

## CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

**Recently deceased:** Alice Sneddon nee Fanning, Moanarch – funeral Mass on Monday 11th April, 11.00 a.m.; Kathleen Sullivan, Rathculbin – funeral on Sat. 9 April in Newtown;

**Margaret (Peig) O'Brien**, Mallardstown, funeral on Tues. 12 April; burial in Newtown;

**Maura Maher, Slade** – funeral prayers in her residence on Thur. 6.30 p.m. followed by removal to parish church; funeral Mass on Frid. 11.00 a.m.;

**Pat Lennon, Green St** – died 15 April; funeral on Monday 18 April.

**Michael Delaney, formerly of 11 Green Lane** – buried in England on Wed. 13;

**Weekend Readers:** Bob McLoughlin; 8.30 a.m. Tommy Quinlan; 11.00 a.m. First Communion Parents.

**Ministers of the Eucharist:** 6.30 p.m. Sadie Bacon & Brenda Farrell; 11.00 Catherine Lanigan, Frank & Anastatia Kania.

**Vocation Sunday:** This Sunday is World Day for Vocations and we're all too aware of the crisis facing the Irish Church and our diocese in particular. We now have 50-55 priests active in ministry in the diocese with an average age of 68. The situation is unlikely to change for the better in the near future. In the past 30 years our number of priests has diminished by 50% but the number of people in the pews has diminished even more – perhaps by as much as 65%. Amalgamating parishes has been tried but doesn't work.

People's expectations remain the same and don't realise that it amounts to a duplication of work for the priest that in ordinary life would already be retired. The recent Diocesan Synod (Meeting) in Limerick Diocese heard **the call for lay people to begin taking on the role of leading prayer services on weekdays so that they will be ready to step in when there is no priest available on a Sunday.** That day is not too far off. It arrives when a priest falls ill, because there no spare priests around. Once upon a time priests involved in teaching were available at short notice to supply when a priest fell ill. Official church policy encourages people to make the pilgrimage on the Sunday to where the nearest eucharist (the summit of the Christian life) is being celebrated.

It is good to remember however that in its origins the church consisted of that little community of believers that gathered in prayer after the resurrection. The felt need to establish a formula of leadership came later. During these days of Easter Time we are reading about this community in the readings at Mass. Maybe the Lord is challenging us to get back to our roots and in the process nurture its own form of leadership, culminating in a vocation to serve the Lord and his people in a more full and singleminded way. The celebration of the eucharist is the supreme expression of the vitality of a Spirit-filled community, evidence of a community coming of age and growing in spiritual maturity. While it is true that 'the eucharist makes the church' it is equally true that 'the church makes the eucharist' as the Fathers of the Church continually reminded us. What is abundantly clear at this point is that a dwindling number of ageing clergy cannot singlehandedly guarantee the number of Masses and levels of service hitherto people have come to expect. Meanwhile we must continue to pray for that spiritual discernment in the hope that it will begin to produce the vocations we yearn for. Paul Clarke of the St. Joseph's Young Priests Society will be distributing prayer cards for this purpose after Mass.

**St Joseph's Young Priests Society recruiting new members:** St. Joseph's Young Priests Society is a national organisation with branches in many parishes throughout Ireland. Bishop Forristal promoted its establishment in

parishes throughout the Diocese of Ossory. Its aim is to support vocations to the priesthood through prayer, encouragement and to help defray the costs of seminary training to those in need – In 2014/15 we assisted 114 Irish and 586 foreign students with their fees at a total cost of **€869,587**. A branch of the society has been in existence in Callan Parish for the past ten years or so. They meet every month after the 10.00 a.m. Mass in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel for prayer, reflection etc.. The meetings take 20-30 minutes approx.. In recent times Callan Branch has lost some of its original members through bereavement, illness or death. They are now recruiting new members. If you have the time and the interest in promoting vocations please contact **086-2523534. Phil Cooke : 086-8333029; Marian Fennelly : 086-0693510.**

**Congratulations to Bunscoil McCauley Rice on winning the Credit Union National Quiz Final** – in the under 13 category last Sunday, 10 April in the RDS, Dublin. They came out on top of the 50 participating finalist teams in their category. The team members were: **Julie Greene, Luke Minogue, Joshua Buckley & Billy Power**. We also congratulate the under 11 team (**Sadhbh McCormack, Sean Fitzpatrick, Thomas Godden & James Hickey**). They too reached the final, coming 4<sup>th</sup> in their grouping. They were also competing against 49 other teams. Proud parents, teachers and friends cheered on our winning team as it went to a tie-breaker with Bunscoil McCauley Rice emerging overall winners. We are deeply grateful to **Callan Credit Union Ltd.** for sponsoring our teams.

**Housebound / sick / hospitalised:** Please let us know when a loved one is sick or in hospital and would like to be visited. We have no way of knowing otherwise.

**Trocaire Boxes:** Please bring your Trocaire boxes as soon as possible so that we can forward this year's proceeds to the Diocese for onward transmission to Trocaire. We may have forgotten to do something special for Lent. We still have the chance to do so by making a contribution to the poorest of the poor in this Jubilee Year of Mercy.

**Pope Francis publishes long-awaited document on Family Life: Amoris Laetitia** (the Joy of Love). Back in 2014 & 2015 Pope Francis met in synod with some 300 bishops from around the world discussing problems pertaining to family life today e.g. divorced and remarried, same sex unions etc.. There was much discussion and heated debate at times and not little disagreement at those meetings. The differing cultures where the Church finds itself gives rise to a wide range of experience and different approaches to day-to-day problems. The Church is no longer that monolithic European Church it once was. The majority of its members now live on other continents. **While Pope Francis does not change anything in traditional church teaching concerning the variety of complicated situations real life throws up, he insists that such complications “should not be pigeonholed to fit into overly rigid classifications leaving no room for suitable and personal and pastoral discernment”.** The church “must be particularly concerned to offer understanding, comfort and acceptance, rather than imposing straightaway a set of rules that only lead people to feel judged and abandoned”. The existence and ready availability of clear laws and ready-made rules covering all kinds of situations is the dream of every practitioner on the ground but all too often these rules can be misused and abused by the one not familiar with the reason for the law in the first instance and lacking the skills necessary to apply them to the particular situation. Pope Francis is warning against this all too blunt an instrument. This obviously has serious implications for the local church. During the Synod individual bishops did not want to be loaded with this heavy responsibility of accountability. Pope Francis, unlike his predecessor Pope Benedict, favours de-centralization of authority and leaving as much as possible to local bishops to decide within their own respective dioceses.

With regard to those living in regular unions recognized by the Church the Pope says “it is important that they should be made to feel part of the Church. They are not excommunicated and should not be treated as such, since they remain part of the ecclesial community”.