

The Newsletter

May 2020

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The swallows have returned!

Image sourced from Microsoft Creative Commons

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

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

The Rector Writes

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness..." Thus opens Charles Dickens' classic historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. I think that Dickens might just as easily have been referring to Lent 2020 as France 1775. Across Ireland, schoolchildren's initial euphoria at an unexpected break from the classroom was quickly replaced by scenes from many towns and cities of lengthy queues snaking around supermarkets as panicked shoppers piled their trolleys high. The wisdom of staying indoors and keeping not only oneself safe, but one's family and neighbours safe too, was jettisoned by some as they made their way out of the cities along Ireland's motorways to caravans and holiday homes near the sea.

However, overwhelmingly it has been the best of times, or rather the best of people. Our Group of Parishes has always been a fine example of a community that knuckles down with the task in hand whenever anything needs doing. This has been very much in evidence just recently—in Seir Kieran with the community coming together as one to undertake much welcomed ground improvement works; the extremely generous responses over the years to the Clonenagh Golf Classic annual fundraiser; and not least of all the spontaneous outpouring of goodwill, kindness, innovation and generosity which greeted the call to restore Lacca Church's roof.

There are plenty of other examples too of the Clonenagh Group of Parishes coming together so readily to meet challenges, and there are equally more examples too of our Christian family of believers simply doing their level best to live out God's call to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly, and supporting one another as best we can. We've always been good as a community in keeping an eye on our neighbours, but these recent weeks have been witness to a tremendous spirit of care, compassion and charity.

It hasn't all been plain sailing. The last few weeks has seen the deaths of three parishioners: Richie Mulhall, Velma Jackson and John Graham. Church closures and social distancing has radically altered the traditional Irish community-centred approach to grieving, mourning and rallying round to support the bereaved. The long term impact of this on grieving people is yet to be seen. Yet to be measured too will be the long term mental health trauma from anxiety, fear and worry, not just at the physical health implications of the spread of the Coronavirus, but the resulting financial ramifications and impact that this epidemic has had on families, farmsteads, individuals and livelihoods, and indeed the increased stress on our young scholars and exam students is of great concern. We pray that the Lord guide and direct us all to respond effectively to their needs.

May I end with some personal words of gratitude: thanks for all the kind phone calls, cards, texts and emails enquiring after my mum and I; thanks for the kind and supportive words of encouragement and your appreciation of the online church services. Thanks too to Fr. Seán Brophy for allowing me the use of the St Fintan's Church radio transmitter to broadcast our Easter Vigil live; thanks to Margaret Hawkins for sourcing a mic and tripod mount from the Priorities Fund to assist with the online services; to Joan for her thoughtful and inspirational messages on WhatsApp; and most importantly thank you one and all for your kind support of each other during this dark period in our history.

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (*Matthew 5:16, KJV*).

~Rev. Victor

Requiescant In Pace



We extend our most sincere condolences:

To Roskelton parishioners Bertie Mulhall and Nowell Kearney on the death of their brother **Richard (Richie) Mulhall**, who died peacefully at home surrounded by his family on 1st April.

To David, Pamela and Clive Jackson on the death of their dear mother **Velma Jackson**, née Newton, on 12th April in the Maryborough Centre, Portlaoise. Velma's husband Dickie predeceased her by a few short months, having died in July 2019.

To his brother Derek, sister Nellie, and his family and friends, on the recent death of **John Graham**. Another long term resident of the Maryborough Centre, and former Annatrim parishioner, having come to the parish as an orphan in 1947, John was laid to rest in the Maryborough plot at St Peter's Church, Portlaoise, by Canon Peter Tarleton.

To Jim Shirley on the death of his dear mother **Louise Shirley**, late of Balacolla, who died on 5th April and was laid to rest in Killermogh Church.

To Simone Cooper, Annatrim, on the recent death in Tasmania of her beloved mother **Beth Ruck**. Beth is survived by her husband and her four daughters.

To Annie, Albert and Stan Lalor on the recent death of their sister-in-law and aunt **Ida Mitchell**, late of Brookhaven Nursing Home, Co. Kilkenny.

May they rest in peace and rise in glory

Parish Notes

Easter General Vestries 2020

May I extend a very warm thank you to Borris-in-Ossory Rector's Churchwarden Heather for all her kind help and support since I arrived in the parish, who is now stepping down after many years dedicated service to the parish in a variety of capacities. May I also thank Ivan, the People's Churchwarden, who has very kindly accepted the appointment as Rector's Churchwarden in Borris. I would also like to give hearty thanks to Stan (Annatrim), Moira (Lacca), Emily (Mountrath), Phyllis (Roskelton) and William (Seir Kieran) who have very graciously agreed to continue as Rector's Churchwardens in their respective parishes. Indeed, to all of our Churchwardens, Glebewardens and Vestrymembers may I extend a very sincere thanks for all of your dedicated service, assistance and hard work on behalf of the parish. It is hoped that we can reschedule the Easter General Vestries some time in the coming weeks.

May Diocesan Magazine

Denise Hughes, editor of the Diocesan Magazine, has been in touch to say that the May edition will not be printed but will be made freely available in pdf format like last month. However if any parishioner would like a paper copy of the May magazine sent by post (for May only at present), please email me with postal address details ASAP on prayspot@live.ie and I'll pass on your details. Please note that this time round it does not matter if you are regular subscriber or not to the magazine, Denise will post this month's anyway because it's going to be quite a slim volume.

Clonenagh Golf Classic 2020

It is with deep regret we have to announce the postponement of the Golf Classic which had been scheduled for

Friday 15th May in Mountrath Golf Club. At this stage it is unclear when, or indeed if, it may be possible to reschedule this very important social and fundraising event.

Clonenagh Group of Parishes WhatApp Group

The Rector set up a WhatsApp group for the Clonenagh Group of Parishes with the original intention of streaming church services for parishioners of all six of our churches during the present lockdown, however when that proved impossible he began uploading services to his own YouTube channel. The WhatsApp group has however proven useful for communicating with as many parishioners as possible during these difficult times of social distancing and self isolation, but mindful of our parish Communications Policy, please understand that the group will be closed as soon as Covid-19 restrictions are lifted and church services return to normal. If parishioners feel that such a group does still serve a useful purpose for communicating, the Select Vestries may decide to establish official WhatsApp groups in due course. As mentioned above, if you'd like to view the Rector's YouTube services please visit: www.youtube.com/prayspot

Church Finances

I am acutely aware of the financial difficulties many parishioners will find themselves in with the closing of marts, businesses and places of employment. Ireland appeared to be gradually getting back on its feet following the economic collapse of the previous decade, and God knows how the Coronavirus epidemic will impact families and livelihoods in the weeks and months ahead. Your kind and generous support of this Group of Parishes is very greatly appreciated, and it ensures the maintenance

of our six churches and the continuation of worship and church and community life in this part of Laois/Offaly. With our churches having been, and continuing to remain closed, this has had some impact on church finances. If those who contribute via envelope are able to continue to set aside an envelope each month it will help keep church finances on an even keel come our eventual return - God willing - to normality.

Gideon Service

Sunday 31st May is a fifth Sunday of the month, and there will hopefully be a United Service of the Word in Lacca

Church at 11am if restrictions are lifted. The service will be led by Sam Harper with colleagues of his from The Gideons. The Gideons International is an association that works with many Christian churches. Its members come from many denominations, live all over the world, and share a desire to see the lost come to Christ. Gideon bibles placed in hotel rooms are a familiar sight to many, as indeed is its work on university campuses around the world through the distribution of the New Testament with Psalms. There will be a retiring collection in aid of the Gideons after the service. All welcome!

Clonenagh National School News

I hope that this update continues to find you all well. As we start the new term, I thought it would be nice to touch base with you all in relation to our current situation in Clonenagh National School.

I have been in contact with many of our families since we closed and it is so very encouraging to see how resilient our pupils can be and how they are making the best of this strange and confusing time.

We are sending and receiving work through an online platform called SeeSaw and using email also.

I have every confidence that when we return to school, the dedicated staff will continue to provide for the needs of the pupils and fill in any gaps if required. They will ensure that the pupils are not at a disadvantage from having this period at home.

Parents know their children best and if simply reading a book, playing a board game or kicking a ball is making them happy and filling their time – go with it!

Presently, the teachers and the Board of Management are trying to navigate their way through the world of virtual meetings using Zoom from next week!

If anybody needs to contact the school, you can reach us by email using this address : clonenaghns@gmail.com.

We have also developed a Facebook page, "Clonenaghns". Please follow and 'Like' us. It's a lovely way to keep connected during this time. Rev Victor has very kindly recorded an assembly for us and that link is available on our Facebook page.

Take care,
Mrs Burnell
An Priomhoide

10 Things Mentally Strong People Do During a Pandemic

(Originally published on www.drtracyhutchinson.com)

Research reveals how you can reduce your anxiety and stress during COVID-19.

1. **Limit news and media exposure**

Media exposure and the 24/7 news cycle can activate “fight or flight” responses, which can lead to traumatic stress. The best approach is to limit news exposure, choose reliable and responsible print/media, and limit exposure to distressful images shown on the news.

2. **Accept your feelings as normal**

Accept that your feelings are normal during this time of both personal and collective trauma. Feelings such as fear, anxiety, hopelessness, anger and sadness are normal because the information is too overwhelming to process at once.

3. **Carefully choose the leaders to follow**

Follow people who display healthy leadership styles and mental health, people who promote calm and rational action. It is both confusing and psychologically harmful to watch leaders who publicly argue and misstate the facts and the research.

4. **Limit social media exposure**

Understand how social media operates with some platforms operating as unofficial news channels and delivering news tailored for you (some of it fake) based on your behaviours and preferences gleaned over the last decade.

5. **Allow for self-compassion for lack of productivity**

There may be self or societal pressure to “be productive” with the increased time you may have at home. It is important to realize that when our physiological and safety needs feel threatened-such as during a pandemic-we shouldn't put added pressure on ourselves to produce or achieve. It is important to understand that lack of focus, concentration, and overwhelming feelings are common during this time.

6. **Focus on facts**

Be aware of when your emotions are “getting the best of you”. According to Marsha Linehan, creator of Dialectical Behavior Therapy, we all have three states of mind: an emotional mind, a rational mind, and a wise mind. Being emotional is natural during times of crisis, but consciously moving to a rational mind by listing facts and logic can decrease unnecessary negative states.

7. **Meditate**

The benefits of meditation include anxiety reduction, reduced stress, increased attention span, decreased depression, and improved emotional health and well-being.

8. **Limit toxic people**

Understand toxic people and their behaviours and limit your time with them. It is important to choose to spend time with loved ones who display healthy behaviours and add to your well-being, not detract from it.

9. **Focus on self-care**

Use good self-care and attempt to be flexible with new routines. Prioritize things that help you through the pandemic such as laughter and connecting with family and friends (while socially distancing or remotely) coupled with rest and good sleep patterns.

10. **Know your personality needs: Introvert vs. extrovert.**

What do you need to feel supported? Introverts focus on internal states of being and small gatherings versus external sources of stimulation (a lot of socializing) Introverts often feel drained after heavy socializing (even media based) and need to recharge their batteries in solitude. Extroverts gain energy from other people and enjoy social activities. Both personalities may have different needs to promote well-being.

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



The Diocesan resource for news and information regarding the COVID-19/Coronavirus crisis, including a listing of online Services throughout the Diocese, can be found at:

<http://cashel.anglican.org/category/covid-19/>



The HSE provides extensive health information and advice resources at:

www.hse.ie

Items for the June 2020 Newsletter need to be with the editor by WEDNESDAY May 20th AT THE LATEST, so that the Newsletter can be assembled in time for the Fourth Sunday, May 23rd.

PLEASE make your item as ready for publication as possible, and 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

NOTICE regarding photographs submitted for publication in the newsletter:

In compliance with the current **Parish Communication Policy**, the Editor will in future note the name of the contributor/owner of the photo, and will take it in good faith that they have secured permission to publish from all readily identifiable persons in the image, particularly those to be named in the caption.

Services & Readings

May						
Sunday 3rd 4th Sunday of Easter	Acts 2: 42-47 Psalm 23 1 Peter 2: 19-25 John 10: 1-10	Roskelton 9.30am Holy Communion	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Lacca 10.30am Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 10th 5th Sunday of Easter	Acts 7: 55-60 Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16 1 Peter 2: 2-10 John 14: 1-14	Seir Kieran 9.30am Holy Communion		Annatrim 11.00am Holy Communion	Mountrath 11.30am Holy Communion	
Thursday 14th St. Matthias	Isaiah 22: 15-25 Psalm 15 Acts 1: 15-26 John 15: 9-17	Mountrath 8.00pm Holy Communion				
Sunday 17th 6th Sunday of Easter: Rogation Sunday	Acts 17:22-31 Psalm 66:7-18 1 Peter 3:13-22 John 14:15-21	Roskelton 9.30am Morning Prayer	Seir Kieran 9.30am Morning Prayer	Mountrath 11.30am Morning Prayer		Lacca 4.00pm Service of the Word
Thursday 21st The Ascension Day	Acts 1: 1-11 Psalm 47 Ephesians 1: 15-23 Luke 24: 44-53	Mountrath 8.00pm Holy Communion				
Saturday/Sunday 23rd/24th 7th Sunday of Easter: Sunday after Ascension Day	Acts 1:6-14 Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 John 17: 1-11	Seir Kieran Saturday 7.00pm Holy Communion	Borris-in-Ossory Sunday 9.30am Holy Communion	Lacca Sunday 10.30am Family Service	Annatrim Sunday 11.00am Morning Prayer	Mountrath Sunday 11.30am Holy Communion
Sunday 31st The Day of Pentecost: Whit Sunday	Numbers 11: 24-30 Psalm 104: 26-36, 37b Acts 2: 1-21 John 20: 19-23	Mountrath 9.00am Holy Communion		Lacca 11.00am Gideon Service		

IMPORTANT NOTICE!

All of these dates and times are **PROVISIONAL** and are liable to change or cancellation. The Parish will make every effort to communicate any changes as quickly and as broadly as possible, but PLEASE consult with the Rector, the Church Wardens, or any member of the Select Vestry before attempting to attend any of these Services.

Parish Diary

May

6th Wednesday.....Closing date for Diocesan Magazine Notes

20th Wednesday.....Closing date for June 2020 Newsletter