

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

Recent deaths: Nan Dargan, Newline – died 16 Jan.; funeral 18 Jan. 2017;

Margaret Mary Webster nee O'Brien, Croan, Dunamaggin – following an accident: 15 Jan. 2017; funeral in Hugginstown 19 Jan 2017.

Ministers of the Eucharist: 6.30 p.m. Richard Lynch & Bernie Butler; 11.00 Frank & Anastatia Kania & Paul Clarke;

Ministers of the Word: 6.30 p.m. Patti McGuire; 8.30 a.m. Tommy Quinlan; 11.00 a.m. Mairead Carey.

Irish Bishops - 5 yearly visit to Rome: All bishops in communion with or affiliated to the Roman Catholic Church are required to give an account of their stewardship to the Holy Father once every five years. This entails going to Rome and making themselves available to meet officials from different branches of the Roman Curia or church civil service. Before making the journey bishops are required to submit an account of how things are going in his diocese e.g. the number of people attending Mass regularly, the number of baptisms, confirmations, ordinations to the priesthood and religious professions, church marriages, religious vocations etc.. These statistics are then studied by the officials in Rome as well as anything unusual pertaining to church life in any given area or territory. It is the duty of the Apostolic Nuncio or papal representative in the country to keep Rome informed on matters pertaining to church life, faith and morals etc.. Recently when our Taoiseach Enda Kenny T. D. visited the Vatican to invite Pope Francis to Ireland for the World Meeting of Families in August 2018, he had half an hour interview with the Cardinal Secretary of the Vatican State – in other words his opposite number within the Vatican – during which the marriage equality referendum was raised as well as policies pertaining to religious education in schools etc.. The Taoiseach was probably taken aback at how well informed Roman sources were. Vatican officials tend to be

extremely well versed in what is happening in any part of the world through its diplomatic representatives. They keep abreast with local news and save it for possible future reference. This has always been so even in the days before modern social media became available.

These meetings also afford individual bishops the opportunity raise relevant issues pertaining to their diocese with the Roman authorities. Needless to say top of the agenda for every bishop is the declining number of vocations, falling Mass attendances and the need to amalgamate parishes and learn from other territories that have been down the same road already.

The Irish Bishops as a group had a private audience with Pope Francis on Frid. 20th Jan. 2017. I recall accompanying Bishop Birch on a similar mission more than 40 years ago (he had been ill when the other bishops visited Rome) and acting as interpreter for him at a meeting with an official in the Congregation for the Clergy. Bishop Birch was requesting permission to ordain an older man who had completed 4 years in seminary rather than 6 years which was then the norm. Permission was readily granted, the man in question was ordained priest but unfortunately died within a year or two of ordination.

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. E.g. Anglican 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. All that 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 formerly were 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 faith this permission is routinely forthcoming.

Confirmation Programme 2017:

Sun. 26 Feb., 11.00 a.m. – Enrolment Sunday;
Confirmation Preparation Programme 27 Feb.; 6 March; 13 March
8-9p.m. in Bunscoil McCauley-Rice School Hall;
Frid. 24 March – Confirmation Retreat at St. Mary's Cathedral;
Sun. 26 March: Ceremony of Light in preparation for Confirmation;
Sun 2 April, 11.00 a.m. Celebration of Confirmation.

Closing date for enrolment applications to Bunscoil McAuley-Rice for September, 2017 is 1st February. Contact 0567725674 or mcauleyrice@gmail.com for forms.

Coming up: Catholic Schools Week : 29 Jan. – 3 Feb.: Last year we celebrated the Jubilee Year of Mercy and attention was focused on the theme of mercy and forgiveness during Catholic Schools Week. This year the focus shifts to caring for our common home – the earth. In May 2015 our Holy Father Pope Francis published an important letter (an encyclical letter) on '**Caring for Our Common Home**' (**Laudato Si**). The letter deals with all issues pertaining to our environment – pollution, climate change and resultant drought and famine. The Pope is appealing to all of us to take greater care of the earth. It is after all our shared home and we must take care to hand it on in good shape to the generations coming after us. The issue of climate-warming is particularly worrying because more and more of the earth's surface is turning into desert and resulting in starvation and famine for peoples occupying those parts of the

world. We have just been told that 2016 was the hottest year on record, continuing a pattern which has been evident since the beginning of the new millennium.

As people living in a land of plenty what is particularly relevant is to wage war on waste. We have just celebrated Christmas and I'm sure we're embarrassed to admit how much good food went to waste in our households – maybe even 50% of all that food that we purchased in the run-up to Christmas. Think of the people who had little or no food for Christmas because of drought and famine taking hold in their homeland – no water for livestock to survive, no grass, not vegetation etc.. The earth has been entrusted to us to care for it and ensure that we hand it on to the generations after us in a better state than we even received it.

Other areas we might look at is how we use energy e.g. electricity. Electricity is becoming an ever increasing commodity to produce. We can save energy by turning off lights and other household appliances when not in use. Every little bit of energy that is wasted amounts up, especially when it is on large scale.

Baptism – a criterion for entry: This issue is in the news again recently. The Department of Educations uses it to cover up its failure to provide sufficient school places for all. In places where there are sufficient school places to meet the local need the issue of being baptised does not arise and this is so in probably 90% of all cases..

It is the most inclusive of all schools. In places where there is an insufficient number of school place to meet local needs baptism or non-baptism is not going to solve it; the shortage of places is the core issue.

Important dates in 2017: First Communion: Sunday 14 May.

Lent begins with **Ash Wednesday, 1st March. Confirmations: Sun. 2 April 2017; Easter Sunday 16 April 2017.**

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..