

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

Readers: ?xml:namespace prefix = st1 ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:smarts" /6.30 p.m. M. McLoughlin; 8.30 Rachel Hogan; 11.00 First Communion Parents.?xml:namespace prefix = o ns = "urn:schemas-microsoft-com:office:office" /

Eucharistic Ministers: 6.30 p.m. Breda Coady & Nellie Lynch; 11.00 a.m. Paul Clarke, Bridie Metcalf & Kathleen Carroll.

Primary School Enrolment: Parents please note: the closing date for enrolment application for Junior Infants in Bunscoil McAuley Rice for September, 2016 is 1st February. Contact 056 7725674 for enrolment forms or e-mail mcauleyrice@gmail.com Thanks, John Maloney, Principal

SVP Collection after all Masses this weekend.

Coming up: Mon. 1st February: St. Brigid's Day: Brigid is the secondary patron of Ireland, ranking next to St. Patrick in terms of importance. She was born in Co. Offaly area about 460 and died in Kildare area c. 528. Her mother was a slave girl but her father saw to

it that she was brought up by a foster mother. While still a young girl her hand in marriage was sought by an eager suitor but she rejected his proposal on the grounds that she 'had vowed her virginity to the Lord'. She went on to found a church in the Liffey Valley at a place called Kildare. She was ahead of her time in making contact with the Abbot of a local male monastic foundation with a view to sharing the church facilities rather than each building their own. The Abbot's name was Conleth. In time he would be reckoned to be the first Bishop of Kildare. Brigid saw herself as a kind of second St. Patrick, bringing the Good News to places that had not yet been touched by Christianity. Hence, she merits the title 'Mary of the Gael'.

February 1st in our pre-Christian, Celtic Tradition: The old Irish Celtic Year was marked by 4 major festivals – **Imbolg (1st Feb.); Bealtaine (1st May); Lughnasa (1st Aug.) & Samhain (1st Nov.).** **Imbolg** (meaning 'in the belly') was the festival of the springtime, a festival looking forward to fertility – the time for tilling the land and getting things ready for the crops; it was also the time when the first of the spring lambs began to appear and when the fishermen were able to return to the sea after the winter storms. It was a time when the whole of nature was 'pregnant' again and about to give birth provided the gods were on side. Each festival had its own unique rituals. These were aimed at winning favour with the gods. They often took the form of visiting wells or springs, the ultimate source of all fertility – water. They often contradicted or came into conflict with Christian faith and its particular rituals hatched in an alien environment and culture. Rituals spawned by different beliefs and in different cultures are often unhappy bed-fellows. Early Christian teachers were nothing if not practical and pragmatic in that they endeavoured to hang onto what was good in the old Celtic traditions and weave them into a new and embryonic Christian culture. The ancient tradition of gathering

around a well to appease the gods was common to all festivals. Tying a piece of cloth that had been in contact with a wound around a bush was an ancient Celtic tradition also (the 'raggedly bush' tradition). It was taken over by Christians and became the blessing of a piece of flannel with water drawn from St. Brigid's Well. This probably explains the proliferation of St. Brigid's Wells all around the country. Nearly every parish has a St. Brigid's well. The first church in Callan was at Kilbride or 'the Church of Brigid'. Callan as a town did not come into existence until 1208 and could only boast of its first church from c. 1215 onwards. Incidentally it was called the Church of the Assumption as it still is today.

Recent deaths: Rick Burke, Mollassey & Green View Terrace – died 13 Jan. 2016; Jim Holden, Tinnamona – died 15 Jan. 2016. R.I.P..

Holy Year of Mercy: On the 8 Dec. 2015 Pope Francis inaugurated the Jubilee Year of Mercy by opening the Holy Door in St. Peter's Basilica, Rome. One might well ask why the pope should choose this theme of mercy! Is it because of the ruthlessness and barbarism that is engulfing our world today? We have only to point the brutality being perpetrated on innocent people caught up in the war in Syria & Iraq – innocent children starving to death, public executions every other week, unsolicited attacks on innocent people, the refugee crisis etc.. The pope wishes to underpin the centrality of mercy in the Christian vision way of life. In a harsh society it is not unusual for mercy to find itself bypassed or sidelined even by those professing to be Christian. The pope writes "we are called upon to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us. Pardoning offences

becomes the clearest expression of merciful love, and for us Christians it is an imperative from which we cannot excuse ourselves. At times how hard it seems to forgive! And yet pardon is the instrument placed in our fragile hands to attain serenity of heart. To let go of anger, wrath, violence and revenge are necessary conditions to living joyfully. Let us therefore heed the Apostolic exhortation: "do not let the sun go down on your anger" (Eph 4:26) Above all let us listen to the words of Jesus who made mercy an ideal of life and a criterion for the credibility of our faith: "Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy" (Mt. 5:7): the beatitude we should particularly aspire in this Holy Year".

Ossory Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes: Bookings are now being taken for the Ossory Diocesan a Pilgrimage to Lourdes from May 22 to 27. For information please call Eleanor at 051 880414 or glenmore@ossory.ie

Prayer for recovery: O God, I know that recovery cannot come quickly, that it cannot be rushed, it takes time; I know that everything possible is being done for me. Nevertheless I get impatient; I want to be on me feet; to get back home and to get back to work. O God teach me that the more impatient I am, the more I delay my recovery. Help me to learn to wait cheerfully and hopefully and uncomplainingly, content to live one day at a time and to learn to take one step at a time. Le me remember the cry of psalmist 'wait for the Lord'. Be strong and let your heart take courage; yes wait for the Lord. Trust in the Lord, forever trust and banish all our fears.