

The Newsletter

March 2016

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The return of the snowdrops each year, no matter what the weather, remind us of the beauty and wonder of the world that surrounds us.

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

Going to see my family back in January, we called at the farm from which my mother had come and where I spent the early years of my life. One of my aunts still lives in the farmhouse that was home to my grandparents; it is a house filled with happy memories, memories of summer days and gatherings of cousins (I was one of twenty grandchildren) and huge teas at the kitchen table.

The room we called the "kitchen" was never a kitchen in my lifetime, it was where we gathered to eat around a big wooden table, as many of us as possible squeezed into a settle that stood along one wall. It was where daytime visitors were received, one of the front rooms being used in the evenings, when the fire was lit, and the other front room only being opened for special occasions.

So it was that we sat around the kitchen table one afternoon in January. My aunt had been working on some curtains and her electric sewing machine sat on the kitchen table; it looked familiar. It looked like something from my childhood days.

"Is that the machine you always had?" I asked my aunt.

"It is," she said, "I got it for my twenty-first birthday and I am seventy-six now."

My aunt is twenty-one years older than me; for the whole of my life she has been using that sewing machine.

There was a strange moment of timelessness, as if by touching the machine I could somehow be connected with moments forty or fifty years ago.

Having a sense of timelessness, however, doesn't stop time. Our local newspaper, the Western Gazette, brings news of funerals of those who were always there; people who somehow seemed old in the 1970s, but must only have been in their fifties because the obituaries say they were in their nineties.

There is a joy in going home, but also a sense of sadness; a year passes quickly and with it go opportunities that will not return. I should try to go home once a month, but it is easier said than done.

The approach of Easter is always an encouragement. In the business of everyday life, we can get down-hearted, worried about things, and miss the greatest truth of all – that this is not the end, that through the death and rising again of Jesus, we have hope of a life where no-one ages and where no-one dies; we have hope of a life of being forever young. Perhaps it will be a life where cousins gather again around a kitchen table and smile and laugh and enjoy just being there.

Happy Easter.



Church of Ireland News

Closure of Dublin churches for 1916 Parade

The Diocese of Dublin and Glendalough issued a statement on 19th February:

“The Church of Ireland is appreciative of the Government’s willingness to consult regarding the facilitation of the Church of Ireland’s provision of worship in the city centre churches on Easter Day during the Commemoration of 1916. The Government has pledged the full support of the state to ensure the facilitation of the fullest possible availability of worship on this most important festival of the Christian calendar. While the archbishop of Dublin is very grateful for this, he recognises that most city centre churches are used by congregations who travel in, for the most part, from areas of the city outside the security cordon. For health and safety reasons and so that those who wish to worship on Easter morning can do so with greater ease, the provision of alternative places of worship remains in place. Senior church clergy will shortly meet with the Government and An Garda Síochána in an attempt to facilitate ease of access to Christ Church Cathedral in order that the cathedral may open for worship on Easter Sunday morning. The church acknowledges the efforts being made by the state in this regard and also the importance being placed by this gesture upon the main emphasis of Easter Day. The archbishop of Dublin will preside at the Easter Vigil in Christ Church Cathedral on Easter Eve and will attend the Easter morning Festival Eucharist in Sandford Parish Church, following which he plans to be in attendance at the 1916 commemoration on Easter Day.”

Ulster Players speak at Saint Anne’s Cathedral

More than 1,000 people were in St Anne’s Cathedral on Monday January 25 to hear three Ulster rugby players. Ruan Pienaar, Peter Browne and Wiehahn Herbst were introduced and interviewed by BBC journalist Mark Simpson.

Wiehahn Herbst related how he received assurance from God after experiencing injuries on the pitch: “Every time, God gives you strength and gives you courage to just go through that challenge.” On living the Christian life, he added: “It’s not always easy but you have got God there for you. In a difficult situation, he gives you the power and peace that the world can’t imagine.”

Ruan Pienaar explained that he prayed for God’s protection and favour over the team before each match and also for his family. “I think it’s a small way to say thanks to God for giving us the talent,” he said. Ruan said he sensed that God had opened a door for him to come to Ulster to spread the gospel as well as to play rugby. “Whenever you go to ask him for forgiveness and to come into your life, he’ll always answer and respond.”

Peter Browne mentioned that his attitude is to play for an audience of one. “It’s not about me. It’s about God and doing my best for God to the best of my ability,” he said.

Parish Notes

Funeral

Wednesday, 10th February 2016 at Lacca Church, **Robert Chambers** of Saint Vincent's Hospital, Mountmellick and formerly of Killanure.

A farmer until the day he died, Bob Chambers grew up on the family farm at Killanure, a place where his heart always remained.

Educated at Offerlane school and a lifelong member of the parish, Bob had a great love for the place and the community from which he came, always interested in news of those among whom he had lived.

Bob loved the land and the livestock, even in hospital he could still give an account of all that was happening on the farm, and he would recall with contentment the years he spent working alongside his father and his brother Ivor.

Though severely physically incapacitated in latter years, Bob retained a sharp mind – he could recall family trees and local history and tell stories of times long forgotten.

Through all his years, and particularly through the later part of his life, Bob was sustained by a deep Christian faith, he would recall services he had attended and sermons he had heard, and would speak about his own prayers that he said each night.

Bob was very grateful for all the love and friendship he received, particularly for the kindness of Dan Mortimer and Alec Stone, and for all the care provided by the staff of Mountmellick Hospital.

After the funeral service at Lacca, Bob's mortal remains were laid to rest at Annatrim beside those of his brother Ivor.

Confirmation 2016: Our confirmation service this year takes place in Mountrath church on Sunday, 22nd May at 4 pm. To prepare for that occasion, we are having eight one hour classes and a rehearsal.

Trying to find a day and a time that suits everyone is almost impossible; we are holding on Tuesdays from 6.30-7.30 pm.

We begin on Tuesday, 1st March and then meet on Tuesdays, 8th March and 15th March.

We begin again after Easter on Tuesday, 5th April and then meet on 12th April, 19th April and 26th April.

On Saturday, 7th May, at 11 am in Mountrath church, there will be a meeting with the bishop of the candidates from Clonenagh Group, along with those from Rathdowney and Portlaoise parishes who are preparing for their own confirmation services. It is important that ALL candidates attend this gathering as it is the rehearsal for the service.

Our final class will be on Tuesday, 10th May.

Lent 2016: The theme of our Lent services this year has been, "Some of those he met along the way." Our series continues each Wednesday evening through Lent.

There will be a service of Holy Communion with hymns and an address based on our theme.

The remaining Lent services are on Wednesday, 2nd March at Lacca Church, when we look at Martha and Mary; on Wednesday, 9th March at Roskelton, when the subject is Zacchaeus and Wednesday, 16th March at Seir Kieran, when we conclude by looking at Pilate and Herod.

World Day of Prayer: The World Day of Prayer for 2016 is on Friday, 4th March and has been prepared by the women of the Cuba.

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 at 8.00 in the evening at Saint Fintan's Church. It would be good to see a few more men supporting the occasion!

Saint Ciaran's Day: One of the earliest Irish saints, Saint Ciaran's monastery at Seir Kieran is said to date from the times of Saint Patrick. We welcome Mr George Cunningham, a well-known local historian, as our speaker at our Saint Ciaran's Tide service on Sunday, 6th March at 3.30 pm. Everyone is welcome, do invite friends and neighbours

Fellowship Meeting: Our fellowship group at Lacca will meet on Thursday, 10th March at 8 pm. Our meetings have gone well so far, with a good level of participation. They are not scary, we use a service from the Prayer Book and sing three hymns, and are open to anyone who should wish to join us.

Saint Patrick's Day: As usual, we shall mark our national saint's day with Holy Communion in Mountrath at 10.30 am on Thursday, 17th March. We do try to make an occasion of it, including singing three hymns, and, while we usually have around twenty people at the service, 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?

Palm Sunday: Services on Palm Sunday, 20th March will be Holy Communion at Roskelton at 9.30 and at Borris-in-Ossory at 11.30 and Morning Prayer in Mountrath at 11.30. Our final Four O'Clock service of the winter season will take place in Lacca at 4 pm.

Holy Week Series: Our Holy Week theme for 2016 is "five buildings", each evening we will look at the Holy Week story as told by Saint Luke and look at the significance of one of the buildings in the story. Beginning with the Temple in Seir Kieran at 7 pm on Palm Sunday we continue:

Monday, 8 pm Roskelton – The Upper Room

Tuesday, 8 pm Annatrim – the house of the high priest

Wednesday, 8 pm Borris in Ossory – the courtyard

Maundy Thursday 8 pm Mountrath – the tomb cut in the rock

Good Friday: Good Friday: Our services on Good Friday begin at 10 am with the Stations of the Cross from Roskelton to The Hollow.

At 2 pm we keep the Last Hour in Mountrath, a service of Bible reading, hymns and quietness; attendance at this service has grown from a dozen to twenty, 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, which has been read by younger members of the congregation in recent years, along 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, 26th March, at 6.50 pm, the time of the sunset which marks the beginning of a new day in the New Testament way of counting the days. We gather for the Easter Vigil, Holy Baptism and the First Communion of Easter Day.

As part of our service each year 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 9 pm at Seir Kieran. As has been our practice in recent years, we shall light the Easter Fire on the monastic site where Saint Ciaran 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.

Thanks from the Roe Family: The Roe family want to sincerely thank everyone who sympathised with us on the recent death of our dad George, those who attended both funeral services, donated so generously to the Laois Hospice Foundation collection and sang so vibrantly his favourite hymns which he loved to sing.

A special word of thanks to Rev Canon Ian Poulton and the Venerable John Murray for the care and attention to detail they put into dad's funeral services and to Margaret Jestin our organist.

It would also be impossible to thank all those who were so kind to dad over the past few years so we trust that this acknowledgement will go some way to expressing our sincere gratitude to you all.

Clonenagh Parish Fundraising **Golf Classic** on May 20th in Mountrath Golf Club is now open for sponsorship of a hole and team entries. More details next month.

Parish Diary

March

- 4th Friday.....World Day of Prayer Service (*page 5*)
- 5th Saturday.....Cancer Patient & Carer Seminar (*page 7*)
- 6th Sunday.....Saint Ciaran's Day Service (*page 5*)
- 10th Thursday.....Fellowship Meeting (*page 5*)
- 17th Thursday.....Saint Patrick's Day Service (*page 5*)
- 23rd Wednesday.....Closing date for April Newsletter**



Seminar &
Ministry Day

God Cares For the Cancer Patient & Carer

Saturday 5 March
10.30am - 3.00pm



Main speaker: Cherith Semple
Cancer Nurse Specialist

Cherith Semple is originally from Dungiven, Co. Derry, and is now a clinical nurse specialist in Belfast. She specialises in head and neck cancer, and has been involved in intermittent research work over the last 15 years.

*Practical and
inspirational help for
those affected by cancer*

Other Contributors include:
Geoff & Margaret Moore
(Family Care in Cancer NI)

At The Faith Mission Centre, Durrow

Sat Nav: 52.834487, -7.437736

Items for the April 2016 Newsletter need to be with the editor by **WEDNESDAY March 23rd AT THE LATEST**, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the fourth Sunday, March 27th.

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

Services & Readings

| March | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|--|---|---|--|
| First Sunday 6th | Joshua 5: 9-12 Psalm 32 2 Corinthians 5: 16-21 Luke 15: 1-3, 11b-32 | Roskelton 9.30am Morning Prayer | Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion | Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Morning Prayer | Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion | Seir Kieran 3.30pm Saint Ciaran's Day Service |
| Second Sunday 13th | Isaiah 43: 16-21 Psalm 126 Philippians 3: 4b-14 John 12: 1-8 | Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion | Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion | | Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer | |
| Palm Sunday 20th | Isaiah 50: 4-9a Psalm 118: 1-2, 19-29 Philippians 2: 5-11 Luke 19: 28-40 | Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion | Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Holy Communion | Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer | Lacca 4.00pm Palm Sunday Service | Seir Kieran 3.30pm Evening Prayer and First Holy Week Address |
| Monday in Holy Week 21st | | Roskelton 8.00pm Compline | | | | |
| Tuesday in Holy Week 22nd | | Annatrim 8.00pm Late Evening Office | | | | |
| Wednesday in Holy Week 23rd | | Borris-in-Ossory 8.00pm Evening Prayer | | | | |
| Maundy Thursday 24th | | Mountrath 8.00pm Holy Communion | | | | |
| Good Friday 25th | | Roskelton to The Hollow 10.00am Walking With The Cross | Mountrath 2.00pm The Last Hour | Lacca 8.00pm Readings and Hymns for Good Friday | | |
| Easter Eve 26th | | Annatrim 6.45pm Easter Vigil, Holy Baptism and First Communion of Easter Day | | Seir Kieran 9.30pm Lighting the Easter Fire and Holy Communion | | |
| Easter Day 27th | Acts 10: 34-43 Psalm 118: 1-2, 14-24 1 Corinthians 15: 19-26 Luke 24: 1-12 | Borris-in-Ossory 8.30am Holy Communion | Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion | Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion | Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion | |