

Recent deaths Breda Holden, Canon Kennedy Court and formerly of Mill St. – funeral on Wed. last; **Jim Walsh**, Grand Gates, Castlemorris, Aghaviller – sister of Mary Byrne, Knockbutton funeral on Tues. last.

Readers: 6.30 Marie Murphy; 8.30 am Tommy Quinlan; 11.00 am Joe Kennedy.

Sat. 19 Dec. 7.10 pm - Reconciliation Service & Confession for Christmas i.e. immediately at the end of Mass. Outside priests will be available for confessions.

Eucharistic Ministers: 6.30 p.m. Richard Lynch & Sadie Bacon; 11.00 a.m. Mary McGrath, Bridie Metcalf & Geraldine Collins

Christmas schedule in the parish: Thur. 24 Dec. Christmas Eve: 6p.m. family Mass of Christmas; **Night Mass of Christmas (with parish choir) 9 p.m.**, preceded by carol singing. **Coolagh & Newtown both at 7.30 p.m.** **Friday, Christmas Day: Parish Church 8.30 a.m. & 11.00 a.m.;** **Saturday, St. Stephen's Day:** no morning Mass, **vigil Masses (Callan & Coolagh) for Sunday; Sunday - regular Sunday Mass schedule.**

Great Jubilee Year of Mercy "Be Merciful like the Father" Pope Francis solemnly proclaimed the beginning of the Jubilee Year of Mercy on Tues. 8th Dec. when he opened the Holy Door entrance into St. Peter's Basilica. The purpose of the Holy Door is to ensure that "anyone who enters will experience the love of God who consoles, pardons and instills hope". The 8th of Dec. was chosen to coincide with the 50th anniversary of the closing of the Second Vatican Council on 8 Dec. 1965. Pope Francis goes on to spell out his reasons for choosing this date: "The Church feels a great need to keep this event alive ... because of the "wave of affection and admiration (that) flowed from the Council over the modern world of humanity. Errors were condemned ... but for individuals themselves there was only admonition, respect and love. Instead of depressing diagnoses, encouraging remedies, instead of direful predictions messages of trust issued from the Council to the present-day world. The modern world's values were not only respected but honoured, its efforts approved, its aspirations purified and blessed" (Year of Mercy, *Bull of Proclamation n. 4*).

No need to travel to enter into the spirit of the Holy Year of Mercy: The pope goes on to invite every diocese or shrine where the faithful gather to open their own Holy Door on the 3rd Sunday of Advent to coincide with his opening of the Holy Door at St. John Lateran Basilica in Rome, it being the 'Head and Mother Church of all the churches in the world' and the first Christian Church above the ground at the end of the persecutions in the middle of the fourth century. It is often referred to as the pope's own basilica.

Opening of Holy Door in Ossory: Bishop Seamus Freeman, SAC, will inaugurate the Great Jubilee Year of Mercy in the Diocese of Ossory on **Sunday, 13th December 2015 in St. Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny**, leading the celebration of the Eucharist with priests, religious and the lay faithful of the diocese. He extends an invitation to priests, religious and the lay faithful to gather at 5.15 p.m. at the statue of Our Lady at the entrance to the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. From whence all will process through the newly purple painted Holy Door.

Symbolism of the Holy Door: Holy Door, Porta Sancta, has been used as a ritual expression of conversion. The faithful pass through the Holy Door as a gesture of leaving the past behind and crossing the threshold from sin to grace and from darkness to light.

Westcourt News: The monthly Mass to pray for the intercession of Blessed Edmund Rice in our lives and for his canonisation will take place in Westcourt on **Monday, 14 December. It is being organised by St. Joseph's Young Priests Society. All are welcome.**

SVP Collection this weekend: At this time of year we are asked to remember especially the less well-off and to give to them what we might otherwise waste on food that will end up being discarded a few days after Christmas or on gifts that people neither need nor want. This after all is the Year of Mercy and charity is the handmaid of mercy. The early Church Fathers constantly remind us that giving to the poor cancels out a multitude of sins. Over the past few years we have had a lot of bad press about charities but the SVP is a unique charity in that it is all voluntary and the volunteers endeavour to search out and sift the most needy and genuine cases needing help. Let our

motto this Christmas be 'to wage war on waste – food, drink, presents etc'. and give to the SVP instead. The dedicated number for **the local SVP is 085-2490029**. Anyone needing help or wishing to donate and who cannot be in church this weekend should contact this number. There is no point in calling to particular locations as all charity is now centralized through the local branch of the SVP.

December Cathedral Draw will take place on Wed. 16th Dec.. Hopefully Callan supporters will be as lucky as they were at the last draw. Promoters and fundraisers are invited to partake of a special reception in the Chapter House at 7 p.m. to thank them for their work and dedication. This will be followed by the draw

Bishop Forristal's Diamond Jubilee of Ordination to the Priesthood: Bishop Forristal was ordained priest in Rome on **Dec. 21st, 1955** for the Archdiocese of Dublin. He was student at Propaganda Fide College in Rome at the time. He became Bishop of Ossory in July 1981 on the death of Bishop Peter Birch and continued as bishop for the next 26 years. He lived through extraordinary and exciting times in the Church, brought about principally by the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. He embraced the new way of thinking heralded by that Council and set about implementing it, first as a priest and later as a bishop. We heartily congratulate him on reaching this milestone in his priestly life and wish him ad multos annos.

Meeting of Callan Heritage Society takes place this Monday 14th December at 8.00 PM in Mount Carmel House, Prologue. Kris Kindle takes place after the regular meeting.

Callan Parish Christmas Bingo Sunday 20 Dec.. Free raffles etc. and all kinds of prizes. Come along for the fun.

Callan Parish Christmas Special Whist in parish hall on Wed. 23 Dec.. All are welcome.

Coolagh cards for hams and hampers continue each Thursday night in Coolagh Hall until Christmas.

Windgap Annual Bazaar – Sunday, 13th December, in Windgap Community Hall, at 2 pm. Spinner, raffles, firewood, Christmas cakes, vegetable stalls and lots more. Come and see. Raffle tickets on sale already.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,
Last year we inaugurated **Safeguarding Sunday** in our diocese as recommended by *The National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church in Ireland*, in their Safeguarding Review of the Diocese of Ossory, carried out the previous year. Having completed the Review, the *National Board* published a Report which included twelve Recommendations. I am pleased to say that the diocese has implemented all twelve Recommendations
I thank all of you, priests, religious and the lay faithful, for your dedicated service to this very important ministry. Your support is essential in order to ensure the implementation and monitoring of Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. By doing so we, together, are doing all we can to ensure that children who participate in our Church do so in a safe environment. In particular, I thank Sr. Ena Kennedy, Diocesan Director of Safeguarding, who is doing tremendous work in assisting parishes with the implementation and monitoring of Diocesan Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. If you have any queries or suggestions please contact Sr. Ena. + Bishop Seamus Freeman SAC
Further information, leaflets for Parents and Children, Posters, Notices, Contacts for reporting a safeguarding matter, are available at the back of the Church and on our website www.ossory.ie
With every blessing of the Lord.