

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

Recent deaths: Brigid (Bid) McCauley, nee Holden, funeral prayers & Rosary 7 p.m. on Frid. 29 Jan. Molloy's Funeral Home; prayers on Sat. 10.15 a.m. followed by removal to parish church for funeral Mass at 11.00 a.m.; burial in Kilbride.

Sr. Kathleen Murphy, Mercy Sisters, Villa Maria, Kilkenny – funeral in St. Canice's Church, followed by burial in Kilbride on Wed. last.

Readers: 6.30 p.m. Marie Murphy; 8.30 a.m. Bridie Bergin; 11.00 a.m. Olive Power

Eucharistic Ministers: 6.30 p.m. Brenda O'Brien & Molly Foley; 11.00 a.m. Frank & Anastatia Kania, Olivia Quirke.

Westcourt News: The monthly Mass imploring the blessings and canonization of Blessed Edmund Rice will take on this Mon. night at 7.30 p.m. in Westcourt. Callan Heritage Society is organizing the liturgy. All are welcome.

Sunday 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 Feast of St. Brigid, Feb. 1st coincides with old Celtic Festival of 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 aimed at winning favour with the gods. These rituals often took the form of visiting wells or springs, the ultimate source of all fertility being water. Tying a piece of cloth that had been in contact with a wound around a bush was an ancient Celtic tradition - 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. Nearly every parish has a St. Brigid's well. The first church in Callan was 'the Church of Brigid' or Kilbride. 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 also as it still is today.

Tuesday 2 Feb.: Candlemas Day: the Feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple. It is the day when we bless candles that we use in our churches through the year and in our homes also, especially at times of bereavement and illness. It is customary for people to present candles for blessing on this day for use in the church over the coming year. People may also like to take home a few blessed candles to keep in their homes to ward off any misfortune, storms or flooding that might come their way. Packets of candles are available from Hackett's in Bridge St. and in Super Valu.

Wed. 3rd February – Feast of St. Blaise – throats will be blessed at the 10.00 a.m. Mass on the day and at the weekend Masses next weekend 6/7 February.

Week of First Friday of February: The sick & housebound will be visited with Holy Communion have their throats blessed during the coming week.

Year of Mercy – a time to practise the Corporal & Spiritual Works of Mercy (Pope Francis): In our catechism we learned about the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. At the time they mean little to us and there was little we could do at that tender age towards putting them into practice. Now that we have time on our hands we might like to re-visit them. Pope Francis challenges us to exercise this ministry of mercy during this special Jubilee Year of Mercy. Ever

since the Second Vatican Council which ended more than fifty years ago we have been hearing a lot about the mission of the laity and how we might give concrete expression to it. Our actions must match our words. It is not enough to talk about mercy; we must put it into practice. Pope Francis identifies a very practical way of exercising this ministry in this Jubilee Year of Mercy. He writes “It is my burning desire that during this Jubilee, the Christian people may reflect on the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. It will be a way to awaken our conscience, too often grown dull in the face of poverty. ... Let us rediscover these corporal works of mercy: to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; welcome the stranger; heal the sick; visit the imprisoned and bury the dead. And let us not forget the spiritual works of mercy: to counsel the doubtful, instruct the ignorant, admonish sinners, comfort the afflicted, forgive offences, bear patiently with those who wrong us, and pray for the living and the dead” (Jubilee Year of Mercy n. 15).

Results of the Callan whist drive held on Wednesday last 20th January. Top Score: Kathleen O'Sullivan, Top Gent: Henry Cooke & Gerry Ryan; Top Lady: Bridie Bergin; half time scores: Ladies: Patricia Walton, Mary Doheny; Gents: Henry Cooke, Eileen Maher; Hatchers Mary McGelligot, Lowest Score: Aidan Ryan. Raffle: Kathleen Hickey, Ann Hickey, Pat Delaney, Sr Miriam, Patricia Delaney. Next whist drive Wednesday February 3rd at 8pm. **Whist held fortnightly, on every alternative Wednesday night in the parish hall.** New players always welcome. For enquiries about lessons call in and arrangements can be made. Note for your diary: Fr Philip O'Halloran's Annual Whist Drive for Mill Hill Fathers will be held on Wednesday 30th March, in Callan Parish Hall 8pm. Thank you. Veronica Robinson 0863133208