

# Callan Parish Newsletter

**Readers:** 6.30 p.m. Aisling McGrath; 8.30 Paddy McGuire; 11.00 a.m. Mary McGrath

**Eucharistic Ministers:** 6.30 p.m. Bernie butler & Molly Foley; 11.00 a.m. Catherine Lanigan, Olivia Quirke & Margaret Nolan.

**Important dates in 2016:** First Communion: Sunday 15 May. Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday, 10 February. Easter Sunday 27 March 2016.**

**Cemetery Masses as usual:** Kilbride – last Friday of June, 8 p.m.; Coolagh – first Friday of July 8 p.m.; Newtown: last Friday of July 7.30 p.m..

**Feast of the Baptism of the Lord:** This Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and as we do so we are invited to reflect on our own baptism and that of our children. Formerly we used to view baptism as the excising of the great wart of original sin which we had inherited from our first parents, Adam & Eve.. This explained why baptisms were carried out within the first few days of birth. The generally accepted theory of evolution proposed by Darwin and others in the 19<sup>th</sup> century raised serious questions about this teaching. How can we speak of original sin if there were no first parents as the theory of evolution would seem to suggest?

Today we speak of original sin being located within each one of us – that inner discord, disharmony that we experience within each one of us i.e. knowing the good that we want to do but being helpless when it came to doing it. Baptism inserts us into the community of believers who espouse a

value system and way of living that enables us to overcome that innate, inner division and disharmony within our own selves. By belonging to the community of believers are equipped to come to grips with and overcome that attraction to do evil rather than good. Hence the faith of the parents, family and wider community play a pivotal role. God's grace rubs off on us. God's grace comes to us through other people because grace is not a 'thing' or 'object' that is poured out upon us in some magical way in the waters of baptism. When parents present their child for baptism they want their child to grow up to inherit the values, the hopes, the joys and the expectations that have served them well to find their way and pick their steps through the thorns of life. George Hook, the well known rugby pundit and veteran broadcaster in a recent interview in the *Irish Catholic* spells out very passionately how important his faith has become for him. His story is worth reading.

**George Hook re-discovers his Catholic faith:** He re-converted to Catholicism during a recent brief stint in hospital. He was petrified about the anaesthetic. He sent for the chaplain to hear his confession, give him the blessing of the sick and Holy Communion. He speaks of the great comfort, consolation and peace he found in returning to the practice of his faith. He is utterly convinced that "there is no better belief system to pass on to children as a way of living than the Catholic faith. ... faith comes from parents rather than schools .. parents should teach their children about faith. The idea of love they neighbour as thyself is still a very good idea as a way to live ... the idea of thou shalt not lie; the idea of honouring your father and mother and thou shalt not kill – what a way to live! There is no better way to show your kids how to live their lives. ... it may be a sort of politically incorrect to attend Mass nowadays but people who have become alienated from the Church could benefit from returning to the fold. My advice to non-practicing Catholics and those of no faith is to consider the pros and cons of religion on their lives. I would love nothing more than to go into schools and preach the Christian message to young kids".

**Callan Heritage Society Meeting** this Monday, 14th January, at 8.00 PM in Mt. Carmel Home. New members always welcome.

**Coming up: Church Unity Week: 18 – 25 Jan:** Each year at this time of year we focus on praying for unity among the different members of the Christian tradition. Catholics differ from other Christians in their understanding of Christ's presence in the eucharist. Catholics refer to this presence as 'real' while non-Catholic Christians see it more in terms of sign or symbol of Christ's presence among his people gathered in prayer and worship. Non-Catholics do not subscribe to a central authority like that of the Pope but to the leaders of their own particular Communion. Non-Catholics admit married men and women to positions of ministry within their church. Traditionally Catholics placed greater emphasis on sacraments while non-Catholics made the word of God their priority. Many will remember the old discipline when Catholics were not allowed to enter a Protestant Church under any circumstances, even for the funeral or wedding of a non-Catholic neighbour or friend. That all changed around 1965 during the Second Vatican Council. Now we are encouraged to pray together while respecting what is proper to each tradition. This is called 'ecumenism'. Interfaith marriages were formerly discouraged; today while the bishop's permission is still required and the Catholic party is required to promise to do all in his/her power to remain steadfast in their faith and have the children baptised and brought in the Catholic this permission is routinely forthcoming.

**Prayer for the New Year:** Lord, as I quench the lamp and close the door on the past year, may I find the words of gratitude to honour this passing time; the gift of your design. For all that's come and gone, for decisions right and wrong, for unsung songs, I offer words of thanks. For days when life had plenty, for nights when hearts were empty; for undiscovered plains, when all was ventured but nothing gained. Through struggle and through pain, may we learn to rise again. Now at this threshold time make our hearts refined to dream new dreams beyond our imagining. May we

step into places where courage will take us beyond our limited spaces. May we never lose the courage to seek for a better world where no child will cry hungry, while another is bored with too much. Where war is remembered in hushed tones, a memory of forgotten days. Where colour and creed can celebrate with pride in their different ways. And may your gentleness O Lord, exude from every heart. May this new year be a year of many blessings where new vision will transform the paralysed places of lonely hearts; where we will discover the hidden beauty of each soul, all who cross our pathways and if we meet with sorrow may we find an inner light to guide us to the bright place in the company of friends and family, in the company of love. May each moment of every month unveil your abiding presence in beautiful surprises, re-awakening the child within each one of us. Lord, bless all we hold so dear that you might guide our way at the birthing of the year. Liam Lawton.

**Pope's Francis' New Year Message:** Pope Francis reminds us of the dangers of indifference to the plight of others. He reminds us that 2015 was marked 'from start to finish by kidnapping, ethnic persecution and the misuse of power'. Indifference underlies much of the misery we find in our world. This indifference results from 'a false humanism and practical materialism allied to relativism and nihilism'. We make the mistake of thinking that we are masters of our own destiny and that we can manage without God. We were never better informed about the world we live in and yet this world of ours is in a greater mess than ever before – conflict, religious persecution, a refugee crisis, cruelty and violence. As Christians we are imbued with the message of hope i.e. the conviction that despite all this evil so visible in our world the forces of good will ultimately triumph over those negative forces that try to swamp it. Recognition of the inalienable dignity of every human being holds the key.