

# The Newsletter

October 2016

**Rector:**

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**Diocesan Reader:**

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*Mrs. Inez Gee recently celebrated her 95th birthday with tea and cake following a service of Holy Communion at St. Matthew's, Roskelton; with Anne Gee and Rev'd Ian Coulter*

## **Clonenagh Group of Parishes**

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

# Rector's Letter

Sometimes things can take a lot less time than you think.

The Church of Ireland allows clergy to take sabbatical leave from time to time, periods away from the parish to allow opportunity for reading, study and thinking. The guideline is that sabbatical leave of three months might be granted every seven years. Having completed thirty years of parish ministry last June and never having taken a sabbatical break, I thought about taking one this last summer. We never know how things will turn out and, in retrospect, it was a blessing not to have gone away for three months.

What I did decide to do was to take the full holiday I was allowed under diocesan regulations. Being away for four weeks allowed time to stop completely and think about things, to learn from what can be seen around about.

Going to France each year has meant visiting many of the medieval Roman Catholic churches and noticing the way in which they do things. Ministry for most of the priests must be very discouraging. Parishes can contain twenty or more churches, on a map of one parish there were thirty-three. The arrangement seems to be that there is a weekly Mass in the main town and then Masses in the other churches on a rotation basis, perhaps only twice a year.

Pondering a parish notice board in one French town, there was a realisation that this is the way the Church of Ireland is going if we continue as we are. The French situation translated to the Church of Ireland situation in Laois and Offaly would mean services in places like Portlaoise, Portarlington, Birr and Tullamore and worship in smaller places becoming very infrequent. Yet we know that the less often services are held, the greater the likelihood that congregations will dwindle until they disappear altogether.

Three months of sabbatical leave would only have produced similar thoughts and a similar conclusion - that we need to look at the example of the church in the New Testament where local groups of Christians met for the breaking of bread on a weekly basis. Rather than the Church of Ireland thinking in terms of groups or unions or parishes, we need to think about individual churches. We need to reverse the trend toward more and more amalgamation and instead think about how each one of our churches might follow the pattern found in the Acts of the Apostles.

Travel to France and we can see in a short time what things will be like if we do not say that we want to do things in a different way.



# Church of Ireland News

## **An interview with the new head of the RCB**

David Ritchie, the recently appointed Chief Officer & Secretary General of the Representative Church Body of the Church of Ireland, talks about his plans for the role.

### **DAVID, CAN YOU DESCRIBE YOUR CAREER TO DATE?**

I have had a varied career. After studying Civil Engineering at Trinity College in Dublin I joined Concern, the Irish relief and development agency, designing and building refugee settlement centres in Cambodia. And then I went to Rwanda during the 1994 genocide developing refugee camps, sanitation and water programmes. Following my overseas experience I trained as a Chartered Accountant with KPMG before joining the ESB and then finally moving to Rabobank, where I worked for fourteen years.

### **DO YOU SEE YOUR PREVIOUS BACKGROUND AS RELEVANT TO YOUR NEW ROLE?**

I have always had an interest in finance and engineering, and also an interest in faith and church. This role in the RCB allows me bring together both these interests. I have been discussing and thinking a lot about the strategy and role of the RCB, and the recurring challenge as I currently see it is how can the RCB best facilitate and support the Church of Ireland, in the South and North, for new churches and established churches, for the present and also for the future.

### **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE THE ROLE OF CHIEF OFFICER & SECRETARY GENERAL?**

It is a very broad role. I am very thankful for having three months' overlap with Adrian Clements, the outgoing Chief Officer, who was very patient with all my questions. In summary, the RCB has a responsibility for the investments, finance, property, legal advice, trusts, clergy payroll and Synod services as well as supporting various organisational projects. The Chief Officer & Secretary General is responsible for setting the vision, direction and strategy, as well as managing and establishing the control structures of the RCB.

### **YOU MENTIONED 'VISION' AS ONE OF YOUR ROLES. HOW DO YOU CURRENTLY SEE THE RCB AND WHERE DO YOU SEE IT GOING?**

The RCB has an excellent team of people. As I reflect on your question, I am reminded of a leadership book 'Good to Great' by Jim Collins where he uses the analogy of a bus arguing that the first stage to building great organisations is to get the right people on board, the next stage is to begin the journey. I look forward to this journey with the team at the RCB. So over the next year one of my key objectives will be to articulate this vision for the RCB. But I am also aware the vision is built on values and the values that I hope to develop would include accessibility, efficiency, reliability and a passion for what we stand for and what we do.

# Parish Notes

**Mountrath Harvest:** Our harvest thanksgiving season begins on Sunday, 25th September at 4 pm when we welcome the Revd Tim Irvine, Rector of Mountmellick, as our preacher.

**Harvest offerings:** We need not look far in the newspapers, or on the television news, for stories about where money has gone; sometimes even the government does not seem to know where money has gone. In times when there is a lack of transparency, and when we have become very distrustful about how money is spent, we have tried in our parishes to be clear about where the money we give actually goes.

This year, the plan is very practical. Each time the rector has visited Rwanda, he has visited the village of Nyamagana where there is a desperate need for a new health clinic. In 2011, the Church of Ireland Bishops' Appeal gave €25,000 for the upgrading of the dispensary in the village, including providing new equipment. Part of the way through that work, the local government officials came along and said the dispensary was not sufficient for the needs of the community, a clinic was needed.

Obviously, money cannot be spent twice and, after the work on the dispensary was complete, there was only money sufficient to build the walls of the new clinic, which will have around a dozen rooms and which is intended to provide both out-patient and in-patient care.

At the end of January 2017, Philip Bennett plans to take a work party to Rwanda to assist the local people with putting a roof onto the building so that internal work can begin (the rector, who is completely useless at anything practical, will not be going). The total cost of the roof is around €10,000.

As a gesture of our thanks to God for all his goodness and loving-kindness,

it would be good if we were able to send with Philip a generous contribution towards the cost of the work. Every Euro will go towards the cost of the materials needed.

**Mothers' Union:** Our Mothers' Union branch hold their opening service of the new year in Saint Peter's Church, Mountrath on Monday, 26th September at 8 pm.

**School harvest:** Clonenagh National School celebrate the harvest on a Wednesday evening this year instead of on a Friday evening (hopefully avoiding clashes with other activities). The service takes place on Wednesday, 28th September and everyone is welcome to join us for the occasion.

**Saint Michael and All Angels:** When we think about Roman Catholic neighbours we know who attend Mass on a daily basis, we realise that we are not just as disciplined as they are. In Mountrath, we try to keep one of the saints' or holy days each month and in September we remember the archangel Saint Michael and all the angels whom we believe God sends to watch over his loved ones. Our Holy Communion for Michaelmas will be on Thursday, 29th September at 8 pm.

**Harvest services:** The harvest festival season continues through the month of October. On Sunday, 2nd October we shall be giving thanks in Roskelton at 4 pm and in Seir Kieran at 7 pm, when Mrs Gillian Purser will be our speaker

**Annatrim harvest:** The harvest thanksgiving season is a time when we give thanks to God for all of his gifts to us, including our lives, and it is very fitting to be able to include a baptism, a very real sign of new life, as part of our celebration

in Annatrim on Sunday, 9th October at 11 am.

**Fellowship group:** Our fellowship group has its monthly meeting at Lacca on Thursday, 13th October. Thank you to James Bennett for taking the September meeting.

**Mountrath Historical Society:** The local history society holds its monthly meeting in the library, 6.15-7.15 pm on Thursday, 13th October.

**Lacca Harvest:** The Revd Richard Seymour-Whiteley will be our preacher at Lacca on Sunday, 16th October at 4 pm. We hope to have our meeting room complete by then and are very grateful to those who have funded and undertaken the work.

**Saint Luke's Day:** There will be Holy Communion to remember the gospel writer Saint Luke in Mountrath church on Tuesday, 18th October at 8 pm.

**Diocesan synod:** The annual synod of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory diocese meets on Wednesday, 19th October, when our parishes will be represented by our five synod members: Mr Joe Peavoy, Mrs Emily Jackson, Mrs Jean Treacy, Mr Ivan Jestin and Mrs Joyce Wharton. The rector will miss the synod, being at a theological conference in Penmaenmawr.

**Saint Patrick's Duty:** The rector is canon in residence at Saint Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin on Sunday, 23rd October, but will only be in Dublin for the day.

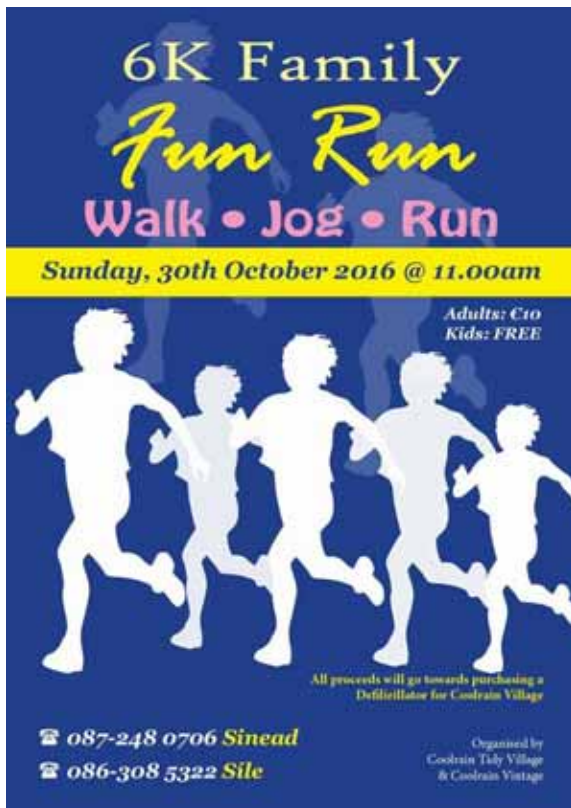
**Borris-in-Ossory Harvest:** Our season of harvest services concludes on Sunday, 30th October at 10.30 am with a group service

in Borris-in-Ossory. Having had over sixty at the group service in Annatrim at the end of July, there is no reason not to have a full church for the harvest at Borris.

**Remembrance of loved ones:** A reminder that on the first Sunday of November, Sunday 6th, we hold our annual service of remembrance of loved ones in Mountrath church at 7 pm. Everyone is welcome at this service.

**Clonenagh Parish Fundraising Committee** would like to thank everyone who supported the Golf Classic and made it a great success; the sum raised to date is €6,456.

Thanks too to Elizabeth for looking after the prizes, to Mabel for looking after the time sheet, and to everyone who helped on the day or night checking score cards and selling tickets.



6K Family  
Fun Run  
Walk • Jog • Run  
Sunday, 30th October 2016 @ 11.00am  
Adults: €10  
Kids: FREE  
All proceeds will go towards purchasing a Defibrillator for Coolrain Village  
Organized by  
Coolrain Tidy Village  
& Coolrain Vintage  
☎ 087-248 0706 Sinead  
☎ 086-308 5322 Sile

# Queen of the Plough

Parishioners who saw the RTE television programme “Queen of the Plough” will be familiar with the story and successes of Laura Grant of Seir Kieran parish in the local and national ploughing championships. Laura, who is a twenty-one year old undergraduate student at Waterford Institute of Technology, fulfilled her ambition on Wednesday, 21st September at the National Ploughing Championships at Tullamore. Laura, representing her home county of Offaly was delighted at winning the “farmerette” class and becoming the women’s national ploughing champion. Scoring 91 points, Laura was two points clear of Rose Nyhan from East Cork and six points ahead of third placed Joanne Deery, a former champion, the Co Monaghan representative.

Laura has been ploughing competitively since teenage years and has steadily

improved her performance at the national championship since coming eighth after scoring 71 points in the 2012 competition at Athy in Co Kildare. Success required many, many hours of practice, and many more hours spent competing at competitions around the country. Getting on a tractor and driving three hours to take part in a competition in Co Longford, and then driving home again afterwards, is not everyone’s idea of weekend relaxation. Laura would wish to pay tribute to her coach Dennis Dooley for all his advice and patience that contributed so much to her success.

We should not forget that Laura is not the only ploughing champion in Seir Kieran and congratulate Offaly champion John McBryde, who came sixth out of a very large field of entrants, in the vintage class at the national championships.



*Left: Laura with her coach Dennis Dooley and her parents Margaret and George*

*Below: Laura and other winners on the platform with Anna May McHugh of the National Ploughing Association*





## WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY

has taken place on the 10th September each year since 2003. It offers us a way of joining with others around the world who are working towards the common goal of preventing suicide.

Although the 10th September has passed, the common themes and goals of suicide prevention remain relevant for every day of the year. The theme of the 2016 World Suicide Prevention Day was "Connect, communicate and care."

Fostering connections with those who have lost a loved one to suicide or have been suicidal themselves is crucial to furthering suicide prevention efforts. Social connectedness reduces the risk of suicide, so being there for someone who has become disconnected can be a life-saving act. Connecting them with formal and informal supports may also help to prevent suicide.

Open communication is vital if we are to combat suicide. In many communities, suicide is shrouded in silence or spoken of only in hushed tones. We need to discuss suicide as we would any other public health issue if we are to dispel myths about it and reduce the stigma surrounding it. This is not to say that we shouldn't exercise necessary caution; we don't want to normalise suicide either.

All the connecting and communicating in the world will have no effect without the final ingredient "care". We need to ensure that we are caring people. We need to look out for others who may be struggling, and let them tell their story in their own way and at their own pace.

## SOME STATISTICS RELATING TO SUICIDE

The World Health Organisation estimates that over 800,000 people die by suicide each year – that is one person every 40 seconds.

Up to 25 times as many again make a suicide attempt.

The number of lives lost each year to suicide exceeds the number of deaths due to homicide and war combined.

Globally suicide rates are highest for people 70 years and over.

Suicide is the second leading cause of death in the 15-29 years age group in 2012 worldwide.

It is estimated that during 2012 for each adult who died of suicide there were over 20 others who made suicide attempts.

Suicide is complex with psychological, social, biological, cultural and environmental factors involved.

The strongest risk factor for suicide is a previous suicide attempt

Reaching out to those who may be struggling or may have become disconnected from others and offering support can be a life-saving act.

Reaching out involves active listening and engaging with a person in a non-judgmental and supportive way.

Don't wait for the 10th September to come around again, Connect, Communicate, and Care, today.

*Emily Dunne*

*Counselling & Psychotherapy  
Dip, B.A, B.A (Hons), M.A, A.P.C.P.*

**Items for the November 2016 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY October 19th AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the fourth Sunday, October 23rd.**

**PLEASE** make your item as ready for publication as possible, and most importantly, please ensure that names are spelled correctly.

**Ideally, items should be submitted by e-mail** to- [newsletter@clonenagh.com](mailto: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](http://www.clonenagh.com)

# Services & Readings

October						
<b>First Sunday</b> <b>2<sup>nd</sup></b>	Lamentations 1:1-6 Psalm 137 2 Timothy 1:1-14 Luke 17:5-10	<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Holy Communion	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 11.00am Morning Prayer	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Holy Communion	<b>Roskelton</b> 4.00pm Harvest Thanksgiving	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 7.00pm Harvest Thanksgiving
<b>Second Sunday</b> <b>9<sup>th</sup></b>	Jeremiah 29:1,4-7 Psalm 66 2 Timothy 2:8-15 Luke 17:11-19	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Holy Communion	<b>Annatrim</b> 11.00am Harvest Communion & Holy Baptism		<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	
<b>Third Sunday</b> <b>16<sup>th</sup></b>	Jeremiah 31:27-34 Psalm 119:97-104 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5 Luke 18:1-8	<b>Roskelton</b> 9.30am Holy Communion	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 11.00am Holy Communion	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Lacca</b> 4.00pm Harvest Thanksgiving
<b>Fourth Sunday</b> <b>23<sup>rd</sup></b>	Joel 2:23-32 Psalm 65 2 Timothy 4:6-8,16-18 Luke 18:9-14	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Family Service	<b>Annatrim</b> 11.00am Morning Prayer	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Holy Communion	
<b>Fifth Sunday</b> <b>30<sup>th</sup></b>	Habakkuk 1:1-4;2:1-4 Psalm 119:137-144 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4,11-12 Luke 19:1-10	<b>Mountrath</b> 9.00am Holy Communion		<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 10.30am Harvest Thanksgiving		

# Parish Diary

## September

- 26th Monday.....Mothers' Union Opening Service (page 4)  
 28th Wednesday.....Clonagh National School Harvest Service (page 4)  
 29th Thursday.....Holy Communion for Michaelmas (page 4)

## October

- 2nd Sunday.....Roskelton Harvest Service (page 4)  
 2nd Sunday.....Seir Kieran Harvest Service (page 4)  
 9th Sunday.....Annatrim Harvest Service (page 4)  
 13th Thursday.....Fellowship Group (page 5)  
 13th Thursday.....Mountrath Historical Society meeting (page 5)  
 16th Sunday.....Lacca Harvest Service (page 5)  
 18th Tuesday.....St. Luke's Day Service (page 5)  
 19th Wednesday.....Diocesan Synod (page 5)  
**19th Wednesday.....Closing date for November Newsletter**  
 30th Sunday.....Borris-in-Ossory Harvest Service (page 5)  
 30th Sunday.....Coolrain 6K Family Fun Run (page 5)

## November

- 6th Sunday.....Remembrance of Loved Ones Service (page 5)