



Callan Parish Newsletter

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Fr. W. Dalton P.P. 77 25287



Weekend Mass Times in Callan: Parish Church 6.30pm (Vigil) 8-30 a.m., 11.00 a.m.; Coolagh: 7.30 p.m.; Newtown 9.30 a.m.

www.ossory.ie (see Callan Parish)

Recent death: Jackie Roche, Poulacapple – funeral in Mullinahone on Wed. Dec. 2nd followed by burial in Kilbride.

Ministers of the Eucharist: 6.30 Nellie Lynch & Brenda O'Brien; 11.00 a.m. Frank & Anastatia Kania; Paul Clarke.

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 2015 at 7.30pm.** St. Joseph's Young Priests Society will organise the liturgy for this mass. Please note the change of date. All are welcome. **Kind Regards, Br. Damien.**

Youth 2000 Christmas Retreat, Frid. 18-Sun 20 Dec. 2015 at Newbridge College, Co.

Kildare. Open to adults between the ages of 16-35, this exciting weekend attracts over 600 young people from all over Ireland. Parental consent is required for those under 18. All meals are provided for and accommodation is on site. Don't let money be an obstacle. Just bring a donation and sleeping bag. Free buses from around the country, see www.youth2000.ie or Youth2000 Ireland Facebook or tel. 01-675690. It promises to be a weekend of fun, excellent speakers, inspiring talks and workshops, prayer, youth Masses, adoration, healing and lots of time to chill out and meet new people.

Cathedral Draw Results: Callan hits the jackpot: **€2000 : Sr. Anthony Barlow, Mercy Convent, Callan; €1000 Sr. Hannah Frisby, Mercy Convent, Callan; €500 Brendan Murphy, Muckalee Parish; €300 each: Marie Delaney, St. Canice's Parish; Trish Campion, Johnstown Parish; €200 each Denis Molly St. Mary's Parish; Dorothy Kennedy, St. Mary's Parish; €100 each: Michael Hoyne, Thomastown; Gowran Parish; Eugene O'Donovan, IFAC House, Callan.**

Tuesday next 8th December, Feast of the Immaculate Conception – holy day of obligation – Vigil Mass Mon. 7 Dec. 6.30 p.m.; Masses in Callan for holy day 8.30 a.m.; 11.00 a.m. & 6.30 p.m.. Holy day Masses for Coolagh & Newtown combined into the Sat/Sun. Masses 5/6th Dec..

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.

New Book on memories of growing up in Callan 70 years ago: A new book by Callan native **Father Jim O'Halloran** will be launched at Stonehouse Books, Kieran St., Kilkenny on Saturday 5th of December at 3.00 PM. It is called **Giving Life Away: Memories.** In it Fr. Jim recounts his life growing up in Mill Street during the 40's and his subsequent life as a priest and Missionary abroad. It costs **€10** and is signed by the author – surely an ideal Christmas gift for loved ones and Callan folk abroad.

Ambo of parish church gone to Molloy's Workshop for refurbishment and adornment with some of the marble salvaged from the altar rails. It should be back in good time for Christmas.

SVP Christmas Collection on the weekend of Sunday 13 Dec.. Proceeds go towards helping the poor and those who have fallen on hard times. Please try to be as generous as possible.

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.

The coming of our Saviour into our fractured world invites us to reflect on the place of religious faith in our life: The issue of religious instruction in our schools has been seldom out of the media in the past number of years. It is always deemed a safe bet for public debate and sure to generate polarized views. The recent case of a pupil being excused from studying religion at second level has re-ignited the issue. Some might even see the time given to religious instruction as time lost to other subjects. It is interesting to note that there are other strands of opinion swimming against this tide of secularism. A former Taoiseach John Bruton is strong advocate of religion being taught in schools and dismisses as ‘erroneous to attribute falling education standards to the 30 minute per day spent teaching religion’.

The big issue is if we throw out religious education what do we replace it with? As we know only too well nature abhors a vacuum and sooner or later a secular religion will rush in to fill that void. Communism, Nazism and more recently the rise of Islamic Fundamentalism are good examples of secular religions. When people cease to believe in the dignity of the human person and the sacredness of human life the climate is ripe for any form of anarchy and brutality.

A well known journalist trying to understand what drives the suicide bomber blamed ‘the secular generation that believes in nothing and is therefore willing to believe in anything. We see a version of it here in this country in those who grew up disregarding the Catechism that passed for a religious education, but were left in its absence with no spiritual beliefs. I saw the most anti-religious people of my generation become devotees of Eastern Mysticism ... adrift with no core beliefs in anything .. they gravitate towards some kind of mish-mash of anything that wasn't Catholicism. I saw people who partied hard settle down and look for meaning in acetic lifestyles and universal consciousness. They had thrown the baby of an inner life out with the bathwater of Catholicism and they had a void that needed filling. As lost empty vessels they are ripe to be filled with any kind of creed”. This profile fits very well into the kind of people involved in the recent Paris attacks. We are often mistaken thinking of them as a serious bunch of people who are deep, thoughtful and religious, more committed to their way of life than we are, people who are devout and driven by a powerful connection with their God and their beliefs. It is much more likely that that they are people who have fallen overboard having been failed by society and ended up adrift in the sea of life. The frightening thing is that this could be the fate of any of us or that of our children. Such people often end up wild and rootless ready to embrace the certainty and strict rules of any organisation irrespective of whatever aims or objectives it might be sponsoring.

The Eight Amendment Safeguarding Human Life: Christmas is the time when we gather round the Crib in prayerful silence thanking our God for coming into our world as a little child and the most vulnerable of all that God has created. What greater gift could any family be bestowed with than the gift of a new life. The Eight Amendment to our Constitution conferring equal rights to the mother and child has served our society well. We should be slow to set it aside until we know exactly what we are putting in its place. This is a common human failing – rushing into dismantling something that we have grown tired of and without having anything to put in its place. We don't demolish our house that we have grown tired of in order to replace it with a new one until we have first made alternative provision for our living accommodation while the work is underway. The same should hold with regard to an article of our Constitution which is after all a pillar supporting the whole fabric of our social life.