

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

Recent death: St. Joseph Sheehy, Convent of Mercy, Callan (sister of Sr. Alphonsus, also of the Convent of Mercy, Callan who died 11 months ago. RIP). Funeral Prayers : Thur. 5 p.m. in Convent chapel & Requiem Mass in Convent Chapel on this Frid. 12.00 noon, followed by burial in Kilbride. Sr. Joseph, a native of north Kerry, entered religious life in Callan in 1938, trained as a nurse and was appointed to St. Luke's Hospital, Kilkenny, working there **as a nurse for the next 44 years.** On retiring from St. Luke's she continued to exercise her caring charism in the newly established Mt. Carmel Home, until retiring in 1993. Ar dheis láimh go raibh a hanam dilis.

Readers: 6.30 p.m. Patti McGuire; 8.30 a.m. Bridie Bergin; 11.00 a.m. Ailis Carey.

Mount Carmel News – Annual Open Day: This year Mt. Carmel Open Day will take the form of a BBQ, hosted by **Callan Premium Foods at their Westcourt Business Park, Callan, 17 July 2016.** In previous years it took place in Mt. Carmel House but space was always a problem. All are welcome to come along to support this invaluable facility in our town and taste some mouthwatering BBQd food, thereby dispensing with the drudgery of preparing Sunday lunch/dinner at home. Come along and enjoy meeting the residents and friends of Mt. Carmel. Plenty of Children's entertainment also: bouncy castle, face painting & live music.

Cemetery Masses still to come
Newtown: Friday 29 July 7.30 p.m..
Whitechurch: 19 Aug. 7.00 p.m.

Please let family members and neighbours know in good time.

Callan CBS Kenya Immersion Programme: A group of 15 students and 3 teachers will be travelling to Kenya next Easter to take part in an immersion programme during Eastertime 2017. They will be witnessing another culture and how other people live. It will be a learning experience for all. Meanwhile the they will be busy fundraising throughout the coming year having to raise €30,000 towards the trip. In addition each participating student will have to raise **€500** towards his own expenses. Local Callan student Luke Walsh, as part of his fundraising project has made some small wooden money boxes to collect the fast becoming obsolete 1,2 & 5 cent coins. He is grateful for being invited to place them in the P.O, Credit Union, AIB & Bank of Ireland. He would be grateful if you would donate your brown coins in these boxes. All donations gratefully accepted. This is an opportunity to empty your jars of coins and put them towards helping others.

Study theology by distant learning: The Priory Institute Tallagh is offering a B. A. in Theology by distance learning and with flexibility to to build modules. Application deadline 20 Sep. 2016 contact www.priorinstitute.com Tel. 01-4048124 or email enquiries@priorinstitute.com .

Reek Sunday: Reek Sunday or Garland Sunday is an annual day of pilgrimage and pattern in Ireland. Our best known pilgrimage site is Croagh Patrick, near Westport, Co. Mayo. On the last Sunday of July each year pilgrims in the thousands climb this holiest of mountains. This pilgrimage has been held yearly on that day for the best part of 1,500 years. It is held in honour of St. Patrick who according to tradition, like Moses of old, spent 40 days fasting on the mountain in 441. Anything between 15,000 and 30,000 take up the challenge. It is estimated that in all about the 100,000 pilgrims annually make the climb; some incorporate it into their holidays in Westport area. On Reek Sunday Archbishop Michael Neary leads the climb and celebrates the Pilgrimage mass at the summit. Confessions are available at various stages along the way. The climbing itself takes about 2 hours plus a further hour and half for descent.

The phenomenon of pilgrimage is deeply etched into our Celtic psyche and folklore. It is not something thought up by those promoting challenging and healthy outdoor pursuits or by Wild Atlantic Way enthusiasts.

Reek Sunday / Pattern Sunday – its ancient origins and roots: Our Celtic ancestors had four main festivals or celebrations during the course of the year. The most boisterous and roudy by far was that in honour of Lugh or the god of the moon which was celebrated on 1st of August. It became known as the festival of Lughnasa. Lugh was honoured as the god of crafts, skills and talents and the timing of the celebration coincided with the beginning of harvest season. Our ancestors thanked the god of skills and talents for getting them to harvest time. It marked the end to the hungry month of July when food supplies were low and people looked forward anxiously to the new harvest. They did so by gathering around stone crannogs, hills or wells and reciting certain set formulae or prayers and performing ritual dances (recall Brian Friel's Play, *Dancing at Lughnasa*) in thanking Lugh for protecting their crops from the evil one.

This celebration did not sit easily with Christianity when it arrived. The old festival of Lughnasa survived and refused to give up its pre-Christian identity despite the best efforts of St. Patrick and the new faith he was preaching. People still gathered on local hills or around wells to enact a mixture of pagan and Christian rituals. They still had the harvest to celebrate and the new potatoes lavishly sautéed with rich helpings of cream to look forward to irrespective of what St. Patrick had to say. The Celtic people were not to be separated from their rituals. They still made the customary rounds in an anti-clockwise direction reciting set prayers; they picked bilberries and wild flowers; danced, played and fell in love, raced and wrestled (after all Lugh was the god of skills and talents etc.), competed in shows of strength and agility, joined in the routine fights and exchanged the news; re-told old stories and became familiar with the landscape. This took place usually on the Sunday nearest the 1st of August or the last Sunday in July. In time this became known as 'pattern' or 'patrons's Sunday'. Church authorities having tried in vain to stamp it out but instead designated the last

Sunday of July as 'Pattern Sunday'. This coincided with the digging of the new potatoes. People still went to the old Lughnasa sites to do the customary 'rounds' or climbed the hill (Tory Hill in south Kilkenny, St. Moling's Well near Thomastown, or Reek Sunday – climbed Croagh Patrick. The ancient Celtic ingredients of 'climbing' and 'gathering round a well or spring' survived but in post-Famine Ireland these pagan rituals were over-laden with a superimposed Christian imagery and content. One now climbed the hill or reek not to pay homage to Lugh but on a pilgrimage of penance and prayer, and one gathered round the well drinking from the spring not to appease the god Lugh but to derive healing from its water through the intercession of the local saint. A raggedy bush was often located at the holy bush – the sick tying a piece of cloth around the bush in the hope that the particular illness would have disappeared by the time the rag had decayed. The name of the local saint was assigned to the well. This explains the proliferation of 'holy wells' throughout the length and breadth of Ireland and the celebration of the 'pattern' to coincide with the feast of the particular saint rather than on the last Sunday of July. This was the Church's attempt to wean people off the celebrations associated with the ancient festival of Lughnasa – the alcohol-fuelled faction-fighting and other anti-social behaviour. In many places, however, the last Sunday of July remains sacrosanct while in some places 'pattern Sunday' has become the more sober Cemetery Sunday or annual local horse fair.