

The Newsletter

October 2015

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Harvest Time
by Henry Hillier

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

We attended a service in a church in a small town in the south-west of France last Sunday. The notice said it would be at 10.30, and, it being a Church of England service, when we arrived two minutes late, they were well into the first song. We knew we were late before we arrived because the church doors were open and the music was amplified.

The service was held in a French Protestant church, a plain building in which the benches had been turned sideways for the service so one wall could be used as a surface on which to project the words. No-one was at the door to welcome those arriving, no-one offered any explanation of what was happening. We could have been anyone wandering in off the street, but no-one at the beginning, middle or end acknowledged our presence. There were twenty people there, all of whom seemed to know each other and there was a feeling that we were superfluous to requirements.

The service was disjointed, there were songs we didn't know, a video clip from a film, a sermon that seemed to go off at tangents, and prayers that everyone read together off the screen. The notices were about an event that was taking place, though there seemed uncertainty about where the place was. At 11.30 precisely, the service came to an end and everyone turned to chat with the person beside them, no-one came to the door to say, "good morning", or "good to see you", least of all, "how are you?" or "thank you for joining us."

We walked down to a cafe in the town square where a grumpy waiter served us tea and coffee. Three ladies from the congregation came to sit at a nearby table, one of them had done the readings at the service and looked at us as though she might have seen us before, but offered no greeting, not even the customary nod and "bonjour" with which many French people will acknowledge total strangers.

At the table next to us, there were Ulster accents, when one of them stood up to go into the cafe there was a lull in their conversation. "You're a long way from Belfast", I said. "So are you", replied one of the Ulsterwomen, and we talked of the weather and French taxes and Northern Ireland politics, and people they knew who lived, "down South". There was a natural sense of community at the cafe that had been entirely lacking in the church.

The church service was one of the most disappointing I had attended, not because of the music or the preaching, but because there was no sense that anyone cared. If we want to share our faith in Jesus, we must first do as he did and treat every person as someone who matters. We need to make our churches places where a stranger coming in off the street would feel they were wanted, without that feeling all our worship and all our preaching will be in vain.



Church of Ireland News

Statement from the Archbishop of Armagh on the Refugee Crisis

“War Makes No Distinctions and Neither Should We”

The growing intensity of the refugee crisis and its human cost becomes more and more distressing each day. No-one, especially those who have or have had the care of children, could fail to be utterly moved by the harrowing images which have emerged from Turkey, alongside the constant stream of media images of suffering families and individuals. This is a heart-rending situation involving real people not statistics.

While it is vital to ensure that leaders work strategically to resolve political problems at their source – in the countries where people are fleeing from, and while recognising how extraordinarily difficult that may be – we need to look for both political and humanitarian solutions. One way forward in the humanitarian sphere would be to look to the goodwill of local communities to take in and embrace manageable numbers of refugee families in their towns and cities, as others have done. If people across this island, for example, could welcome refugee families into their communities in this way this could make a real difference to those who have left their homeland far behind in such desperate circumstances.

We pray for wisdom and compassion for those who must make political decisions that so affect the lives of vulnerable and distressed peoples.

‘War makes no distinction between age, gender or faith and our response to this humanitarian crisis should make no distinction either,’ Archbishop Michael Jackson said at a Vigil and Prayer for the people of Syria in Zion Church, Rathgar, he said that the congregation gathered in Dublin in recognition of and in solidarity with the plight, panic and sorrow of all those people who moved from one place to another, wondering where they may next be rejected.

Archbishop Jackson said that many of the people were coming from the crucible of Christianity and hoped that the night of prayer would prepare people for action. ‘Our invitation and our challenge is to welcome these people with mercy and dignity,’ he added.

Drawing on St Luke 14: 1–14, in which Jesus, when faced with a man who had dropsy, asked the Pharisees and lawyers if it was legal to cure people on the Sabbath or not, spoke about the relationship between self interest and the interests and needs of those who are deprived of health and dignity.

‘Jesus is drawing people to bring the values of the Kingdom of God to the lives they live day by day. This is what we are called to do today. We are to refocus our priorities on those who have nothing... We in our own way can stand with those who are witnesses to life itself in their death and life.’

Parish Notes

The early publication of the newsletter this month enables us to have reminders of events taking place in late September.

National Ploughing Championships:

Few people will need the newsletter to remind them that "The Ploughing" takes place at Ratheniska, Co Laois from 22nd until 24th November. The recent weather, and the threat of more damp days, may mean that the crowds are not as big as those of last year, but it is still the biggest event in the Irish farming calendar. If you are going, do find your way to the Church of Ireland tent, which is at Block No. 3: Row No. 26, and Stand No. 445 and say "hello" to those who are on duty. Do also remember that the Mothers' Union are present every year, providing baby feeding and changing facilities, so if you are passing their tent do call in (last year, a farmer who had lost his wife went along to the MU tent and stayed there until she found him!)

School Harvest: Clonenagh National School hold their harvest thanksgiving in Mountrath church on Friday, 25th September at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome at the service.

Mountrath Harvest: The harvest thanksgiving in Mountrath is on Sunday, 27th September at 4 pm. We welcome Mr Richard Codd, a retired teacher and now a full-time farmer as our preacher.

Seir Kieran Harvest: At Seir Kieran we give thanks for the harvest on Sun-

day, 27th September at 7 pm when we are joined by Mr Richard Codd.

Michaelmas: There will be Holy Communion for Saint Michael and All Angels' Day in Mountrath on Tuesday, 29th September at 8 pm.

Lacca Harvest Thanksgiving: The harvest thanksgiving service at Lacca takes place on Sunday, 4th October at 4 pm when we shall welcome Mrs Phyllis Grothier, All Ireland President of the Mothers' Union as our preacher. We hope that members of our Mothers' Union branch will be present among the large crowd that always gathers for the occasion.

Clergy conference: The diocesan clergy conference at Dungarvan, Co Waterford takes place from Monday, 5th until Wednesday, 7th October. The Rector will have his phone with him as usual and all calls to the Rectory number will reach him.

Thursday Bible Club: Our Thursday Bible Club in Mountrath began again on Thursday, 10th September and this month will be meeting on Thursdays 8th and 22nd October. We are grateful to Mervyn Tomb of the Faith Mission in Durrow for all his work with the Bible Club.

Fellowship meeting: In August, we announced plans to start a monthly fellowship group that would meet in Lacca church for Bible study, prayer and singing. Our first meeting will be on Thursday, 8th October at 8 pm and

we would plan to continue to meet on the second Thursday of each month. Our meeting will use the Late Evening Office from the Book of Common Prayer as a structure, so that anyone who might feel uncertain about coming along can be reassured that the meetings will not be strange or alien.

Annatrim Harvest: Our harvest services draw to a close on Sunday, 11th October. In the morning there will be the thanksgiving service at Annatrim when Mrs Mabel Peavoy will be our preacher. We look forward to seeing a continuation of the excellent attendances we have had at the harvest service in Annatrim in recent years. The morning service in Mountrath that day will be conducted by the bishop.

Roskelton Harvest: The seventh of our seven harvest services will be at Roskelton church at 7 pm on Sunday, 11th October when Bishop Michael will complete a day's visitation of Clonenagh Parish by preaching at our thanksgiving.

Third Sunday Service: The winter months are returning and with them the Third Sunday service at Lacca at 4 pm on each third Sunday of the month, the first of the new season will be on Sunday, 18th October. The service has been a great encouragement to the Rector (and to others who have taken the service), and we look forward to more occasions of lively worship and tea and buns.

Saint Patrick's duty: The Rector is in residence at Saint Patrick's Cathedral in Dublin on the week beginning Sunday, 18th October, but will be available in the event of any emergencies.

Diocesan Synod: The annual diocesan synod takes place on Wednesday, 21st October. Please pray for the synod and for the working of the Holy Spirit.

Family service: The monthly family service in Lacca takes place on Sunday, 25th October at 10.30 am. Mervyn Tomb has built up a strong congregation for this service and we encourage people to support Mervyn in his efforts.

Saints' Simon and Jude: On Wednesday, 28th October at 8 pm there will be Holy Communion to remember Saints Simon and Jude.

Remembrance of Loved Ones: Our annual service of remembrance of loved ones takes place in Mountrath on All Saints' Day, 1st November at 7 pm. Everyone, from whatever parish or tradition, is welcome at this service.

Thank you: Thank you to everyone who attended the blessing of the schoolbags in Mountrath on Sunday, 30th August, we were especially pleased to have the principal and members of staff from our National School with us for the occasion. It was our first attempt at such a service and there was probably much that could have been done better, but it was a great encouragement.

Laois Federation I.C.A. Choir will be in St Peter's Church Mountrath on Sunday December 6th at 3pm. Keep this date free, as your support will be appreciated. Refreshments will be served. More details next month.



Thank You most sincerely to all who supported our fundraising efforts for St. John's Ward, Oncology Unit, Crumlin Hospital, Dublin. To everyone who so generously donated raffle prizes, made cash contributions, attended the Coffee Day, bought quiz sheets and raffle tickets, we are extremely grateful. The total, €16,750, was presented by Tommy to the Staff of St. John's Ward, where we were assured it will be put to good use. Your kindness, generosity and support were greatly appreciated. Yvonne Shaw & Family

Items for the October 2015 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY October 21st AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the 3rd Sunday, October 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@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

After a church service on Sunday morning, a young boy suddenly announced to his mother, "Mom, I've decided to become a minister when I grow up."

"That's okay with us, but what made you decide that?"

"Well," said the little boy, "I have to go to church on Sunday anyway, and I figure it will be more fun to stand up and yell, than to sit and listen."

* * *

An accountant dies and goes to Heaven. He is met by St Peter who goes through the usual questionnaire.

"Name?"

He gives his name. St Peter goes through some files and pulls one out.

"Oh, yes. We've been expecting you. You've reached your allotted span," says St Peter.

"How can that be?" says the accountant. "I'm too young to go. I'm only forty-eight"

"No, that's impossible."

"Why do you say that?"

"Well we've been looking at your time sheets and the hours you've charged your clients. By our reckoning you're at least ninety three."

* * *

A pastor and a lawyer are seated next to each other on a transatlantic flight. The lawyer asks if he would like to play a fun game? The pastor, tired, just wants to

take a nap, politely declines, and rolls over to the window to catch a few winks. The lawyer persists and explains that the game is easy and a lot of fun. He explains, "I ask you a question, and if you don't know the answer, you pay me \$5.00, and vice versa."

Again, he declines and tries to get some sleep. The lawyer, now agitated, says, "Okay, if you don't know the answer you pay me \$5.00, and if I don't know the answer, I will pay you \$500.00."

This catches the pastor's attention and figuring there will be no end to this torment unless he plays, agrees to the game. The lawyer asks the first question. "What's the distance from the earth to the moon?"

The pastor doesn't say a word, reaches into his wallet, pulls out a \$5.00 bill and hands it to the lawyer. Okay says the lawyer, your turn. He asks the lawyer, "What goes up a hill with three legs and comes down with four legs?"

The lawyer, puzzled, takes out his laptop computer and searches all his references, no answer. He taps into the air phone and searches the Internet and the library of congress, no answer. Frustrated, he sends e-mails to all his friends and co-workers, to no avail. After an hour, he wakes the preacher, and hands him \$500. The pastor says, "Thank you", and turns back to get some more sleep. The lawyer, who is more than a little miffed, wakes the pastor and asks, "Well, what's the answer?"

Without a word, the pastor reaches into his wallet, hands the lawyer \$5.00, and goes back to sleep.

Services & Readings

September 2015					
Fourth Sunday 27th	Esther 7: 1-6, 9-10, 9: 20-22 Psalm 124 James 5: 13-20 Mark 9: 38-50	Lacca 10.30am Family Service	Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 4.00pm Harvest Communion	Seir Kieran 7.00pm Harvest Communion

October 2015						
First Sunday 4th	Job 1: 1, 2: 1-10 Psalm 26 Hebrews 1: 1-4, 2: 5-12 Mark 10: 2-16	Roskelton 9.30am Morning Prayer	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion	Lacca 4.00pm Harvest Thanksgiving
Second Sunday 11th	Job 23: 1-9, 16-17 Psalm 22: 1-15 Hebrews 4: 12-16 Mark 10: 17-31	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 11.00am Harvest Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer		Roskelton 7.00pm Harvest Thanksgiving
Third Sunday 18th	Job 38: 1-7 Psalm 104: 1-10, 26, 37c Hebrews 5: 1-10 Mark 10: 35-45	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 Third Sunday Service
Fourth Sunday 25th	Job 42: 1-6, 10-17 Psalm 34: 1-8, 19-22 Hebrews 7: 23-28 Mark 10: 46-52	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Morning Prayer	Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer		Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion

Parish Diary

September

25th Friday.....School Harvest Thanksgiving (*page 4*)
29th Tuesday.....Michaelmas Communion Service (*page 4*)

October

5th Mon - 7th Wed.....Clergy conference (*page 4*)
8th Thursday.....Thursday Bible Club (*page 4*)
8th Thursday.....Fellowship meeting (*page 4*)
21st Wednesday.....Diocesan Synod (*page 5*)
21st Wednesday.....Closing date for November Newsletter
22nd Thursday.....Thursday Bible Club (*page 4*)
28th Wednesday.....Saints Simon & Jude Communion Service (*page 5*)
1st November.....Service of Remembrance of Loved Ones (*page 5*)
6th December.....ICA Choir Concert (*page 5*)