

The Newsletter

February 2017

Rector:

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Visiting the Austrian city of Salzburg on a recent music tour, James Harvey met another Laois man in the great cathedral there. Feargal of Aghaboe founded Salzburg Cathedral in 784, an event marked by commemorative stones at Aghaboe Abbey, and is commemorated by a statue in the Cathedral

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

I wanted to be like Bob.

Bob was an Englishman in Austria in January ten years ago. He was a wonderful skier who came on holiday by himself each year. He always skied with the fastest skiers and always enjoyed himself. Bob was seventy-seven years old.

I was forty-six at the time, thirty-one years younger than Bob, and I thought, "wouldn't it be wonderful to be like him if I lived to the age of seventy-seven?"

The ambition to be like Bob came to a sudden end this year. Having skied well in the morning, after lunch everything was different. Falling for silly reasons, I asked the instructor if I might leave the group when we reached the next village and take the bus back. He thought it wise. Minutes later, as we descended to the village, I fell heavily, landing across my skis and smashing my glasses. After some minutes, and with help, I was able to ski down to the village and find my way to the bus stop. The pain became steadily worse and by the time I found my way to a doctor, the pain was extreme. There was a suspicion of broken ribs and an ambulance was called. At the hospital, I was X-rayed for fractures and given an ultrasound test for kidney damage; both were clear, I had nothing worse than bad bruising. "The pain will increase for

two days and then relent," said the doctor, handing me a prescription for tablets. He wasn't wrong.

Why had I wanted to be like Bob? Who knows?

Perhaps we live in times when we are encouraged to be discontented with the way we are, for how else would the advertising industry work if we could not be persuaded that to have something, or to do something, or to be something, would make us different people? People in former generations would think we were very gullible to be taken in by the media.

More importantly, the Bible tells us to be focused not on what other people are doing, but to be focused on what God calls us to do. Saint Paul tells us that we should lead lives worthy of our calling. Perhaps we would be very different people if we didn't live lives where we wanted to be someone, or something, else, but instead lived the life we have been given with thankful hearts.

Bob would be eighty-seven this year. Perhaps he is still skiing. I shall not be following his example.



Church of Ireland News

Statement by the Church of Ireland Board of Education in Relation to School Admissions Proposals

The Board of Education was interested to learn of the remarks made by Minister Richard Bruton in relation to on-going considerations regarding school admissions. In making his remarks, the Minister reiterated that he is mindful of how any proposed changes on school admissions would impact on the “important position of religious minority schools”. The Board is grateful to the Minister for highlighting the role and place of minority schools within the Irish education system and Irish society.

However, Church of Ireland and Protestant primary and secondary schools are embedded in communities across Ireland as local schools and serve a wide variety of students, at primary and second level, from various faith traditions and family backgrounds and have done so for generations. They have long been respected for their lived commitment to pluralism and diversity. The ability of religious minority schools to continue the key role they play in educational provision in modern Irish society is vitally important to safeguard. It is an expression of active participation by minority religious groups in modern Irish society as conscientious minorities who are concerned with contributing to the civic common good of diversity of experience for children, leading to a respectful and engaging citizenship without discrimination, in service to the common good.

However, more than this, Church of Ireland and Protestant schools at primary and second level exist to serve their students who are entitled to receive their primary and second level education within an ethos that is conducive to their own beliefs and that of their parents/guardians/family. The Board is strongly of the view that considerations around changes to school admissions must reflect this existing practical reality.

The Board welcomes the invitation by Minister Bruton to engage in consultations on the complex area of school admissions and will do so. The Board finds it deeply disturbing nonetheless that special interest lobby groups, who ostensibly seek equality, would publically reject and oppose such consultations. The Board wishes to highlight that the views of the 15,000 pupils at our primary schools and the 10,000 students at Church of Ireland/Protestant second level schools and their parents along with the staff, Boards of Management/Governing Bodies and patrons of each of the two hundred and twenty-seven schools under Church of Ireland/Protestant patronage in the State, are entitled to be heard.

The Board looks forward to reiterating at those consultations the importance of the ability to prioritise entry for students from Church of Ireland, Protestant and other minority religious traditions into the relatively small number of religious minority schools that exist in the State.

Parish Notes

From the registers . . .

Engagements: Good wishes to David Treacy of Loran, Pike of Rushall and Claire Mullen of Sligo, and to Donya Telford of Mountrath and William Honner of Rushall on their recent engagements.

Mothers' Union: 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.

Confirmation Group: Our confirmation service this year takes place on Sunday, 30th April at 3.30 pm at a venue to be decided upon by the bishop. Five people have indicated an interest in joining our group which will be using the "I Believe" course from Down and Dromore diocese. The course is based round the Confirmation Service, the Ten Commandments and The Apostles' Creed. Topics include 'Who is God?', 'Why we need a Saviour', 'The Sacraments' and 'Serving God/Serving others'. The first meeting of the group is planned for Thursday, 2nd February at 7 pm in the parochial hall in Mountrath.

Mountrath Historical Society: The local history group are planning another visit to Dublin. On Saturday, 4th February there will be a tour taking in Kilmainham Gaol, the Irish National War Memo-

rial Gardens, the Guinness Storehouse, and the Molly Malone and Famine Memorial Gardens. The cost of the day is €50. To book contact Samantha at 085 102 8837 or Geraldine at 086 164 7304. Full payment is needed by 23rd January. Please bring a packed lunch.

The Presentation: The Christmas season concludes when we remember Mary and Joseph bringing the forty day old infant Jesus to the Temple. There will be Holy Communion to remember the presentation of Christ in Saint Peter's Church, Mountrath on Thursday, 2nd February 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 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.

Fellowship service: Our monthly fellowship meeting takes place at Lacca on Thursday, 9th February at 8pm. At these evenings, we use the Late Evening Office from the Book of Common Prayer, sing three hymns, discuss the Gospel reading from the previous Sunday and spend a time praying. We usually finish around 9.15 pm.

Four o'clock service: Lacca holds its monthly four o'clock service, with tea and buns afterwards in the hall, on Sunday, 19th February at 4 pm.

Lent 2017: Our keeping of the season of Lent begins on Wednesday, 1st March at 8 pm with our Ash Wednesday Service in Saint Peter's Church, Mountrath. We shall follow our usual pattern and have a service of Holy Communion with hymns and a sermon in each of our

churches over six Wednesday evenings. Canon Geoff Bayliss from the Church of England Diocese of Oxford has recently published conclusions from his long study of the language we use in church and how difficult many people find many of the words we use. There are words regularly used in prayers, hymns and sermons that might mean very little to many of those listening, so during Lent we are going to look at six words that are often used which we might find it difficult to explain. Our words will be: Temptation, Discipleship, Redemption, Grace, Salvation, and Eternity. After Mountrath on 1st March, our services will be Annatrim on 8th March, Borris-in-Ossory on 15th March, Roskelton on 22nd March, Lacca on 29th March and Seir Kieran on 5th April.

Saint Ciaran's Day: We remember Saint Ciaran of Saighir, one of the first evangelists in Ireland, with our service at Seir Kieran Church on Sunday, 5th March at 4 pm.

Saint Peter's Restoration Work: We are embarking upon Phase Two of the restoration work at Saint Peter's Church which will include the replacement of the remaining windows; the installation of new protective glazing on the stained glass east window; the repair of internal plasterwork; and the complete redecoration of the interior of the church. We are grateful to Mr Brian Grubb, the diocesan architect from Limerick and Killaloe Diocese, for his overseeing of the work. Phase One, the replacement of the windows on the south side of the church, cost €40,000, and it is anticipated that Phase Two will cost €68,000.

Coolrain runs: Thank you to everyone who supported an excellent day in Coolrain on 28th December. One hundred and twenty people registered for the 6 km fun run/walk which was won by Fionn Marum in a time of twenty-one minutes; the Rector came home last in a

time of one hour and twenty-one minutes. Eighty-six tractors plus vintage cars and motorcycles participated in the Tractor Run. It was a very successful day, raising over €4,000 for Clononagh National School.

Clononagh Parish Golf Classic will take place on Friday May 19th in Mountrath Golf Club. Looking forward to good support as the new windows are looking well in St Peters Church, but there is more to be done.

Clononagh National School enrolments for September 2017 take place now. Please contact the school on 057-8732516 or email:

school@clononagh.com

...and an application form will be sent to you. Closing date for receipt of application forms is Monday 27th February.

Clononagh National School Parents Association held their annual tractor run on the 28th December. This year we had a family walk in the morning which was also a great addition to the fun family day. Thanks to all you helped to arrange this enjoyable day, we raised over €4000 for the school. Thanks to all who donated, gave their time to volunteer, gave prizes and took part. Looking forward to the year ahead. Wishing you all a happy new year.

Castlecomer Union of Parishes Annual Dinner Dance at Springhill Court Hotel, Kilkenny. Friday, 10th February 2017. Music by Limelite.

Pre-Dinner punch reception from 8.00 pm and Dinner served at 9.00pm sharp.

Subscription €25.00, please contact Wendy Carry 087-1787245 Lacca/Annatrim Parish and Kenneth Wilson 086-8357066 (Castlecomer Parish).

Please support functions in other parishes as people from other parishes come to the events run in our own parish (e.g., Clononagh National School.).

So God made a Farmer

And on the 8th day, God looked down on his planned paradise and said, "I need a caretaker"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to get up before dawn, milk cows, work all day in the fields, milk cows again, eat supper, then go to town and stay past midnight at a meeting of the school board of management"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

"I need somebody with arms strong enough to rustle a calf and yet gentle enough to deliver his own grandchild; somebody to call hogs, tame cantankerous machinery, come home hungry, have to wait lunch until his wife's done feeding visiting ladies, then tell the ladies to be sure and come back real soon -- and mean it"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God said, "I need somebody willing to sit up all night with a newborn foal, and watch it die, then dry his eyes and say, 'Maybe next year.' I need somebody who can shape an axe handle from the branch of a tree, shoe a horse with a hunk of car tire, who can make harness out of haywire, feed sacks and shoe scraps; who, planting time and harvest season, will finish his forty-hour week by Tuesday noon, and then in pain from tractor back,' put in another seventy-two hours"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God had to have somebody willing to ride the ruts at double speed to get the hay in ahead of the rain clouds, and yet stop in mid-field and race to help when he sees the first smoke from a neighbour's place

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

God said, "I need somebody strong enough to clear trees and heave bales, yet gentle enough to tame lambs and wean pigs and tend the hens, who will stop his mower for an hour to splint the broken leg of a lark. It had to be somebody who'd plough deep and straight and not cut corners; somebody to seed, weed, feed, breed and rake and disc and plough and plant and tie the fleece and strain the milk and replenish the self-feeder and finish a hard week's work with a five-mile drive to church; somebody who would bale a family together with the soft strong bonds of sharing, who would laugh, and then sigh, and then reply, with smiling eyes, when his son says that he wants to spend his life "doing what dad does"

-- so **G**od made a **F**armer.

~ from a speech made by US radio presenter Paul Harvey in Kansas in 1978

Sometimes it is easy to think, that as just a single person, we cannot make a real difference in the world, we cannot bring about real change and we cannot make any real impact on all the things we see that are wrong with the society around us. But just as we are taught in school, $1+1=2$ and $2+2=4$ and so on. Just look at the tiny ant that is powerless on its own but joined with all its comrades can virtually move mountains. Working together we can move mountains too, we just might have to be brave enough to stand on our own for a little while and encourage others to join us. In helping others, we help ourselves.

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

THE POWER OF 1

*One song can spark a moment,
One flower can wake the dream, One tree can
start a forest, One bird can herald spring.*

*One smile begins a friendship,
One handclasp lifts a soul, One star can guide
a ship at sea, One word can frame the goal.*

*One vote can change a nation,
One sunbeam lights a room, One candle wipes
out darkness, One laugh will conquer gloom.*

*One step must start each journey.
One word must start each prayer, One hope will
raise our spirits, One touch can show you care.*

*One voice can speak with wisdom,
One heart can know what's true, One life can
make a difference, You see, it's up to you!*

Do not wait for leaders. Do it alone, person to person.

Mother Teresa

Services & Readings

January			
Fifth Sunday 29th	Micah 6: 1-8 Psalm 15 1 Corinthians 1: 18-31 Matthew 5: 1-12	Mountrath 9.00am Holy Communion	Lacca 10.30am Group Service

February						
First Sunday 5th	Isaiah 58:1-12 Psalm 112:1-10 1 Corinthians 2:1-16 Matthew 5:13-20	Roskelton 9.30am Morning Prayer	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion
Second Sunday 12th	Deuteronomy 30:15-20 Psalm 119:1-8 1 Corinthians 3:1-9 Matthew 5: 21-37	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion		Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	
Third Sunday 19th	Genesis 1: 1 - 2: 3 Psalm 136: 1-9 Romans 8: 18-25 Matthew 6: 25-34	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 Service of the Word
Fourth Sunday 26th	Exodus 24: 12-18 Psalm 2 2 Peter 1: 16-21 Matthew 17: 1-9	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Family Service		Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion

Parish Diary

- January** 23rd Monday.....Mothers' Union Meeting (page 4)
29th Sunday.....Fifth Sunday Service (page 4)
- February** 2nd Thursday.....Confirmation Group (page 4)
2nd Thursday.....The Presentation Holy Communion (page 4)
3rd-5th Fri-Sat.....11-13s Youth Weekend (page 4)
4th Saturday.....4th Seed Youth Group (page 4)
4th Saturday.....Mountrath Historical Society Trip (page 4)
9th Thursday.....Fellowship Service (page 4)
10th Friday.....Castlecomer Union Dinner Dance (page 5)
19th Sunday.....Four O'Clock Service (page 4)
22nd Wednesday....Closing date for March 2017 Newsletter
27th Monday.....Closing date for Clonenagh National School Enrolment Applications (page 5)
- March** 1st Wednesday.....Ash Wednesday Service (page 4)
4th Saturday.....4th Seed Youth Group (page 4)
5th Sunday.....St. Ciaran's Day Service (page 5)

Items for the March 2017 Newsletter need to be with the editor by **WEDNESDAY February 22nd AT THE LATEST**, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the **Fourth Sunday, February 26th**.

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

Otherwise to- Ivor Clegg, Cloncourse, Mountrath, Co. Laois. 057-8621277/087-2522162

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