

# The Newsletter

January 2017

**Rector:**

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*A Christmas tree of hands made from the cut shapes of the hands of all the staff and students of Clonenagh National School*

## Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

# Rector's Letter

Those of us who are over fifty years old will remember the black Book of Common Prayer. It included the Epistle and Gospel readings for each Sunday and holy day. I loved the poetry of the readings for Christmas, particularly the verses from Saint John Chapter 1 which end with Verse 14 which says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth." I always liked those final words, "full of grace and truth." Jesus was the truth and he taught his followers to always speak the truth. Jesus tells us that our "yes" should mean "yes" and our "no" should mean "no," because anything else comes from the evil one.

Anyone who remembers the old Prayer Book may also remember words of the catechism which were to be learned: "To be true and just in all my dealings: To bear no malice nor hatred in my heart: To keep my hands from picking and stealing, and my tongue from evil speaking, lying, and slandering." The Bible and the church taught us always to speak the truth and not just to speak the truth, but to be just in our dealings with others.

Those who have followed the news stories on the television or in the newspapers will know that Saint Patrick's Cathedral, where I am a

canon, has been at the heart of a terrible child abuse scandal. To me, the Christian response, the one which would be true and just, would be for the cathedral to ask for an independent inquiry into how such horrible crimes were committed against boys in the cathedral choir; the board of the cathedral have set their faces against asking for a government inquiry. Why would they do such a thing? Are they afraid of what other stories might come to light?

I attended a meeting of the cathedral board, together with canons of the cathedral, on Tuesday, 20th December and left feeling very despondent. It all seemed very far from the teaching of Jesus in the Bible and the teaching of the church in the Prayer Book. I have not yet posted my letter resigning as a canon. Some people have said to stay on and to keep speaking, even if in a minority of one.

Jesus is born in Bethlehem and brings God's grace and truth to us. May we know that grace and truth this Christmas, and never take our eyes off of his way of doing things.



# Church of Ireland News

## **RTE at Christmas**

A Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols sung by the Choir of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, will be broadcast live on Christmas Eve at 4pm on RTÉ Radio 1. The Christmas Message from the Archbishops of Armagh, The Most Revd Dr Richard Clarke and The Most Revd Eamon Martin, will be broadcast on Christmas Day at 12.20pm on RTÉ One. It will feature contributions from St Joseph's National School and St Nicholas's National School, Dundalk, and St Peter's National School, Drogheda.

## **Dublin Adopts Interfaith Charter**

A groundbreaking new charter promoting religious freedom, interfaith dialogue and religious diversity in the city of Dublin was officially launched by the Lord Mayor Brendan Carr on 20th December. Coming as it did the day after the attack on a Christmas market in Berlin, the Lord Mayor passed on his condolences to the people of the German city and said he and Dublin's faith leaders were "standing shoulder to shoulder to ensure that this doesn't happen in our city".

The Dublin City Interfaith Charter has been agreed and signed by representatives of Dublin City Interfaith Forum, including Archbishop Michael Jackson. The Forum plans to agree a schedule of projects and programmes in partnership with Dublin City Council to further its aims. The Lord Mayor

spoke of the rise of racism, xenophobia and intolerance across the world. "This intolerance is happening more and more. But in Dublin the interfaith forum has said it is not happening here. We're going to be a focus and a guiding light for tolerance," he said. He urged the faith leaders to ensure that their signing of the Charter was not an empty gesture.

## **Church leaders urge solidarity with fleeing migrants**

The Christian bishops have called for solidarity with migrants fleeing violence in places like Aleppo in Syria and Mosul in Iraq in their Christmas messages. In a joint Christmas statement, the Catholic and Church of Ireland Primate reminded people that the founder of Christianity "became, for a time, a migrant child". Archbishop Eamon Martin and Archbishop Richard Clarke said Jesus Christ and his family fled to a foreign country because their lives were at risk. "The plight of so many hundreds of thousands of displaced people in the world today gives us all cause for thought. If our concern with our own identity allows us to think of others as less worthy of God's love or less in his heart of love than are we, then we are both deluded and dangerous," they said.

# Parish Notes

**From the registers . . .**

**Holy Baptism:** On 26th November 2016 at Saint Mark's Church, Borris-in-Ossory, Anthony Patrick Clarke of Church View, Borris-in-Ossory.

**Funeral:** At Lacca church on Thursday, 1st December 2016, Joy Murphy of Rossvale. Growing up at Lacca, Joy never lost the love of the place where she had spent her childhood years. Married to Harry and living in England, Joy's life was filled with a great love for own home and for her husband and children, and for her parents and her family back in Ireland, to whom she wrote lengthy letters every week. Joy loved beauty; she loved everything to look well and was diligent in her care of her loved ones, paying careful attention that they did not go out without looking their best, and Joy brought a similar love of beauty to her house and to her garden. Her life was one marked by order: Joy believed in planning and tidiness and consideration for others. Joy enjoyed her years as a home help and those whom she visited would have benefited from the carefulness with which she did everything. Joy was known for a direct honesty, honesty in dealing with others, and honesty with herself, following Jesus' teaching that "yes" should mean "yes" and "no" should mean "no." In her final months, Joy was filled with a confident hope about the future, never letting her illness cloud over the person she had been, having the assurance of the faith learned from her mother. Joy's love for her family was reflected in the wonderful care with which they surrounded her during her final days. After her funeral service, the burial took place beside

the grave of Joy's parents in Saint Peter's churchyard in Mountrath.

**Engagement:** Good wishes to David Treacy of Loran, Pike of Rushall and Claire Mullen of Sligo on their recent engagement.

**Burn off the Christmas calories:** Clonenagh National School Parents' Association invites you to join them for healthy exercise at 11 am on Wednesday, 28th December when they have a 6 km fun run/walk starting from Sheeran's in Coolrain at 11 am.

**Vintage Tractor and Car Run:** Events on 28th December continue with Clonenagh National School's seventh annual vintage tractor and car run. Meeting at Sheeran's in Coolrain at 1.30, the run moves off at 2.00. Free food and music all day.

**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.

**Clonenagh Select Vestry:** The select vestry of Clonenagh Parish meets on Wednesday, 4th January at 8 pm to discuss the second phase of the restoration work at Saint Peter's Church. As we are discussing the church building, it would seem appropriate that we meet at the church rather than the hall so everyone can see the things that are being discussed. We are very

pleased with the new windows on the south side of the church and we are very grateful to everyone whose generosity has made the work possible, including Laois County Council who have been very generous in their grants to us.

**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.

**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 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.

**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. It is always a well-attended service. We will welcome the Revd Alec Purser, Rector of Stradbally as our preacher. Our collection will be for Embrace Farm to support them in their work with families affected by farming accidents. Do bring along your friends and neighbours.

**Fellowship service:** Our monthly fellowship meeting takes place at Lacca on Thursday, 12th January at 8pm.

**Rector away:** The Rector is taking his Christmas break from Saturday, 14th January until Saturday, 21st January. In his absence, Canon Patrick Harvey in Abbeyleix has kindly agreed

to take emergency calls. Canon Harvey can be contacted at 057 873 1243.

**Four o'clock service:** Lacca holds its monthly four o'clock service, with tea and buns afterwards, on Sunday, 15th January at 4 pm.

**Mothers' Union:** Members of Mountrath and Ballyfin Mothers' Union branches enjoyed an excellent dinner at Mountrath golf club on Friday, 2nd December. A mulled wine reception was followed by very good food chosen from an imaginative (and adventurous) menu. The next Mothers' Union meeting is on Monday, 23rd January, at Loran, the home of Jean Treacy, when a surprise supper is on the agenda for the evening. One of the most important tasks of the Mothers' Union is the fellowship and support and encouragement of each other, so do come along to the gatherings.

**Fifth Sunday:** Sunday, 29th January is a fifth Sunday of the month. There will be Holy Communion at 9 am in Mountrath church and a group service at 10.30 am in Lacca church. Attendances at our group services in 2016 had improved greatly on previous years. Let's keep up the improvement.

**Bishop Michael's Visit:** Bishop Michael came to Lacca on 4th December to dedicate the new hall and to discuss with parishioners of Annatrim and Lacca their vision for Offerlane parish over the next ten years. It was a very positive meeting and there were plans for the establishment of a Sunday School and for the development of youth work.

**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 in the spring. The trip had been planned for the end of January, but the walls require preparatory work and the metalwork to be used in the roof needs to be prepared. There is no point in a team travelling to Africa and having to sit to wait for work to be done.

**Church of Ireland Census:** Compiling the return from our parishes for the Church of Ireland census, which took place on each Sunday in November, gave the rector a headache (there were 516 of those cards to be checked) and it didn't tell us very much. The aggregate attendances for the four Sundays were 156, 98, 126 and 138 – giving an average almost identical to that in 2013, when the census last took place. But we could have told them that - and saved all the printing costs.



*On Sunday, 4th December 2016, Bishop Michael dedicated the hall at Lacca church. Given in memory of John and Sylvia Lalor of Knocknagad, the construction was carried out by parishioners and friends. The service was attended by members of the two churches in Offerlane Parish, Annatrim and Lacca, and after the dedication the bishop talked with parishioners about their vision for Offerlane Parish in 2026.*

Yes it's Christmas and the children are off school for two weeks or you might be thinking "the holidays are coming" help.

## **HAPPY OR HORRIBLE HOLIDAYS?**

When you think of holidays and Christmas you might think that everyone else has a wonderful family time and really enjoys the holidays, except me?

This is where looking at your thinking pattern may help. Firstly ask yourself if the above statement is fact or opinion.

The truth is that maybe a minority of people are fortunate to have a lovely family time holiday time without any issues. The majority will have good times mixed in with the stress of all the work getting organised for it, things not going to plan, the financial burden of holidays and the stress of all being together in one place and everyone being out of their usual routine but being stuck with each other. Everyone trying to be cheerful because that is the way people are "supposed" to be at Christmas and during the holiday period.

So what can we do to get through this time? Can we make some changes to improve the way we feel about it?

## **IF WE CHANGE THE WAY WE THINK ABOUT IT, OR CHANGE WHAT WE DO-THEN WE WILL CHANGE THE WAY WE FEEL**

If we carry on thinking and doing what we have always done in the past then nothing will change and we will, as expected, have a terrible time. Consider the following questions to see where you can make a change to your thinking:

1. How can I think differently?  
(Can I accept that there will be issues but focus on the fun bits)

2. What can I do differently?

(What is my part in the issue? Is the way I am thinking and then behaving making my worries a reality rather than just an opinion?)

How will I feel if I think/act differently?

(Imagine yourself looking forward to the holiday period, think of all the good things that will happen, imagine yourself relaxing, laughing, having fun. If you think differently then you will act differently and things will change)

It's a bit like looking outside and seeing it pouring with rain, again.

If you think, just look at that. It's raining again. It's been raining for the last few months. Why does it always rain in Ireland? Etc.

Your mood will drop immediately and you will act differently. Also so much of the statement is not actually fact. It won't have been raining for months and it doesn't always rain in Ireland.

Imagine if you could look out at the same scene and say, Oh it's raining again. But I know it will stop or at least I don't have to water the plants today or that's great I'll stay at home and get something done inside the house or whatever. This will definitely help you to feel better about a situation that is out of your control anyway and there are always positives, we just need to practice looking for them.

## **PRACTICE THIS AND SEE HOW IT CHANGES HOW YOU THINK, FEEL AND BEHAVE.**

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

# Services & Readings

January						
<b>First Sunday</b> <b>1<sup>st</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 63: 7-9</i> <i>Psalm 148</i> <i>Hebrews 2: 10-18</i> <i>Matthew 2: 13-23</i>	<b>Roskelton</b> 9.30am Covenant Service	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Covenant Service	<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Covenant Service & Holy Communion	<b>Borris-in-Ossory</b> 11.00am Covenant Service	<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Covenant Service & Holy Communion
<b>Second Sunday</b> <b>8<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 42: 1-9</i> <i>Psalm 29</i> <i>Acts 10: 34-43</i> <i>Matthew 3: 13-17</i>	<b>Seir Kieran</b> 9.30am Holy Communion	<b>Annatrim</b> 11.00am Holy Communion		<b>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Mountrath</b> 7.00pm Plough Sunday Farmers' Service
<b>Third Sunday</b> <b>15<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 49:1-7</i> <i>Psalm 40:1-12</i> <i>1 Corinthians 1: 1-9</i> <i>John 1: 29-42</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>Mountrath</b> 11.30am Morning Prayer	<b>Lacca</b> 4.00pm Four O'Clock Service
<b>Fourth Sunday</b> <b>22<sup>nd</sup></b>	<i>Isaiah 9: 1-4</i> <i>Psalm 27: 1, 4-12</i> <i>1 Corinthians 1: 10-18</i> <i>Matthew 4: 12-23</i>	<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>29<sup>th</sup></b>	<i>Micah 6: 1-8</i> <i>Psalm 15</i> <i>1 Corinthians 1: 18-31</i> <i>Matthew 5: 1-12</i>	<b>Mountrath</b> 9.00am Holy Communion			<b>Lacca</b> 10.30am Group Service	

## Parish Diary

- December** 28th Wednesday.....Clonenagh National School Christmas Walk (*page 4*)  
28th Wednesday.....Clonenagh National School Tractor Run (*page 4*)
- 1st Sunday.....Covenant Service (*page 4*)  
4th Wednesday.....Clonenagh Select Vestry Meeting (*page 4*)  
6th Friday.....Epiphany Holy Communion (*page 5*)  
7th Saturday.....4th Seed Youth Group (*page 5*)
- January** 8th Sunday.....Plough Sunday Farmers' Service (*page 5*)  
12th Thursday.....Fellowship Service (*page 5*)  
15th Sunday.....Four O'Clock Service (*page 5*)  
**18th Wednesday.....Closing date for February 2017 Newsletter**  
23rd Monday.....Mothers' Union Meeting (*page 5*)  
29th Sunday.....Fifth Sunday Service (*page 5*)
- February** 3rd-5th Fri-Sat.....11-13s Youth Weekend (*page 5*)  
4th Saturday.....4th Seed Youth Group (*page 5*)

**Items for the February 2017 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY January 18th AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the Fourth Sunday, January 22nd.**

**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

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