Purser from Stradbally, a diocesan lay reader and wife of the Revd Alec Purser, has agreed to take the service at Annatrim on the fourth Sunday of each month and know Gillian will be warmly welcomed (and, hopefully, well supported by good sized congregations). Mrs Maureen Lanigan faithfully took

the service each fourth Sunday for four years, including during the very difficult weather in 2010, and there has been no regular person since Maureen's sad death. Without the diocesan readers, including Mabel Peavoy, John Bailey and Charlie Wallace, our group of parishes could not function as it does.

Congratulations and best wishes to Robert (Bobby) and Maud Harvey who celebrated their 60th wedding anniversary on the 9th February.

Clonenagh Parish Fundraising Committee are holding a **golf classic** on Friday 22nd May at Mountrath Golf Club. This is to raise funds for substantial repairs to the windows in St. Peters Church Mountrath which are in very poor condition. More details next month.

The **Parish Barbecue** is planned to take place at the Rectory grounds on Sunday June 28th. More details nearer to time.

Borris-in-Ossory parish have a **quiz** in circulation in aid of parish funds. Anyone wishing to obtain some please contact Louise Moynan

087-7512116 or Margaret Jestin 087 -9439831.

St Cronan's National School is running a **cookery demonstration** by Ailish Hennessy of Fiacri House in Racket Hall on the Wednesday 4th March. Doors open 7.30pm, tickets €10. Contact Sandra Reid 086-1699204 or The Ugly Duckling deli Roscrea. Raffle on the night for a meal for 2 at Fiacri House, and the meals cooked will also be raffled.

We are also running a **monster draw** and tickets for this can be bought from any parent of St Cronan's. Prizes are a B&B for 2 in Dromoland Castle, timber, a family night in the Clare Inn and much more. This draw will take place on the 4th at cookery demo. Looking forward to seeing you all there.

A **Coffee Day** in Aid of St. John's Ward, (Oncology Unit) Crumlin Hospital will be held at The Resource Centre, Birr on April 4th from 10:30 am. Quiz sheets and Raffle Tickets are now available as part of the fundraiser. Support in any way would be greatly appreciated. Contact Yvonne Shaw for further details on 087-6792561.

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

This Newsletter and many older editions can be downloaded directly from

www.clonenagh.com

Smiles

*Mothering Sunday falls on 15th March. 'I've been very weak.'
Here is some humour for the day . . .*

The Vocabulary of a Mother

Dumbwaiter: One who asks if the children would care to order a dessert.

Feedback: The inevitable result when the baby doesn't appreciate the strained carrots.

Full Name: What you call your child when you're angry with him.

Grandparents: The people who think your children are wonderful even though they're sure you're not raising them right.

Independent: How we want our children to be for as long as they do everything we say.

Puddle: A small body of water that draws other small bodies wearing dry shoes into.

Show Off: A child who is more talented than yours.

Whodunit: None of the children who live in your house.

Bottle-feeding: An opportunity for Daddy to get up at 2 am.

Phone Home?

Arnold phones his mother living in America. 'Mum, how are you?' he asks.

'Not too good,' answers Arnold's mother,

Arnold, concerned asks, 'Why are you so weak, mother?'

She says, 'Because I haven't eaten in 23 days'

Arnold stammers, 'That's terrible. Why haven't you eaten in 23 days?'

His mother replies, 'Because I didn't want my mouth to be filled with food if you should phone.'

Lionhearted

Edward, a big-game hunter, goes on safari in Kenya with his wife, Frances and his mother-in-law, Agnes. One evening, while still deep in the jungle, Frances awakes to find her mother, Agnes, has disappeared. Rushing to Edward, she insists on them both trying to find her mother.

Sighing heavily, Edward picks up his rifle and starts to search for Agnes. Soon, in a clearing not far from the camp, they come upon a frightening sight.

Agnes, the mother-in-law is backed up against a thick, impenetrable bush, and a large male lion is standing facing her. Frances cries out in panic, Edward, what are we going to do?'

'Nothing,' explains Edward calmly. 'Absolutely nothing, my dearest. The lion got himself into this mess, let him get himself out of it.'

Services & Readings

March 2015

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| First Sunday 1st | Genesis 17: 1-7, 15-16 Psalm 22: 23-31 Romans 4: 13-25 Mark 8: 31-38 | 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 8th | Exodus 20: 1-17 Psalm 19 1 Corinthians 1: 18-25 John 2: 13-22 | Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion | | Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion | Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer | |
| Third Sunday 15th | Numbers 21: 4-9 Psalm 107: 1-3, 17-22 Ephesians 2: 1-10 John 3: 14-21 | Roskelton 9.30am Holy 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 | Jeremiah 31: 31-34 Psalm 119: 9-16 Hebrews 5: 5-10 John 12: 20-33 | Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer | | Lacca 10.30am Family Service | Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer | Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion |
| Fifth Sunday 29th | Isaiah 50: 4-9a Psalm 31: 9-16 Philippians 2: 5-11 Mark 11:1-11 | Mountrath 9.00am Holy Communion | | Roskelton 10.30am Group Service | Seir Kieran 7.00pm First Holy Week Service | |

Parish Diary

February

- 23rd Monday.....Mothers' Union meeting (page 5)
 27th Friday.....Closing date for Clonenagh N.S. enrolment
 27th Friday.....GFS meeting

March

- 4th Wednesday.....St Cronan's N.S. cookery demonstration (page 6)
18th Wednesday.....Closing date for April Newsletter
 28th Monday.....Mothers' Union meeting (page 5)