

# The Newsletter

December 2016

**Rector:**

Canon Ian Poulton,  
Clonenagh Rectory,  
Portlaoise Road,  
Mountrath.  
Phone: 057-8732146

**Diocesan Reader:**

Mabel Peavoy,  
Shannon Road,  
Mountrath.  
Phone:057-8732331



*Mrs Melissa Burnell and Miss Jill Cobbe on Miss Cobbe's last day as a teacher at Clonenagh National School. We wish Miss Cobbe well in her new post at Sandy Lane National School in Portarlington.*

## Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

# Rector's Letter

I have for a long time suffered from bouts of depression, sinking unexpectedly into moods where all I want to do is to hide away and do nothing, worried about even the smallest things. On holiday in September, I sank into a very black time and felt so bad I phoned my doctor from France to make an appointment to see him as soon as I returned.

The doctor listened very sympathetically and then told me that I had a deficiency of adrenaline, that I was fine when I was going flat out, but that as soon as I stopped, then the chemical level went down and I became depressed. He gave me tablets to get the balance right and reckoned by next summer the problem should be past.

Perhaps it's partly the effect of the tablets, but also partly the arrival of Advent, but I have been feeling much better. Advent was a special time for the great spiritual writer Thomas Merton. Here's what he wrote about waiting and expectation in "Advent hope or delusion:"

"The certainty of Christian hope lies beyond passion and beyond knowledge. Therefore we must sometimes expect our hope to come in conflict with darkness, desperation and ignorance. Therefore, too, we must remember that Christian optimism is not a perpetual sense of

euphoria, an indefectible comfort in whose presence neither anguish nor tragedy can possibly exist. We must not strive to maintain a climate of optimism by the mere suppression of tragic realities. Christian optimism lies in a hope of victory that transcends all tragedy: a victory in which we pass beyond tragedy to glory with Christ crucified and risen."

Thomas Merton understood that all of us go through dark times at some points in our lives and reminds us that being Christian is not about having an easy life, but believing in a hope that is greater than anything which this life might throw at us, it's about having a hope in Jesus who has died and risen again for us.

The season of Advent is about light coming into the darkness, it's about the lives of ordinary people like ourselves feeling brighter. The words of the blessing at the end of the Holy Communion service during Advent say, "Christ the sun of righteousness shine upon you, gladden your hearts and scatter the darkness from before you." Dark days are never easy days and are not readily changed by words, but Thomas Merton reminds us that darkness and desperation never have the last word.



# Church of Ireland News

## **Statement from St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, on Patrick O'Brien**

St Patrick's Cathedral deeply regrets the fact that children, the most vulnerable members of its community, were sexually abused by Patrick O'Brien. Patrick O'Brien was a member of the congregation and held the post of treasurer with an independent fundraising body, the Friends of St Patrick's Cathedral. The cases of abuse that have been notified to the Cathedral date from the period 1978 to 1989. The community here is shocked at the enormity of the crimes perpetrated by Patrick O'Brien. These crimes against children have caused feelings of revulsion and immense sadness. St Patrick's Cathedral is committed to ensuring the safety of all children in its care. The Cathedral fully implements the Church of Ireland's child protection policy 'Safeguarding Trust'. St Patrick's Cathedral apologises sincerely and unreservedly for the fact that those victims and their families who needed and were entitled to care and support did not receive this. Once again, it commends the courage of Patrick O'Brien's victims in coming forward.

## **Gabriel Chrystal Appointed as Child Protection Officer**

The Church of Ireland is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr Gabriel Chrystal as Child Protection Officer for the Republic of Ireland.

Reporting to Dr Ken Fennelly, Secretary to the General Synod Board of Education, Gabriel will be based in Church of Ireland House Dublin. Originally from Sligo, Gabriel has been in police work since 2002 and has been part of the child protection team within both the Metropolitan Police in London and Thames Valley Police. He brings a broad range of experience in the field of family support and child protection, including case management and investigation, and has also specialised in the provision of training programmes. Together with Margaret Yarr, Church of Ireland Child Protection Officer for Northern Ireland, Gabriel's role will be to provide advice and support to the Church in the implementation and development of its child protection policy Safeguarding Trust.

## **Human Stories Flower Display in Roscrea**

It had long been in the mind of Diocesan Reader and local church historian Mr Adrian Hewson to bring together the human stories linking World War One and the Easter Rising. It happened in August, with the support of Roscrea Heritage Association. St Cronan's Church, Roscrea, held an exhibition of artifacts with a breathtaking flower display of 'Human Stories'. It was important to Adrian that the church building be used as St Cronan himself would like it used: bringing people together.

# Parish Notes

## From the registers...

**Funeral:** On Monday, 21st November 2016 at Saint Peter's Church, Mountrath, Maureen Hipwell of Paddock. Growing up on the family's farm at Rossmore, Ballyfin, Maureen retained a great emotional attachment to the place that had been home. Educated at the Cote School at Ballyfin, Maureen served an apprenticeship at Shaw's of Athy, the memories of which she would speak of with pride. Maureen would cycle to and from Athy each week and was known for her hard work and trustworthiness. Moving to Manchester to live with her aunt, Maureen was proud at having worked for Boot's. Marriage to Harry Hipwell brought the young Maureen White back to Ireland to live at Paddock. Maureen combined her role as a wife and as a mother to her children with work on the farm. Maureen was known for her careful care of the livestock, paying particular attention to animals that were sick or weak. Maureen's failing health brought an end to the work in which she had found so much contentment. A firm Christian faith was important throughout Maureen's life and helped sustain her through times of grief. There was a sense of calmness in her endurance of her illness, a quiet forbearance of the difficult times she endured. Following her funeral service, Maureen's mortal remains were laid to rest beside those of her husband Harry who had predeceased her by twenty-five-years. Donations in lieu of flowers were for the work of the Friends of Portlaoise Hospital and of the Alzheimer's Society.

**Saint Andrew's Day:** We try to observe a saint's or holy day in Mountrath each month. December is a very busy time for other engagements, so we shall observe Saint Andrew's Day, which falls

on Wednesday, 30th November, when there will be Holy Communion in Saint Peter's Church at 8 pm. This will be four weeks after we have celebrated All Saints' Day on 1st November and five weeks before we remember the coming of the wise men at the Epiphany on 6th January, so is conveniently timed.

**Mothers' Union:** Our Mothers' Union branch holds its Christmas Dinner in Mountrath Golf Club on Friday, 2nd December at 7 pm. All members, spouses and friends are welcome at the dinner. Please let Jean Treacy know by Tuesday, 29th November if you hope to attend, 085 705 4805.

**4th Seed Youth Group:** There is a youth group for young people aged 11-13 at the Durrow Centre on the first Saturday of the month from 7.30 until 9.30 pm. The group will meet on 3rd December, 7th January, 4th February (part of a youth weekend for 11-13s from 3rd-5th February, 4th March, 8th April, 6th May and 3rd June. Contact Mervyn, 057 874 0770 for further details.

**Bishop Michael's Visit:** Bishop Michael is coming to Lacca on Sunday, 4th December to preach and preside at the Holy Communion and dedicate the hall. After that service, there will be a congregational meeting with him to discuss ideas about the future. It would be good if there could be a wide representation from across Offerlane parish to look at how a community of 160 people can be strong and vibrant in ten years' time. Carrying on paying stipends to clergy who are becoming fewer and fewer and who have more and more churches is not going to be the best way of serving the mission of the church. The New Testament church is one where local Chris-

tian churches have local leaders and are under the oversight of a bishop. The question needs to be how churches in 2026 can be like the early church. There will be a preparatory meeting in the hall on Tuesday, 29th November at 8 pm, to which everyone is welcome.

**December 4th** is a busy day in the life of our community. On Sunday, 4th December, the annual seniors' dinner takes place in the Community School at 1.30 pm and at 4 pm the Christmas market takes place in the square. Mountrath was entered into the "Enterprise Town" competition during November, so do please try to support local businesses with your Christmas spending.

**Fellowship Group:** The final meeting of 2016 of our fellowship group takes place in Lacca church on Thursday, 8th December at 8 pm.

**Anantrim Carol Service:** The Christmas carol service season begins in Anantrim church on Sunday, 11th December at 11 am.

**Midweek carols:** Borris-in-Ossory and Seir Kieran churches will hold their carol services at 8 pm on Wednesday, 14th December in Borris-in-Ossory and at 8 pm on Thursday, 15th December in Seir Kieran.

**School Christmas service:** Clonenagh National School hold their Christmas carol service in Mountrath church on Friday, 16th December at 7 pm. Attendances at school services have continued to be very good and we look forward to again welcoming parents, friends and the wider community.

**Final carol services:** The carol service season concludes on Sunday, 18th December when we shall be holding services in Lacca at 4 pm and in Mountrath at 7 pm.

**Christmas services:** Our Christmas Holy Communion services begin at 7pm on Saturday, 24th December at Seir Kieran. This is followed by Borris-in-Ossory at 8.15 pm and Lacca at 9.30 pm. On Christmas morning, we begin with Roskelton at 9.30 am and then have services at Annatrim at 10.30 am and Mountrath at 11.30 am. It would be encouraging to see every single parishioner in church at Christmas.

**Tractor Run:** The annual Clonenagh National School Tractor Run takes place on Wednesday, 28th December, meeting in Coolrain at 12.30 pm. The weather on 28th December last year was dreadful, constant heavy rain and a biting cold wind, and 79 tractors still turned out – a tribute to the dedication of all involved. We look forward to a good turnout this year, and, hopefully, better weather.

**Covenant Service:** There will be covenant services, committing the coming year into God's hands in each church of the five churches in which there is worship on the first day of the New Year, Sunday, 1st January 2017. We hope people will start the year as they mean to continue and will be present to make New Year spiritual resolutions.

**Epiphany:** We remember the coming of the wise men with Holy Communion for the Epiphany in Mountrath Church on Friday, 6th January at 8 pm.

**Farmers' Service:** Our annual service of prayers for the farming year and the blessing of the plough takes place on Plough Sunday, 8th January 2017, at Mountrath Church at 7 pm.

**Saint Peter's Church Windows:** We are very pleased with the new windows on the south side of Saint Peter's Church in Mountrath and in the New Year will commence the other necessary work, including providing new protective

glazing for the stained glass east window and carrying out repairs to the plaster and re-painting inside the church. We are very grateful to everyone whose generosity has made the work possible.

The time has come once again when the treasurers have to balance their books, so if you haven't yet paid your **Sustentation** they would be delighted to hear from you as soon as possible.

**Harvest Offerings:** Thank you very much to everyone who so generously supported our harvest thanksgiving collections for a roof for a health centre in Rwanda, around €2,000 was collected in total. With other contributions, we hope to reach our target of €10,000 to enable Philip Bennett and his companions to complete the work when they travel to Africa at the end of January.

**Leprosy Mission boxes** should be returned to Olga Telford by December 5th so that the money can reach the charity before Christmas.

Check your attics!

Ever wondered if that family heirloom has a story to tell?

Then pop on down to **Abbeyleix South National School** on Sunday 4th December from 2pm to 5pm. Sincere thanks to Sheppard's Irish Auction House for hosting their Antiques Roadshow to help raise funds for new laptops for the school.

€5 for one item and €10 for 3 items. Refreshments will also be available in our coffee shop.



*The Children with Mervyn Tomb enjoying the Family Service at Lacca*



**Fancy trying a diet that's 100% guaranteed to work? Read on.**

**HAVING SELF-ESTEEM**

How you feel about yourself is too important to be left to chance. You owe it to yourself to make sure that you are aware of your qualities; skills and those personal things that can help you feel good about yourself. It is your defence against depression and all the other worries we can carry in life. Making sure you maintain a good self-esteem takes time and effort but it is worth it. Here are some ideas to help you work out a "Feeling Good Diet". Choose at least one from each area and then write them in the "Feeling Good Diet" sheet that follows. Tick these activities as you do them each day. Remember your aim is to make sure that each day you include a mixture of doing, thinking and relaxing activities that are good for you and you can add your own ideas as well.

**Social**

- Visit someone / write a letter
- Do something for someone
- Invite a friend home
- Spend time with your family
- Go to a party / have a party
- Go shopping with someone
- Have a meal with someone
- .
- .

**Recreational**

- Go for a walk
- Go to the movies
- Play some music
- Read a book
- Watch some sport
- Fish
- Play with pets
- Plan a holiday
- Play a board game
- .
- .

**Creative**

- Write a poem
- Paint a picture
- Sew / knit
- Build a model
- Form a group
- Write a diary
- Write a song
- Cook a meal
- .
- .

**Chilling**

- Buy a treat / have a bath
- Wear special clothes
- Talk to your best mate
- Do your hair differently
- Plan a favourite activity
- Look at a view
- .
- .

**MY "FEELING GOOD" DIET**

Areas	Date:					Date:					Date:					Date:				
	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F	M	T	W	T	F
<b>SOCIAL</b> ✓																				
<b>RECREATIONAL</b> ✓																				
<b>CREATIVE</b> ✓																				
<b>CHILLING</b> ✓																				

Items for the January 2017 Newsletter need to be with the editor by **WEDNESDAY December 21st AT THE LATEST**, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for **Christmas Eve & Christmas Day, December 24th & 25th**. **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@clonagh.com](mailto:newsletter@clonagh.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.clonagh.com](http://www.clonagh.com)

# Services & Readings

December						
<b>First Sunday 4<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 11: 1-10 Psalm 72: 1-7, 18-19 Romans 15: 4-13 Matthew 3: 1-12</i>	<b>Roskelton</b> 9.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Holy Communion	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 11.00am Morning Prayer	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Holy Communion
<b>Thursday 8<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Lacca</b> 8.00pm Fellowship Service				
<b>Second Sunday 11<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 35: 1-10 Magnificat James 5: 7-10 Matthew 11: 2-11</i>	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Holy Communion	<b>Annatrim</b> 11.00am Carol Service		<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	
<b>Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 8.00pm Carol Service				
<b>Thursday 15<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Seir Kieran</b> 8.00pm Carol Service				
<b>Friday 16<sup>th</sup></b>		<b>Mountrath</b> 7.00pm Clonenagh National School Carol Service				
<b>Third Sunday 18<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 7: 10-16 Psalm 80: 1-7, 17-19 Romans 1: 1-7 Matthew 1: 18-25</i>	<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>Lacca</b> 4.00pm Carol Service	<b>Mountrath</b> 7.00pm Carol Service
<b>Christmas Eve 24<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 9: 2-7 Psalm 96</i>	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 7.00pm Holy Communion	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 8:15pm Holy Communion		<b>Lacca</b> 9.30pm Holy Communion	
<b>Christmas Day 25<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Titus 2: 11-14 Luke 2: 1-20</i>	<b>Roskelton</b> 9.30am Holy Communion	<b>Annatrim</b> 10.30am Holy Communion		<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Holy Communion	

## Parish Diary

- November** 30th Wednesday.....St. Andrew's Day Service (*page 4*)  
 2nd Friday.....Mothers' Union Christmas Dinner (*page 4*)  
 3rd Saturday.....4th Seed Youth Group (*page 4*)  
 4th Sunday.....Dedication of Lacca Hall & congregational meeting (*page 4*)  
 4th Sunday.....Annual Seniors Dinner (*page 5*)
- December** 4th Sunday.....Mountrath Christmas Market (*page 5*)  
 4th Sunday.....Abbeyleix School Antiques Roadshow (*page 6*)  
 5th Monday.....Final date for return of Leprosy Mission boxes (*page 6*)  
 8th Thursday.....Fellowship Service (*page 5*)  
**21st Wednesday.....Closing date for January 2017 Newsletter**  
 28th Wednesday.....Clonenagh National School Tractor Run (*page 5*)
- January** 1st Sunday.....Covenant Service (*page 5*)  
 3rd Saturday.....4th Seed Youth Group (*page 4*)  
 6th Friday.....Epiphany Holy Communion (*page 5*)  
 8th Sunday.....Farmers' Service (*page 5*)