

The Newsletter

April 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



Spring is here, and the daffodils are showing their faces

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

I don't cope with grief very well. I remember the death of a man I knew well.

Tom was a good friend to me. Thirty years my senior, he was more like an uncle than a parishioner. He kept open the little church where he and his wife and a small number of others worshipped Sunday by Sunday. Tom always smiled, always laughed; always had an encouraging word.

Tom became ill and had to go to hospital, he wasn't pleased to leave his little village, but he took everything with the same good cheer. But then we had good news, Tom was getting better. The day he was told that the tests were clear, he waltzed his wife around the hospital ward. A few days after the good news, Tom died. It was a cold, bleak winter's Saturday evening and Tom was the second of my parishioners to die that day. I drove back through the Ulster countryside feeling numb. There was no time for feeling sad, it was Sunday the next day and the show would go on. Tom's loss was a bitter blow, but clergymen aren't allowed tears.

Tom's funeral took place on a bright, chilly Tuesday afternoon in the little church he loved so much. There was not space for the community that gathered to bid him farewell. Tom had a daughter in her 20s, bright, articulate and pretty, she was her parents pride and joy, getting to college and becoming a teacher. She took Tom's death with a gentle grace

and asked to read at the funeral, choosing the passage from Ecclesiastes, "There is a time for everything". I buried Tom close to the churchyard wall, a spot he had chosen for himself, laughing when he showed me it. Neither he nor I could have suspected that the grave would be opened so soon.

Sometimes I wonder how people cope with what they have to go through. I find it hard to imagine even a fraction of the pain that some people face. Years later, and I still shed a tear for my friend Tom, how many tears have been shed by those of us who have been through tragedies?

I don't cope well with grief and I don't think I would cope have coped if I had been in Jerusalem on that first Good Friday; I would have been the slowest of all to understand that Jesus must rise again from the dead.

Easter is about understanding that Jesus rises again again from the dead; it's about life and it's about hope. It's about Jesus destroying the power of death and hell. It's about believing we will see all those whom we loved in a world where there is no more death or pain or crying anymore.

I look forward to seeing Tom.

Happy Easter.



Church of Ireland News

British Ambassador speaks at Saint Patrick's Cathedral

St Patrick is a symbol of British and Irish relations, the British Ambassador, Mr Dominick Chilcott, said at St Patrick's Cathedral on St Patrick's Day. The Ambassador delivered the address at the service and said relations between the two countries were "better than ever" although the sensitive history could not be ignored.

Noting that he was standing where Dean Swift had once stood, Mr Chilcott quoted Queen Elizabeth who spoke on the goal of modern British-Irish relations during President Michael D Higgins' State visit last year: "It is that we who inhabit these islands should live together as neighbours and friends. Respectful of each other's nationhood, sovereignty and traditions. Co-operating to our mutual benefit. At ease in each other's company. After so much chequered history, the avoidable and regrettable pain of which is still felt by many of us, this goal is now within reach."

Big debates must be aware of ordinary people.

Speaking on Saint Patrick's Day, the Bishop of Cork said that speakers in debates should be sensitive to ordinary people. "Big debates about big ideas cannot be had in the abstract; they must be grounded in the real experience of the lives of our

fellow human beings. One of the risks of any big debate in any community, society or institution, is that we take to ourselves the luxury and relative safety – or we even draw the battle lines – by having the discussion without putting names, faces and human experience on the idea. Such is a risk as we approach the marriage referendum next May; we already are seeing too much of this in the public space.

"When we allow ourselves to dislocate the people from ideas, we can all too easily dehumanise them, and objectify them, people who, like ourselves, are also children of God. And that's not only a risk in this debate. Labels and categories, for example, are convenient ways of removing the faces and human experience from what is being said: 'the unemployed', 'the sick', 'the disabled', 'the immigrants', 'the gays', 'the single mothers', 'the homeless', 'the poor', 'the traditionalists', 'the liberals', ... the list is endless of the ways that we risk removing people and their experiences from our reflection about big ideas.

"If the simple demands of a radically challenging Christianity – Love God; Love your neighbour as yourself – are to mean anything, then we ought to discuss big ideas by putting ourselves in other people's – our neighbour's – shoes. The words of the Catechism come to mind: 'My duty towards my neighbour, is to love him as myself, and to do to all men as I would they should do unto me ...'"

Parish Notes

Holy Week 2015: Hopefully as many people as possible will try to attend church during Holy Week. If we are honest, with services every day of the week, the only real reason for people not coming to at least one service is that they do not want to attend.

Holy Week begins on Sunday, 29th March. Our Holy week theme this year is "**Five Objects**". and our services for the week are as follows:

Palm Sunday

9.00 am; Holy Communion

Mountrath

10.30 am; Family Service

Roskelton

7 pm; Evening Prayer and First Holy Week Address: A Cloak

Seir Kieran

Monday

8 pm; Compline and Second Holy Week Address: A Table

Roskelton

Tuesday

8 pm; Late Evening Office and Third Holy Week Address: A Coin

Annatrim

Wednesday

8 pm; Evening Prayer and Fourth Holy Week Address: A Cup

Borris-in-Ossory

Maundy Thursday

8 pm; Holy Communion and Fifth Holy Week Address: A Spear

Mountrath

Good Friday: Our services on Good Friday begin at **10 am** with the

Stations of the Cross from **The Holy to Roskelton**, using the fourteen Biblical stations, prepared by Saint John Paul II in 1991, we walk the road, usually in spring sunshine, share in conversations, and pause for thought .

At **2 pm** we keep the **Last Hour** in **Mountrath**, a service of Bible reading, hymns and quietness; attendance at this service has grown over the past couple of years, 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** from Saint Mark's Gospel and we sing all the old favourite hymns.

The bishop's stations: Bishop Michael will be at Ballybrophy station at 12.40 on Good Friday for one of the Stations of the Cross. The station is probably in Donaghmore or Aghaboe parish, but he will be delighted if some of our own parishioners greeted him there

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, in Jewish tradition, a new day has begun. The Easter Vigil and the First Communion of Easter Day at Annatrim has consistently drawn a congregation of sixty or more and we hope for a similar number this year. 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 8.30 am at Borris-in-Ossory and then at 9.30 at Roskelton, 10.30 at Lacca and 11.30 at Mountrath. The Rector is especially grateful to John Bailey for his assistance on such days, going ahead to begin the next service and so allow services not to be rushed, and to Lionel Gyves, who drives the Rector at busy times.

Revd Ian Coulter: Following the introduction of the Revd Alison Seymour-Whiteley as priest-in-charge of Templemore, we are very pleased to welcome the Revd Ian Coulter who will be assisting in Abbeyleix and Clonenagh parishes on a regular basis. Ian is well known to many of us and we look forward to his ministry.

Eric Danne: Following the service in his home parish of Youghal in Co Cork, Eric Danne's funeral came back to his home parish for burial beside his brothers, George, Albert, and Billy in Annatrim churchyard on 12th March. Although moving from the family home at Cappanarrow fifty-nine years ago, when he was nineteen, Eric retained an affection for the countryside and the place that had been home for him, and family members and friends gathered at Annatrim

to bid him farewell. Eric's nephew, the Revd Trevor Stevenson, Rector of Crinken parish in Dublin took the burial service, reminding mourners that, for Christians, the occasion should be one of hope.

Betty Hetherington: On Sunday, 8th March, we remembered Betty Hetherington (nee Jestin) in a memorial service at Borris-in-Ossory church. Betty emigrated to New Zealand in the 1960s, where she was a greatly loved wife and mother, and was well known in her community as a midwife and as the keeper of a menagerie of animals that was popular with all who visited her home. Betty died in New Zealand in January after a period of illness, but we were very pleased to have many memories of her time there shared by Fr Walter Cooke, who ministered in New Zealand for fifty-two years, and was a long-standing friend. A retiring collection at the service, for the Irish Cancer Society, raised some €400. The Jestin family would like to thank all who came to the service and all who contributed to the collection.

Bible Club: Our Thursday Bible Club has finished now until the autumn. Our thanks go to Mervyn Tomb for all his hard work. Over twenty young people were on the register with an average attendance of a dozen to fourteen. Our next Bible Club activity will be the holiday club in July.

Debating Success: Debating: Well done to Naomi Senior, from Mountrath Parish, and her team from St Paul's National School, Mountmellick on reaching the finals of the interschools debating competition. They

have so far proposed such motions as 'People should not have pets', 'Pupils of school-going age should not have mobile phones' and 'Ireland should leave the European Union'. Well done Naomi and good luck in the final..

Western Front: The Rector is taking a Co Laois group to the Western Front from 20th-23rd April. He is particularly looking for information on the men from the Mountrath area and hopes to visit as many of their graves as possible.

Good wishes: We extend good wishes to the Revd Richard Seymour-Whiteley who will be instituted to our neighbouring parish of Rathdowney on 22nd March and to the Revd Alison Seymour-Whiteley who was introduced to Templemore on Friday, 20th March. Please pray for them as they begin their new spheres of ministry at a very busy time in the church year.

Congratulations to Aoibheann Birney who competed in the U11 all-Ireland Gymnastics Final which was held in DCU on February 9th. She came 4th in the Midlands Region and 28th in Ireland.

The Clonenagh Parish Fundraising **Golf Classic** on May 22nd is now open for sponsorship of a hole and team entries. More details next month.

The Parish Barbecue planned for June 28th has been brought forward to June 21st. This is because of Confirmation in Annatrim. **Please note new date!**

Mothers' Union notes:

Our March branch meeting will be on Monday, 23rd March in the Parochial Hall when Miriam Poulton will be the speaker. Miriam is a fourth year medical student at Trinity College, Dublin and will speak about her overseas elective spent at a clinic in Western Kenya last summer. Everyone is welcome.

The Feast of the Annunciation of our Lord falls on Wednesday, 25th March and members are encouraged to attend the Lent service at Borris-in-Ossory that evening.

The Diocesan Festival Service takes place in Enniscorthy at 7.30 pm on Wednesday, 29th April. We hope members of our branch will be able to attend.

Items for the May 2015 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY April 22nd AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 4th Sunday, April 26th .

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

One Easter a priest and a taxi driver both died and went to heaven. St. Peter was at the Pearly gates waiting for them.

'Come with me,' said St. Peter to the taxi driver.

The taxi driver did as he was told and followed St Peter to a mansion. It had everything you could imagine from a bowling alley to an Olympic size pool.

'Oh my word, thank you,' said the taxi driver.

Next, St. Peter led the priest to a rough old shack with a bunk bed and a little old television set.

'Wait, I think you are a little mixed up,' said the priest. 'Shouldn't I be the one who gets the mansion? After all I was a priest, went to church every day, and preached God's word.'

'Yes, that's true.' St Peter rejoined, 'But during your Easter sermons people slept. When the taxi driver drove, everyone prayed.'

Young Ernie and his family were invited to have Easter Sunday lunch at his grandmother's house. Everyone was seated around the table as the food was being served. When Ernie received his plate he started eating straight away.

'Ernie, wait until we say grace,' demanded his father.

'I don't have to,' the five year old replied.

'Of course you do, Ernest,' his mother insisted rather forcefully. 'We always say a prayer before eating at our house.'

'That's at our house,' Ernie explained, 'but this is Grandma's house, and she knows how to cook.'

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In the spring sunshine, a little girl was playing outside one day when she was bitten by a cat. Her mother scooped her daughter up and raced inside to call the hospital. The nurse listened as she explained what had happened. "Are her vaccinations up to date?" the nurse asked. "I don't know," her mother replied. "It was a stray cat."

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It was springtime and a young businessman had just started his own firm. He'd rented a beautiful office and had it furnished with antiques. Sitting there, he saw a man come into the outer office. Wishing to appear busy, the businessman picked up the phone and started to pretend he had a big deal working. He threw huge figures around and made giant commitments. Finally, after some twenty minutes had passed, he hung up and asked the visitor, "Can I help you?" The man said, "Sure. I've come to install the phone!"

Services & Readings

March 2015

Fifth Sunday 29th	<i>Isaiah 50: 4-9a Psalm 31: 9-16 Philippians 2: 5-11 Mark 11:1-11</i>	Mountrath 9.00am Holy Communion	Roskelton 10.30am Group Service	Seir Kieran 7.00pm First Holy Week Service
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April 2015

Saturday 4th	<i>Acts 10: 34-43 Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24 1 Corinthians 15: 1-11 John 20: 1-18</i>	Annatrim 8.15pm Easter Vigil & Holy Communion	Seir Kieran 10.00pm Easter Fire & Holy Communion		
First Sunday 5th		Borris-in-Ossory 8.30am Holy Communion	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion
Second Sunday 12th	<i>Acts 4: 32-35 Psalm 133 1 John 1: 1 - 2: 2 John 20: 19-31</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion		Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer
Third Sunday 19th	<i>Acts 3: 12-19 Psalm 4 1 John 3: 1-7 Luke 24: 36b-48</i>	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Morning Prayer	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Family Communion
Fourth Sunday 26th	<i>Ezekiel 34: 1-10 Psalm 23 1 John 3: 16-24 John 10: 11-18</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Family Service	Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion

Parish Diary

March

23rd Monday.....Mothers' Union branch meeting (page 6)

April

20th-23rd.....Western Front trip (page 6)

22nd Wednesday.....Closing date for May Newsletter

29th Wednesday.....Mothers' Union Diocesan Festival Service (page 6)