

The Newsletter

May 2017

Rector:

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The newly erected sign at St. Matthew's , Roskelton

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

Rector's Letter

Our village primary school used to go across the village green to the parish church for two special occasions a year. One was the annual nativity play, a great occasion for tea towels and old curtains, and the other was Ascension Day. The service on Ascension Day was memorable because we all had to take bunches of flowers with which we decorated a big wooden crown; because there was a lady who used to sing the "Alleluias" with a very loud quavery voice that used to make small boys giggle; and because, after the service, we had the rest of the day off school.

While our family were not churchgoers, and really professed no faith at all, apart from putting down "Church of England" for our religion, the teaching of the Bible at the primary school was very strong and there were many stories that were baffling to a small boy.

The Ascension story was a story that seemed odd. Why was there joy about what happened? If I had been one of the disciples, I wouldn't have wanted Jesus to go away, I would have wanted him to stay with me. I would have wanted him to still be a friend who sat and shared a meal; I would have wanted him to still be a friend who cooked breakfast on the lakeshore; I would have wanted him to still be a friend who would sit down and talk with me. When the teacher

read the story from the Bible about Mary Magdalene meeting Jesus in the garden, I wouldn't have wanted to hear Jesus talking about leaving and going back to heaven.

The world does not operate according to the wishes of small boys, though, and our service remembered the moment forty days after Easter when Jesus returned to the Father: no-one explained why this had to happen, but there were a lot of things in the life of a small boy that were without explanation.

If Christmas was about God taking on our flesh and blood, then the Ascension was about God taking that flesh and blood back to himself. It was about God taking back to himself all the thoughts and feelings and experiences of our human lives. The Ascension meant that God would know himself what it was like to be one of us because someone who had become one of us had gone to be with him. God would know happiness and sadness, he would know joy and pain, he would know love and tears.

The Ascension meant that God would understand us. Perhaps even a small boy would have understood what it meant for someone to understand.



Church of Ireland News

The House of Bishops' statement on Church of Ireland Primary Schools

Church of Ireland primary schools are embedded among communities across the country and have a long-standing tradition of being inclusive, of welcoming pupils from widely differing faith traditions and many from backgrounds of no faith at all. Church of Ireland schools are child-centred, co-educational and are faith based, Christian in ethos.

The Christian faith acknowledges the value and uniqueness of every human being and demands that each individual is treated with respect, kindness and love. A Christian ethos demands of its school that every child should be enabled to flourish and that every child understands the importance of striving to reach their potential with integrity and humility.

Schools under Church of Ireland patronage are democratically run with parents, teachers and the church community in partnership providing an inclusive, effective and comprehensive curriculum with an attractive ethos that responds to the academic, cultural, personal and spiritual needs of pupils.

While the Church of Ireland ethos permeates all aspects of the education of the pupils, the schools under Church of Ireland patronage work to take those moral and personal values which are strongest in Christian faith and promote those values amongst the entire student body regardless of their faith background. Many non-religious parents choose schools under Church of Ireland

patronage as they see the ethos of Church of Ireland schools as an attractive moral and spiritual framework within which they wish their children to be educated.

It is difficult to reconcile what we know and experience about the schools under Church of Ireland patronage with much of the public debate around school admissions and primary education in general. In recent years, faith schools have been poorly served, at times, by news media. Too often, there is a failure to ensure that hyperbole and opinion are counter balanced with evidence based facts.

Church of Ireland schools are an important component of Church of Ireland communities and other Christian minority communities throughout the country. They provide an invaluable focal point for a faith community which is usually widely dispersed geographically. Church of Ireland schools enjoy a strong link with their community and there exists a strong interdependence socially, spiritually and very often practically. Many Church of Ireland schools owe their very existence and their subsequent development over generations to the generous and unwavering support of their parish and the wider Church of Ireland community. To prevent a Church of Ireland school from prioritising children from that community will lead to a splintering and a diminishing of that link causing hurt, confusion and disillusionment. The rights of a minority denomination should not be trampled on in a race towards a populist understanding of pluralism.

Parish Notes

Saint Mark's Day: We keep up our discipline of observing a saint's day each month in Mountrath with Holy Communion for Saint Mark's Day on Tuesday, 25th April at 8 pm

Evening Office, discuss the Gospel reading for the week, sing three hymns – and have a cup of tea. There are around a dozen people at a meeting and it's not scary.

Easter Vestry Meetings: The Easter General Vestry meeting for Offerlane parish is on Wednesday, 26th April at 8 pm and the Borris-in-Ossory/Seir Kieran meeting is on Thursday, 27th April at 8.30 pm. Apologies for the confusion caused by the muddling of days and dates in last month's newsletter

GFS Service: Thank you to Jennifer Lalor and all the GFS leaders for their hard work during the past year in the life of Mountrath branch of the Girls' Friendly Society. The annual diocesan service for the GFS takes place in Saint Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny at 2.30 pm on Sunday, 14th May.

Fifth Sunday: Sunday, 30th April is a fifth Sunday of the month. There will be Holy Communion in Mountrath at 9 am and then at 3.30 pm in Roskelton Church it is our confirmation service. Bishop Michael will be coming to confirm six candidates from our parishes. Worshippers at Roskelton believe this will be the first confirmation service ever to take place in the church.

Golf Classic: We are grateful to the Leinster Express for the unexpected coverage they gave to the Golf Classic planned for Friday, 19th May. As the newspaper reported, we spent €40,000 on the first phase of the refurbishment of Saint Peter's Church in Mountrath and have embarked upon the second phase, which will cost around €68,000. The proceeds of the Golf Classic, entry €100 per team, will go toward the work. Full details from Mabel Peavoy, 057 873 2331.

Rector away: The Rector will be catching the 9 pm boat from Rosslare on 30th April and will be away from Monday, 1st May until Monday, 8th May to attend the celebration in Somerset of his mother's eightieth birthday on Monday 1st May and the marriage of Dean Katharine's niece in Herefordshire on Saturday, 6th May. In his absence, calls will be taken by the Revd Tim Irvine, Rector of Mountmellick, the Revd Tim's number is 057 862 4143.

Third Sunday Series: There are two innovations in the worship in our parishes over the summer months. The first is that the Third Sunday Service Four O'Clock Service in Lacca is going to continue over the summer months, with games on the lawn afterwards. We have had the offer of a barbecue for one of the Sundays, and there will be the usual excellent refreshments on the other days. The first of the summer series is on Sunday, 21st May at 4 pm.

Fellowship Group: After missing out on a meeting in April, because of the Holy Week services, our Fellowship Group meets at Lacca on Thursday, 11th May at 8 pm. We use the Late

Ascension Day: We remember the ascension into heaven of our Lord Jesus Christ forty days after the resurrection on Thursday, 25th May at 8 pm when there will be Holy Communion in Mountrath Church.

Family Service: Mervyn Tomb leads the monthly family service in Lacca at 10.30 am on Sunday, 28th May. Everyone is welcome.

Mothers Union Festival Service: Cashel, Ferns and Ossory Mothers' Union hold their annual diocesan festival service at Saint Canice's Cathedral in Kilkenny on Wednesday, 31st May at 8 pm. We hope for a good representation from Mountrath branch.

Mountrath Family Service: Our second innovation for the summer is the change of the service time in Mountrath on the first Sunday of the month from 11.30 am to 10.45 am. It is planned that we shall have a Communion service, using the form of service we have used at the Back to School service and that there will be a cup of tea in the hall afterwards. We are going to try it for June, July and August to see how well it works.

Holiday Club: Mervyn and his team are planning a holiday Bible Club at Lacca from Monday, 17th until Friday, 21st July. Full details will be circulated.

Lent series: Thank you to everyone who supported our series of Lent services, the aggregate attendance over the six evenings was 178. Hopefully, we gained some insights into some of the difficult words we have often used in church without ever having stopped to think about what those words might mean.

Holy Week: Thank you to everyone who supported a very well attended Holy Week series of services. Talking to a colleague, we had larger attendances than a big parish in Belfast.

Easter Monday Congratulations: Our hearty congratulations go to the Cooper family of Shanderry on their triumph in the Irish Grand National at Fairyhouse on Easter Monday. Their horse, Our Duke, ran a good race and strode home to a comfortable win in the final furlongs. As well as bringing jubilation for the Cooper Family Syndicate, there was a great sense of delight among backers.

Clonenagh Parish Golf Classic will take place on Friday May 19th in Mountrath Golf Club. Entries are now open for teams and golfers, and non-golfers are most welcome too. Contributions would be most gratefully received towards sponsorship of a hole or of prizes for the raffle following the main prizegiving. Please contact Mable Peavoy on 057 8732331 or on 086 2033720 for details .

Looking forward to you support on the day as it is in aid of the ongoing work to St Peters Church.

Girls Friendly Society Service of Celebration of 140 years of GFS in Ireland, Christ Church, Bray, on Sunday 21st May at 3pm.

Being thankful could have tremendous benefits on your quality of life. In fact, gratitude may be one of the most overlooked tools that we all have access to every day. Cultivating gratitude doesn't cost any money and it certainly doesn't take much time, but the benefits are enormous.

1. Gratitude opens the door to more relationships. Not only does saying “thank you” constitute good manners, but showing appreciation can help you win new friends. So whether you thank a stranger for holding the door or you send a quick thank-you note to that co-worker who helped you with a project, acknowledging other people's contributions can lead to new opportunities.

2. Gratitude improves physical health. Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains and they report feeling healthier than other people, according to a 2012 study. Not surprisingly, grateful people are also more likely to take care of their health. They exercise more often and are more likely to attend regular check-ups with their doctors, which is likely to contribute to further longevity.

3. Gratitude improves psychological health. Gratitude reduces a multitude of toxic emotions, ranging from envy and resentment to frustration and regret. Research confirms that gratitude effectively increases happiness and reduces depression.

4. Gratitude enhances empathy and reduces aggression. Grateful people are more likely to behave in a prosocial manner, even when others behave less kind, according to research. Study participants who ranked higher on gratitude scales were less likely to retaliate against others, even when given negative feedback. They experienced more sensitivity and empathy toward other

people and a decreased desire to seek revenge.

5. Grateful people sleep better. Writing in a gratitude journal improves sleep, according to a 2011 study. Spend just 15 minutes jotting down a few grateful sentiments before bed, and you may sleep better and longer.

6. Gratitude improves self-esteem. A 2014 study found that gratitude increased athlete's self-esteem, which is an essential component to optimal performance. Other studies have shown that gratitude reduces social comparisons. Rather than becoming resentful toward people who have more money or better jobs – which is a major factor in reduced self-esteem- grateful people are able to appreciate other people's accomplishments.

7. Gratitude increases mental strength. For years, research has shown gratitude not only reduces stress, but it may also play a major role in overcoming trauma. A 2006 study found that Vietnam War Veterans with higher levels of gratitude experienced lower rates of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. A 2003 study found that gratitude was a major contributor to resilience following the terrorist attacks on September 11. Recognizing all you have to be thankful for – even during the worst times of your life – fosters resilience. We all have the ability and opportunity to cultivate gratitude. Simply take a few moments to focus on all that you have. Each day, jot down a few things you are grateful for. Keep up the habit for a month and watch it making a difference in your satisfaction with life.

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

Smiles

Excerpts from a book, "Children's Letters to God" by Stuart Hample & Eric Marshall:

Dear God, I read the Bible. What does begat mean? Nobody will tell me. Love, Allison.

Dear God, Instead of letting people die and having to make new ones, why don't You keep the ones You already have now? Jane.

Dear God, Maybe Cain and Abel would not have killed each other if they had their own rooms. That's what my Mom did for me and my brother. Larry.

Dear God, If You watch me in church on Sunday, I'll show You my new shoes. Mickey.

Dear God, I bet it is very hard to love everyone in the whole world. There are only 4 people in our family and I'm having a hard time loving all of them. Nan.

Dear God, Did You mean for the giraffe to look like that or was it an accident? Norma.

Dear God, I went to this wedding and they kissed right in the church. Is that OK? Neil.

Dear God, Did You really mean "do unto others as they do unto you"? Because if You did, then I'm going to get my brother good. Darla.

Dear God, Thank You for the baby brother, but what I prayed for was a puppy. Joyce.

Dear God, Are You really invisible or is it just a trick? Lucy.

Dear God, I think about You sometimes, even when I'm not praying. Elliot.

Dear God, My brother told me about being born but it doesn't sound right. They're just kidding, aren't they? Marsha.

Dear God, I didn't think orange went with purple until I saw the sunset You made on Tuesday. That was cool. Eugene.

* * *

A rabbi, a minister, and a priest were playing poker when the police raided the game. Turning to the priest, the lead police officer said, "Father Murphy, were you gambling?" Turning his eyes to heaven, the priest whispered, "Lord, forgive me for what I am about to do." To the police officer, he then said, "No, officer; I was not gambling." The officer then asked the minister, "Pastor Johnson, were you gambling?" Again, after an appeal to heaven, the minister replied, "No, officer; I was not gambling." Turning to the rabbi, the officer again asked, "Rabbi Goldstein, were you gambling?" Shrugging his shoulders, the rabbi replied, "With whom could I be gambling?"

Items for the June 2017 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY May 24th AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the Fourth Sunday, May 28th.

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

This Newsletter and many older editions can be downloaded directly from

www.clonenagh.com

Services & Readings

April			
Fifth Sunday 30th	<i>Acts 2: 14a, 36-41</i> <i>The Psalm Psalm 116: 1-3, 10-17</i> <i>1 Peter 1: 17-23</i> <i>Luke 24: 13-35</i>	Mountrath 9.00am Holy Communion	Roskelton 3.30pm Confirmation Service

May						
First Sunday 7th	<i>Acts 2: 42-47</i> <i>Psalm 23</i> <i>1 Peter 2: 19-25</i> <i>John 10: 1-10</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Roskelton 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion
Second Sunday 14th	<i>Acts 7: 55-60</i> <i>Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16</i> <i>1 Peter 2: 2-10</i> <i>John 14: 1-14</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion	Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion		Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	
Third Sunday 21st	<i>Acts 16: 9-15</i> <i>Psalm 67</i> <i>Revelation 21: 10, 22 - 22: 5</i> <i>John 14: 23-29</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 4.00pm Service of the Word
Fourth Sunday 28th	<i>Acts 1: 6-14</i> <i>Psalm 68:1-10</i> <i>1 Peter 4:12-14, 5:6-11</i> <i>John 17:1-11</i>	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Family Service		Annatrim 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion

Parish Diary

April

- 25th Tuesday.....St. Mark's Day Service (*page 4*)
 26th Wednesday.....Offerlane Easter General Vestry (*page 4*)
 27th Thursday.....Borris-in-Ossory/Seir Kieran Easter General Vestry (*page 4*)
 30th Sunday.....Confirmation Service (*page 4*)

May

- 11th Thursday.....Fellowship Group (*page 4*)
 14th Sunday.....G.F.S. Diocesan Service (*page 4*)
 17th-21st Mon-Fri.....Holiday Bible Club (*page 5*)
 19th Friday.....Parish Golf Classic (*page 4*)
 21st Sunday.....Third Sunday Series Service (*page 4*)
 21st Sunday.....G.F.S. Service of Celebration of 140 years in Ireland (*page 5*)
24th Wednesday.....Closing date for June 2017 Newsletter
 25th Thursday.....Ascension Day Service (*page 5*)
 28th Sunday.....Monthly Family Service (*page 5*)
 31st Wednesday.....Mothers' Union Festival Service (*page 5*)