OSSORY TIMES
Sharing the life of our Diocese

WMOF Diocese of Ossory Launch - Family Fun Day
St Kieran’s College, Sunday 7th May 2017
Subscription €10 per month. Draw will be held at 8pm on the last Wednesday of each month in the Chapter Room, St Mary’s Cathedral, James’s Street, Kilkenny. All are welcome to attend.

Thank you for your support!
Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of the Ossory Times.

Easter is the greatest of seasons in our Christian Faith. It reminds us that everything is possible - even victory over death! Following our Lenten preparation, and fasting, the Easter season is, by contrast, a time of great joy, energy and life. We are reminded that we are a hopeful people and that we have good reason for that hope.

These pages remind us of the many and varied ways that this hope finds expression in our Diocese. It is the people, the activities and the stories that we share together, which put flesh on the bones of our Easter joy. In these pages this is clearly evident. A wonderful event planned in May to launch our Preparation for the World Meeting of Families 2018; the Diocesan Forum reflecting on another four years of service and achievement; the Gospel lived in the service of others in Calais; an Ad Limina visit; a course for those willing to lead people in prayer; the Pastoral Plan and the life that it is bringing to our communities; parish missions; and so much more.

Ossory is alive in the joy of the Resurrection. It is in living our Faith that we continue the tradition of hope as it was handed onto us. In fact, it is these Faith-filled actions that bring to consciousness the liturgy that is our world.

As always we hope you enjoy this publication. Comments, suggestions and contributions are most welcome for future editions. Articles or advertisements for upcoming events or of recent events, can be sent to:

Ossory Adult Faith Development
St Kieran’s College,
College Road, Kilkenny.
Tel. 056-7753624
Email: afd@ossory.ie
A Wonderful Experience

Mgr Michael Ryan
I was very fortunate that my time as Diocesan Administrator in Ossory should coincide with an Ad Limina visit by the Bishops of Ireland to Pope Francis and the Holy See from 15th – 25th January 2017.

The official name of the Pilgrimage is ‘Ad Limina Apostolorum visit to Rome’ or to the ‘threshold of the Apostles – a reference to the fact that an important part of our visit was to concelebrate Mass in the four great Basilicas of Rome – St Peter’s, St Paul’s outside the walls, St Mary Major and St John Lateran. The four Archbishops of Ireland took it in turn to be the Celebrant and the Liturgies were very well prepared by the staff and seminarians of the Irish College in Rome, where we were made so welcome by the Rector, Mgr Ciarain O’Carroll. Nothing was left undone to make our stay so pleasant and enjoyable.

Before the Ad Limina visit Archbishop Eamon Martin writing in the Irish Catholic on the 12th January 2017 said: “The Central purpose of the Ad Limina visit is to celebrate and deepen our communion with the Universal Church and with the Successor of St Peter, Pope Francis’. We look forward to reporting to the Holy Father and to the various offices of the Roman Curia about the Pastoral situation of our dioceses and of the Church of Ireland”.

You make ask what did we do all day? Prior to the Ad Limina visit each diocesan bishop submits a report on his diocese to the Holy See. This lengthy report describes the actual situation of the Church in that diocese, lots of statistics and a reflection on the challenge facing the diocese at this time as it tries to be faithful to the ministry of Gospel. All these reports are read by the staff of the Holy See and a summary is presented to the Holy Father so that when we met him he was already well acquainted with the scene in Ireland.

There are more than twenty dicasteries or departments in the Holy See and during the course of our days we met with all of them. In the group were twenty three Diocesan Bishops, a number of Auxiliary Bishops, two retired Bishops and three Diocesan Administrators from Ossory, Galway and Clogher. We were divided into
groups of about ten so that in any one day we visited two congregations before lunch and two more in the afternoon. I should say that the Congregations/Departments of the Holy See are like the Departments in our own Government with the difference that they are all focused on different aspects of the Mission of the Church in Ireland. May I just name a few of them ‘Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments’, ‘Catholic Education’ ‘Laity, Family and Life, ‘The Clergy’ ‘Commission for the Protection of Minors’. The titles speak for themselves.

A visit by the group of Bishops would usually last about an hour. We were always made so welcome and that was the universal experience over the ten days. The Personnel in each congregation were so anxious to hear what we had to say, for example, at Clergy Congregation much time was given to the promotion of vocations to the Priesthood and Religious Life and the great admiration that the congregation had for the ministry of priests world-wide, in particular the many elderly priests who were still so generously serving their people.

While our days were quite full, beginning with Mass in College Chapel with Staff and Seminarians we did have some very enjoyable social evenings as well. There was a social evening in the College for the Irish Priests, Religious and members of the Irish Community in Rome and we were invited to lunch with the Irish Dominicans at San Clemente. We took part in Evening Prayer with the Irish Augustinian Fathers in the Church of St Patrick followed by a reception. You couldn’t but be impressed by the warmth of the welcome there was for us and that extended to both the Irish Embassy to Holy See and the Irish Embassy to Italy. The recently appointed resident Ambassador to the Holy See Ms Emma Madigan and her husband Nicholas Simms (grandson of the late Archbishop Simms of Dublin) held a dinner in our honour and Mr. Philip McDonagh and his wife Ann hosted a reception for us at the Embassy. I was very pleased to meet the Ambassador as his uncle the late Fr Ned McDonagh C.M. was Spiritual Director in the Seminary in St Kieran’s during my years there. He was a greatly respected friend and advisor to many seminarians during his ten years on the staff.

Our visit to Pope Francis on Friday, 20th January 2017, was of course the highlight of our Ad Limina. He greeted each one of us at the door and then took his seat with his translator beside him. Pope Francis said at the beginning, ‘I’ll throw in the ball and let’s see what happens’, so it turned out to be a conversation about the Church in Ireland about the struggles and challenges we’re having but also about the importance of ‘ministry of the ear’. While we are listening to the hopes, struggles, and fears of our people”. The Role of Women in the Church was raised by Archbishop Eamon Martin who said many women in particular young women felt excluded and therefore do not take part in the life of the Church. We had already discussed this important matter with a number of the Congregations earlier in the week. Pope Francis spoke of his plans to visit Ireland for the World Gathering of Families in August 2018 and was assured of a very warm welcome. With such a large gathering in a very big hall and no microphone those of us who were at end found it hard to hear the conversation that went on between Pope Francis and the Bishops who were close to him. It was only afterwards that we got a further account of what was said.

It was truly a memorable occasion and indeed I saw it as a great honour for me. At the end he thanked each of us for coming and gave us gifts of Rosaries and Medallions of the Blessed Virgin Mary. We assured him of our prayers every day and I’m sure all readers of ‘Ossory Times’ will do so as well, keeping in mind in particular that it will be his responsibility under guidance of the Holy Spirit to name a new Bishop for the Diocese of Ossory.
An invitation to participate

The Pastoral Plan is an invitation to all of us to participate in the future of our parishes and our diocese.

Gemma Mulligan

In our vision for a Diocesan Pastoral Plan we are being asked “to accept that the future shape of the Church in Ossory is in our hands, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit in a new Pentecost.” The Pastoral Plan is an invitation to all of us to participate in the future of our parishes and our diocese. Every week I visit parishes and the presence of Christ is so evident in the people I meet. Their commitment, their passion, their hospitality, their appreciation, their hope and expectation is so great. These parishioners serve their parish because they understand that faith is something that must be lived and shared and handed on. They serve as part of parish teams who together are building up the body of Christ.

Some parishes have been working for many years in a spirit of collaboration preparing for the reality of parishes without resident priests, others are only beginning see the need now. Most parishes in Ossory have more than one Church, many have three or four. These same parishes often have only one priest making morning Mass in every church something that is simply not possible. In some of these parishes people have continued to come together to pray during the week when there is no morning Mass or when their parish priest is away or not available. This is a wonderful example of keeping faith communities alive and participating in the mission. It is important that as communities we continue to come together to worship as part of our daily lives. Our Diocesan Pastoral Plan is about sustaining vibrant faith communities in our parishes in a time of many changes in our Church.

During Lent this year, the parishes of Thomastown and Rosbercon came together to participate in a diocesan programme provided by Adult Faith Development, helping lay people prepare to lead a liturgy or prayers. “Living our baptismal call” involved teaching on Church, The Sacraments, Liturgy, Scripture and an understanding of ministry and service. This programme will allow the participants to lead their parishioners in prayer when the need arises. This was something that both parish pastoral councils in these parishes felt was a need in their respective parishes. I hope that as the reality of our Pastoral Plan unfolds that
more lay people across the diocese will participate in programmes such as this and perhaps some will consider further studies in pastoral liturgy or theology.

Pope Francis speaking recently in Rome said that ‘we are called to go out as missionaries and bring the message of God’s love to every person in every area of life.’ Our faith must be seen and recognised, our faith should be active and living not a private relationship between us and God. Otherwise we are not part of the mission of Jesus Christ in bringing the good news to the world.

Professor of Theology in the University of Oxford, Werner G. Jeanrond, writing recently in an article for Doctrine and Life, said that ‘in the old model of Church we left the light on for people who might come in... Now we must bring the light to the people.’

The strands of our pastoral plan include outreach, young people, nourishing faith as well as Co-responsibility for the mission challenging us all to bring this light to others. As we continue to implement the plan in our diocese we must remember Pope Francis’ words, which is stated in our vision for a pastoral plan, that we need to go forth out of our comfort zone and get involved in People’s lives (Evangelii Gaudium; p.19)
Baptismal Calling

To that end we invited Gemma Mulligan Co-ordinator of the Ossory Diocesan Pastoral Pan to work with the Ossory Faith Development Team to provide a course for us during Lent so that we can support the faith development and spiritual growth of our parishioners. Our long-term view is to support and stimulate Lay Led Liturgy, which would develop what is already offered in our Parish.

We have just finished a 5-week Lenten course ‘Living Our Baptismal Calling’ facilitated in Thomastown for both Thomastown Parish and Rosbercon Parish. The first night led by Fr Dermot Ryan about ‘Our Church’ allowed us to consider in depth what is the Kingdom of God and understand that the way we live our lives allows us to embrace the reality that we all share responsibility for keeping the message of God alive. Week 2 with Fr Dermot considered ‘Sacraments and Sacramentals’ as a particular part of the relationship between God and people. Faith, he noted, is illogical, but only if God doesn’t exist! The more you know about faith and how it works, the better it will work for you and for your ability to develop your relationship with God.

For Week 3 Fr Willie Purcell joined us to talk about ‘Parish Ministries - reaching in and out with God’s love’. We felt his fervour when he discussed with us the value of a Parish that creates a community of welcome, compassion and courage; and the importance of acknowledging that we are all called to be and to live as people of God.

In Week 4 we met Olivia Maher who showed practically and enthusiastically the ‘Power of Scriptures’. Olivia first explained that God imparts faith through the instrument of the Bible and that by becoming familiar with the Bible and meditating on its contents this will give the basis for growing or increasing faith. We all received a quote from the bible and took time to reflect on what this meant to ourselves, and shared this with the group. A powerful and emotional start for what surely could be a lovely faith increasing activity in any parish?

Week 5, our final night, brought Fr Kieran O’Shea to Thomastown to work with us around ‘Delivering Lay Led Liturgies’. His passion for lay work in parishes was compelling. We started by participating in Evening Prayer, discovering during this what the specific Psalms might mean for ourselves and our relationship with God. Following this we broke into groups to consider practical suggestions for Lay Led Liturgies and prayer in action in different pastoral situations. Four groups made suggestions for providing different prayer services including a prayer service for people who do not often come to Mass; a prayer service suitable for the beginning of school year; a prayer service suitable for the family and friends coping with the suicide of a loved one; and a prayer service to support married couples. There was much energy and enthusiasm about this activity and it provided participants with lots of ideas to bring back to their Parishes.

We feel privileged to have participated in this pilot course. We are already planning for a Consolation Ministry Course – this speaks volumes for the value of the course ‘Living Our Baptismal Calling’ to us and we know that other Parishes will benefit spiritually as we have. We are very grateful to Gemma Mulligan, Co-ordinator of the Ossory Diocesan Pastoral Pan, to all in Adult Faith Development, and all the guest speakers for their passion both in organising this and joining us each night on this very worthwhile and fulfilling adventure.
Paula Stapleton

Shining the Light

Ballyragget/Ballyouskill Mission

A very successful Mission united parishioners of Ballyragget /Ballyouskill in prayer and spiritual reflection from 27th to 31st March in preparation for Easter. It was led by Redemptorist Priests Fr Derek Meskell and Fr Kevin Browne CSSR. The theme of the mission “Shining the Light” was taken from a local community initiative. The Tractor/Truck Run group ’lit up the night’ with their vehicles in the surrounding hills on New Year’s Eve in support of suicide awareness and to raise funds for local charities.

Three daily Masses 7am 10am and 11.30am for the week of the mission were very well attended together with the evening service at 7.30pm that involved many participants as the week progressed. The first night of the mission was a celebration of Our Community. Parishioners attended the early morning Mass with the first light of the new summertime hour, birds singing to welcome the dawn and the new growth of Spring. On the first evening of the mission over 30 groups that volunteer their services in the parish had a representative available, to place a candle on the altar showcasing to all each one’s valuable contribution to our Community. Everyone was encouraged to offer their services and gifts to help wherever they can. Our second night was a celebration of our Baptism and a sacred space was created with the help of some young people who processed with symbols of our baptism. The third night was “Family” night. A beautiful circle was crafted by musician Pat Richie with words ”The Circle of God’s Love, no beginning and no end” to which coloured ribbons were added representing family members living and deceased. Healing and Reconciliation was the theme of our fourth night. Again many young people took part, prayerfully and reverently, as we were led to a quiet place in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament to reflect on accepting God’s help that is offered to get us through our struggles in life. Our final evening celebrated the lives of those that have gone before us and who have passed on the faith to us.

Everyone was encouraged to offer their services and gifts to help wherever they can.

All agreed that the week invigorated us, bringing with it a great sense of pride in our Parish and a renewed appreciation for one another. Congregational singing lifted the spirits of all present. It is encouraging to see so many people, young and old, still coming to Church before and after a busy day of work. Faith is still very much alive in our Parish. May the light of Christ continue to shine.
Here in Ossory we hope to launch our preparation programme at a Family Day at St Kieran’s College, Kilkenny on Sunday, 7th May 2017. This will be the start of fifteen months of intensive prayer, reflection and discussion on the meaning and importance of family in our Church and society.
The World Meeting of Families 2018 is scheduled to take place in Ireland from 22nd to 26th August 2018.

At a press conference in the Vatican on Thursday, 30th March last it was announced that Pope Francis expects to attend the event which will be held in Dublin. This is great news and an honour for Ireland and we look forward to hosting the Successor of St Peter in our country. Pope Francis personally selected Dublin, to the disappointment of some other major dioceses, to be the host venue and he is passionate about the role of family
in the Church. It does not surprise us that, God willing, Pope Francis intends coming to Ireland for the event.

However, the event of August 2018 will be more than the presence of the Pope. It will be an incredible opportunity to celebrate family and family life at national and international level. It will provide us with opportunities to reflect on what authentic family life means to us here in our own parishes, in our dioceses, in our country and, indeed, internationally. This major world event will celebrate family as the cornerstone of our lives and the fundamental building block of society and the Church. The event will consist of a joyful and reflective programme of workshops, talks and discussions for adults; an engaging and exciting programme for young people as well as faith and fun activities for children. WMOF2018 will include the daily celebration of Mass, a festival of families event, exhibitions, cultural events and musical performances and events around Dublin City, gestures of solidarity with those in need, and much more. This will be a great opportunity for us to celebrate family here in Ireland but also to share with and celebrate with the many families and delegates who will join us from all over the world.

This is an opportunity for the people of Ireland to reflect on its support of, its ministry to, and its valuing of the institution of the family, both in the Church and in society in general.

Here in Ossory we hope to launch our preparation programme at a Family Day at St Kieran’s College, Kilkenny on Sunday, 7th May 2017. This will be the start of fifteen months of intensive prayer, reflection and discussion on the meaning and importance of family in our Church and society.

From the moment we are conceived until the day we are laid in the grave we are all involved in some way or another in family. During the coming year, we hope to involve families and family members in helping us focus on what family really means to us and how important it is for our Church and society. We will use Amoris Laetitia, the wonderful exhortation written by Pope Francis at this time last year, as the basis for our prayer and reflection. This is an opportunity for the people of Ireland to reflect on its support of, its ministry to, and its valuing of the institution of the family, both in the Church and in society in general.

As Diocesan Delegate to the World Meeting of Families 2018 I appeal to the people of the Diocese of Ossory to get involved in whatever way possible but in particular by sharing locally what it means to be a family. There will be opportunities to do this at parish and deanery level and I hope as many as possible will get involved when our preparatory programme is launched. We are all part of a family, we all have experience of a family and our prayers and considered reflections are important.

Obviously, a huge international event like this requires a lot of planning and organising. As we come closer to the event there will be requests for volunteers to help in many ways before, during and after the event. I’d ask you to keep an eye on the official website (http://www.worldmeeting2018.ie) and consider offering your experience and help in administration, stewarding, translating and in many other ways when the time comes. There will also be a need for financial assistance and sponsorship and I thank those families and individuals who have contributed at national Church collections last year and again in April this year.

Together, let us celebrate family in every way we can!
DIOCESE OF OSSORY

“RENEWED IN THE SPIRIT”

FAMILY FUN DAY

Sing it from the rooftops....

...Jesus loves you...

FAMILY FUN DAY

SUNDAY

7th MAY 2017

ST KIERAN’S COLLEGE
KILKENNY

Children’s Entertainment - Puck Fada
Sacred Space - Art Workshops -
Music Workshops - and lots more...

For more information contact gemmamulligan@ossory.ie
One hundred years have passed since the Virgin Mary appeared on six occasions to three shepherd children in a small village called Fatima in Portugal. The world was at war and the Portuguese government had declared that God was dead. Churches were closed and priests and religious were imprisoned or expelled from the country. These little children, Lucia dos Santos aged ten, her cousin Francisco Marto aged nine and his younger sister Jacinta aged seven were to become messengers of peace in a country where God was not allowed to be called upon or mentioned by name.

The Blessed Virgin asked these little children to pray the Rosary for peace, and to offer sacrifices for sinners to atone for their failures and sins which offended God so much. The Blessed Virgin spoke not of an angry God but a compassionate lover who cared for his children like any parent. God wished to save his children from their sins and so the Virgin came as a messenger of peace to call these little ones to a close discipleship with Jesus.

After the first apparition, little Jacinta kept proclaiming enthusiastically, “O what a beautiful Lady,” and on returning to her home broke her promise to keep the vision a secret. She told her family, “There was something within me that would not keep me quiet.” The same effect has been produced throughout salvation history, whenever someone has experienced a true, interior and personal encounter with God. This very experience caused the hearts of Jesus’s disciples and countless others in history to “burn within them.” The encounter with the living God fills the soul with an unquenchable joy and light and transforms the witness to bear all sufferings for the proclamation of the gospel of peace. Our Lady told the children that they would suffer much and asked if there were willing to be her witnesses, they agreed.

The Catechism teaches us that “taking up one’s cross each day and following Jesus is the surest way of penance.” We do not have to take on extra penances but to carry the crosses that may come our way each day as witnesses and believers in our families and society. We too live in similar times to these three children where it has become more and more difficult to witness to our Christian faith in our modern society. We find it difficult to communicate the faith to our
children and grandchildren and at times we may even receive closed doors at the mention of faith and moral living. Lucia’s mother refused to believe her daughter even up to the very end of her life and much suffering was caused to the two families as their humble farms and crops were trod upon by thousands of spectators.

Our Lady came repeating the gospel command, “repent and believe in the Gospel.” (Mk.1:15) These very words were the first words spoken to us by the Lord. The Fatima message speaks to us of God’s mercy for sinners if they only turn to their loving God. We cannot force anyone to believe but we can as Our Lady asked that we pray for them and offer sacrifices for their conversion. We are not asked to condemn the sinner, but love them into new life. Our simple tools are prayer and sacrifice. God wishes to save all his children and promises us that they will have a home in heaven if they only listen to the voice of his Son who does not come to control their lives but set them free.

Our Lady asked the children to pray the rosary daily for peace in the world and in our hearts. The Blessed Virgin herself gave us this prayer through St Dominic, the founder of the Dominicans. The Rosary is the Gospel on a string, where we sit with Mary and contemplate the life of her Son through her very eyes. These mysteries which Our Lady asked us to keep her company while praying, open for us the mysteries of salvation. They make Christ present here and now wherever we pray this great prayer. The Dominicans commonly called the Rosary the “Mass of the evening.” For the Mass of the morning makes present on our altars the mystery of the Cross and Resurrection. At the altar, we can be present to that one saving sacrifice of Christ and to participate in that mystery where the graces of Calvary are poured forth into our world. The “Mass” of the evening, the holy Rosary, makes present in our homes, workplaces and even our cars the other mysteries from the life of Jesus from which we can draw strength, grace and hope for the situations in which we find ourselves. The Rosary makes present the Lord Jesus in the here and now of daily life. In moments of joy, sorrow and glory, we find a safe harbour in Our Lady’s Rosary.
The Virgin Mary at Fatima who called herself “Our Lady of the Rosary,” asks us to pray the Rosary for peace. If we are at peace, those around us will be at peace, our homes will be centres of peace and from there our world will be transformed. The Fatima message is as relevant today as it was in 1917. The Blessed Virgin came as a messenger of peace, her presence transforming the lives of these children. They in their turn have become beacons of light and love from the turbulent secular society in which they lived. Our Lady’s message of peace issued from her Immaculate Heart, a heart untouched by corruption and sin. It is in this heart we can trust and have recourse to when we feel we have nowhere else to turn. Fatima calls us to conversion, to love and trust our faith, to repent of our sins, to adore God in the Blessed Eucharist, to pray daily for conversion. The message also reminds us of the reality of heaven and the need to pray for the holy souls who rely on our prayers and sacrifices. In many ways, the six apparitions are like a catechism of our Catholic faith. In this Centenary year, may we rediscover the beauty and truth of our faith, and know the God who loves us and forgives us daily. Our Lady of Fatima, Queen of the Rosary pray for us sinners, and enfold us in your mantle of mercy.

COMING EVENTS AT THE BLACK ABBEY KILKENNY

To celebrate the centenary of Our Lady of Fatima (1917-2017), a special Novena will take place, starting on Friday 12th May (eve of First Apparition) with procession from statue of Our Lady of Kilkenny James’s Green to Black Abbey starting at 7pm. More details will follow.

First Saturday devotions of Reparation to the Immaculate Heart of Mary [as requested by the Virgin Mary to Lucia of Fatima ] will take place at the Black Abbey Kilkenny on the first Saturday of every Month at 10.30 am.

The pilgrim statue of Our Lady of Fatima will visit the Black Abbey on the first Saturday of June 2017.
SCHOOL ENROLMENT 2017/2018

Mother of Fair Love
SPECIAL SCHOOL
James’ Street, Kilkenny

Are you and your son or daughter considering enrolment in a special school, in either Primary or Secondary?

Mother of Fair Love Special School celebrated fifty years of educating students in 2016. Our small class size, one to one engagement and SNA care provide:

• A tailored individualised curriculum
• Junior cycle programme JCL2
• Award winning textiles programme
• Well established social skills training programmes
• Inter schools’ sports programme:
  • Host of South East special school swimming league
  • Member of FAI league for special schools in Leinster
• Extensive work placement preparation for school leavers
• End of years Debs
• School Leavers’ Scholarship
• Bishop Birch Award
• School access to Physiotherapy, Speech & Language Therapy, Occupational Therapy and Counselling

Drop in, email or speak in confidence to the Principal today to discuss your options

Phone: 056-7721352 Email: mother.ias@eircom.net
It’s hard for those of us who have been involved in the Forum to realise that we’ve come to the end of another four year term, the third term since the Forum began in 2004, but we have.

Another milestone for the Ossory Diocesan Forum

Helen Maher

When the Diocesan Forum was established the vision was to provide a forum through which all the people, lay, priests and religious, in dialogue, could build an effective, collaborative church in Ossory.

The Constitution of the Forum says that the mission of the Church is “to let people know that they are loved by God and to call them to live by the spirit and values of the Gospel.”

The Forum has evolved as a network of pastoral councils at parish, deanery and diocesan level. These are the groups which were created to draw priests and people together in our parishes and diocese with the mission of bringing the vision of a collaborative church to life.

WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST FOUR YEARS?
The priority for the last four years was clearly set in 2013 when, coming to the end of their term, the various groups did a comprehensive evaluation. Having looked at strengths and weaknesses, they strongly affirmed the value of the process. One person summed it up: “in the Forum the Diocese has a very valuable structure in place.”

The greatest weakness members identified was the lack of an overall plan to give focus and direction to the work of the different groups.

Taking that on board, the need to develop a Diocesan Pastoral Plan set the agenda for the incoming Diocesan Pastoral Council (ODPC). In consultation with the Council of Priests, the Deanery Pastoral Councils, and other diocesan bodies the ODPC set to work. There was much consultation and discussion and many drafts were produced, considered and amended. Eventually the Plan was endorsed by specially convened meetings of all the relevant groups and was formally ratified by Bishop Freeman in May 2015.

From the beginning, it was strongly felt that someone would be needed to “drive” the Plan, otherwise it would remain at the level of wishful thinking.

The position of “Plan Coordinator” was advertised and the happy result is that Ms Gemma Mulligan was appointed by Bishop Freeman to that role in a part-time capacity. Gemma began work in August 2016 and since then she has been visiting and sharing the Plan with priests, parish pastoral councils and parishioners.

While the development of the Pastoral Plan and the appointment of the Plan Coordinator are seen as the major achievements of the last four years, many other pastoral initiatives were undertaken by the Forum Groups. The three deanery groups have been concerned with addressing issues particular to their own areas and have provided channels
for parishes to share experiences and encourage initiatives at parish level.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?
We’re now embarking on an evaluation process asking “what was good about the last four years?” “what could have been better?” and “what are our hopes for the next four years?”

A series of special meetings has been planned for the month of May to consider these questions and the outcome of these meetings will influence the way forward.

A very significant part of the process will be the renewal of membership in the Forum groups. The Diocesan Pastoral Plan reminds us that “the future shape of the Church in Ossory is in our hands” and invites people of the Diocese “to come on a journey together into a new era of change in the Church”.

One very practical way of responding to that invitation would be to be actively interested and involved in choosing the people who will represent you on the deanery groups. Some members of the deanery groups will have completed their terms and to them we owe a great debt of gratitude for their faithful commitment and generosity and very significant contribution over a number of years. They must now be replaced. Parishes will be invited to nominate their representatives for the next term. Priests and religious will also be invited to choose their representatives. This is an opportunity for us all to put forward people who will have the vision, generosity and commitment to make our deanery groups vibrant bodies that will work in a co-responsible way to shape “a new era of change” in our Diocese.

(The outline of the structure of the Forum Groups and the text of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan can be found under the heading “PASTORAL LIFE” on the Ossory Diocesan Website @ www.ossory.ie)

A word from the Diocesan Administrator

During the recent Ad Limina visit by the Bishop’s Conference to Pope Francis and the Holy See in January 2017, which I was fortunate to attend as Diocesan Administrator, Pope Francis met with us on Friday, 20th January. It was really a conversation between the Pope and the Bishops which extended over almost two hours. This is the style of ministry that he is encouraging at diocesan level as well.

As we reflect on the work of the Deanery Pastoral Councils it is, I believe, the same approach that we should adopt – sharing and listening to one another and acknowledging the value of every person’s insight into the mission of the Church.

The appointment of Ms Gemma Mulligan as Coordinator of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan is a hugely significant undertaking by the Diocese as it prepares itself for its mission of evangelisation in the decades to come. When Bishop Freeman appointed Gemma in August 2016 he wrote that the support and encouragement of all the people of the Diocese would be vital for the success of her work. Gemma has now been working for more than seven months and I am convinced that her work is essential if we are to respond to the challenges and opportunities before us at this time in the Diocese.

In conclusion, may I thank sincerely all who have served on the Deanery Pastoral Councils for four years, or more. We are at a point of evaluation at the moment. I would like to strongly encourage everyone to engage, through your parishes, in ensuring that these deanery groups are as vibrant and enthusiastic as possible as we begin a new term.

Mgr Michael Ryan, Diocesan Administrator
A word from the Forum Members

As the term of office for the Ossory Diocesan Forum draws to a close I have been asked to reflect on my time as a nominated member from Ballyragget Parish to the Northern Deanery Pastoral Council (NDPC) and nominated also from the NDPC as a lay representative on the Ossory Diocesan Pastoral Council (ODPC). Work with both groups over the last four years has been very diverse, challenging and productive.

It has been so rewarding to see the work of the last few years come to fruition with the production of a Diocesan Pastoral Plan and the appointment of Gemma Mulligan as Plan Coordinator. Gemma is making great progress in making contact with all Deaneries and Parishes and promoting the Diocesan Plan along the way as we await the appointment of a new Bishop to lead the Diocese.

I felt a strong commitment to both councils at deanery and diocesan levels and feel privileged and proud to have been part of a wonderful team creating the way for both laity and clergy together taking responsibility into the future for the shape of our Church in the Diocese of Ossory.

Paula Stapleton, NDPC

Currently our Diocese is going through major changes. Our new Diocesan Pastoral Plan is currently being implemented. During this time of change being a Parish Pastoral Council represented on the Middle Deanery is very important to me. On a personal level I feel informed and an active part of the Diocese, but more than this I represent my parish. I feel the Parish is fundamental to any change that is taking place. The church should be a place where an individual feels that his or her spiritual needs can be met, core to this is the Parish. By being a Parish representative on the Middle Deanery if I am contributing in any small way I can think of no greater reason serve my Parish.

Alan Burke, Middle Deanery
Certificate in Theological Studies

Aims of the Course
To provide general theological education and formation in the main aspects of faith.
To provide the theological background needed for lay involvement and leadership roles at parish and diocesan level.

Course Duration
100 hours part-time over one academic year from September to May

Level 7 (20 credit ECTS)

For an application form and further information please contact:
Declan Murphy M.A., Course Director, St Kieran’s College, Kilkenny.
Email: declanmurphy@ossory.ie or theology@ossory.ie Telephone 056-7753624 or 087-9081470

Application Forms can be downloaded from
www.stkieranscollege.ie
www.ossory.ie
Do I often listen so carefully to the homily at Mass; I’m sorry to say that I probably don’t, but this day I did listen and was greatly inspired by Fr Dan’s words...

Refugee crisis
Calais 2017

Arlene Carrigan

On the 15th January 2017 I was attending Mass to celebrate my father-in-laws month’s mind in Kells Church. During the Mass in Fr Dan’s homily he said “The power of God shines out where we least expect it and in the most unlikely places. His spirit will be at work and incredibly active in the depth of our person when we open our hearts to those who have lost their dignity through poverty or hard times. On this Day of Prayer for Migrants and Refugees we might recall that God’s spirit will be at work in us when we welcome the stranger in the person of the migrant and the refugee. For this 2017 World Day, Pope Francis tells us: “The mission of the Church is thus to love Jesus Christ, to adore and love him particularly in the poorest and the most abandoned. Among these are migrants and refugees who are trying to escape difficult living conditions and dangers of every kind.”

I’m sorry to say that I probably don’t but this day I did listen and was greatly inspired by Fr Dan’s words; I went straight home and started to research Refugees in Europe. I was shocked to read reports about France and the refugee crisis there, I thought with the demolishment of the “Jungle” in October 2016 that the problem was all sorted!!

How wrong was I! So much to the disbelief of some of my family and friends on the 1st of March I packed my bags and headed to Calais to see for myself what was happening. I had emailed an agency care4calais and offered my services. Care4calais is a voluntary run organisation that has a warehouse in Calais, distributing supplied throughout France all of which are donations from all over Europe. They help in anyway needed when it comes to the care of refugees.

I arrived in the Care4calais warehouse at 9am the 1st morning and by 9.30 I was on my 1st mission to help move a family from Afghanistan to a more suitable place.
Care4Calais Warehouse

Kurdish Iraqi Family

Chopping wood

One of the kitchens
That was it, I was thrown in and also very much hooked! During the very short week that I spent in Calais I did everything from taking in donations that arrived every day, sorting donations into gender, sizes and type of clothing. I filled the vans that were on the road all the time covering the whole of France, distributing to any destination where refugees were in need. I took supplies of mainly food to day centres in and around Calais.

On my second day with care4calais I was asked to take a transit van to the “Church” as it is known.

The “Church” is a day centre in a small town about an hour outside Calais, I was asked not to name the town as they are in fear that any attention brought on them might lead to the place being shut down by the authorities.

My instructions were that when I reached the town that I was to phone a number and someone would come to meet me, I was asked not to wear my care4calais jacket as to not draw attention to myself. So this is what I did. I was brought to the most beautiful church in the centre of the town and at the rear of the church was a very ordinary looking building, but behind that there was the day centre.

The “Church” is run by a little sweet French nun in her seventies named Ann-Marie, one of the most amazing people that I have ever met. Ann-Marie runs the place on her own, taking care of around 140 mostly teenage African refugees. One of the big differences there is that there are a lot of girls which is unusual as they normally stay in hiding, but they feel safe with Ann-Marie. These kids are fed every day and are allowed to shower, the French authorities have banned refugees from taking showers!?! But Ann-Marie has ignored this and has a network of friends that take the kids to their homes for showers. Now the authorities do know that this place exists, but with restrictions. Ann-Marie is only allowed to take in 50 people a day, but she will not turn anyone away! And in her own words if she is questioned she replies “I am too old and busy to count” being a little nun she gets away with more, but they will not let any volunteers in to help her. The refugees are not allowed to stay there at night and must sleep in the ditches and fields, the lucky ones have tents! The others sleep in just sleeping bags or blankets.

Although the place is overcrowded and in poor conditions Ann-Marie and the “Church” stole my heart, I visited them 3 times during the week and brought all the tents sleeping bags and blankets that I could get my hands on, but there is a big shortage of these. On my second visit I brought with me bivy bags and demonstrated how they are used over their sleeping bags keeping them dry and camouflaged. I did a lot of shopping for these trips using the money that I was donated by family and friend, to buy fresh fruit and veg and anything else that Ann-Marie wanted. These people love Ann-Marie and she loves them, they have no one else!

Some of the lads need to have some dental treatment so I was asked to collect them the night before and take them to a safe house in Calais to spend the night. I had to drive them in a blacked out van as it is illegal to carry refugees your car or van. I pulled up to the door rang the bell and only when the door was opened was I to let the lads out of the van and straight in! It is like something from the French resistance.

I loved speaking with the kids, hearing their stories some of which would break your heart. One girl aged 15 told me of how her parents paid an agent to take her to Canada from Ethiopia when she was only 12 years old. Instead she was landed her in a camp in Libya on her own and she is in limbo ever since, now at 15 she is heavily pregnant after years of abuse! A young guy from Sudan who lost all his family in conflict except for
his mother, she now lives alone in rural Sudan and she has no phone to keep in contact. There were lots of sad stories, but you would not believe how happy these people are, always smiling and wanting to talk to practice their English.

I visited the official Refugee Camp in Dunkirk, just for a day. It is a dire place the conditions are dreadful. Officially 1500 people stay there but I was told there were more than 2000 there when I was visited. This camp is for refugees from Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and bad and all as the camp is the African refugees are not allowed in. There is a lot of violence in the camp, there are no locks on doors. At night human trafficking is a huge problem, reports are that they crawl the camp and take their pick of women and children. I spent the day helping the volunteers there, we did our best to clean the main kitchen, not helped by the rats! We chopped lots and lots of wood for the hundreds of fires in the camp. As bad as it sounds, I had a great time in the camp not saying it wasn’t tough, the other volunteers were great fun and again the refugees that I spoke to were happy!

On a walk about in the camp I came across a family that I had met earlier in the week, while on patrol in the railway station. This family were Kurdish Iraqi, a beautiful family with two daughters and a little niece whose mother was lost while crossing the Mediterranean. This family were now living in a chipboard shed, and again they were smiling and glad to speak with me again. I was not allowed to bring supplies into the camp so all I could give them were little children’s books, which made them so happy. God love them!

I don’t claim to be an expert, I only know what I saw and experienced in that short week. As for a solution to this crisis I don’t know what can be done, but the refugees are people and needed to be treated as such. All the people who I spoke to still wanted to get to England, and I asked they why? They all wanted the same, education, healthcare and a safe home.

I loved my week in Calais but also loved coming home. I will be back! We have to thank God because we are blessed to be living in our safe little country.
Parish Mission 2017
Conahy/Jenkinstown

Paddy Gorman

When I first heard the words “Parish Mission” my initial thoughts were “Do we really go back to the past to find a solution for the future of the Church? Surely we need to be looking forward, not backward.” My memories were of parish missions from my childhood. Although it has been 38 years since this parish had a mission lead by the Redemptorists, one of the priests, Fr Richard Tobin (who led it) remembers it well. So as someone who is relatively new to the parish, I thought, “let’s see what happens”.

The mission was due to begin on Sunday 26th February, with the visiting priests, Fr Laurence Gallagher and Fr Denis Luddy celebrating the Saturday/Sunday masses and promoting the mission. I knew little of the community organisation that was set in motion long, long before the Redemptorists found their way to the parish. I would like to share my experience of attending the Conahy/Jenkinstown mission.

Perhaps the symbolism that flowed through the mission would be better understood after reading the Conahy Mission Prayer, which was distributed to the parishioners some weeks before the mission.

Lord,
We gather together as a community
Of many colours...
We bring to this mission the many shades of our lives
The colours of our joy and happiness
The colour of youth with expectation and hope
We bring our dreams of yesterday
And our dreams of tomorrow.
We bring the colours of grief and sorrow
Of loss and of memories shared
We bring the colours of courage and perseverance
Of loneliness and aloneness
Colour of hurt and insecurity.
We bring the colour of our days and our nights
For these Lord are the stories of our lives
Through these many colours
Your prism of light shines
It surrounds us
And enfolds us
In your unconditional love
Always
Inviting us into new life…
We come just as we are
Bringing the colour of our day
Into the rainbow of our gathering
During this mission
Bless our longing
Renew our hope
Fill us with wonder
As we raise our voices
And open our hearts….
We offer
Glory to you Father
And to Jesus
With the holy spirit
Amen
At the Saturday evening mass in Jenkinstown, the liturgy began with a multi-coloured candlelit procession by the confirmation group of 2016, in dimmed lights they brought the focus to the altar, our very reason to be in attendance. They led us in prayer, and reflection, reminding us that we are a family of faith, and that lessons can be learned from all family members.

Sunday evening was the opening night of the mission and it took place in Conahy church - the evening sessions for the week would alternate between the two churches in the parish. The opening theme was Baptism; while the service was led by Fr Laurence and Denis, the liturgy was led by the laity. Not only led but beautifully planned and organised. It encapsulated a history of the parish, scripture, symbols of baptism, the renewal of baptismal vows and an invitation to blessing with newly blessed water; Fr Laurence had included “all in attendance” in the blessing of the water. A sacred space was created in both Churches and the symbols that were placed there during the evening service were duplicated in the other church, so that all would be included as the themes of the mission developed. Each evening we were invited to place some coloured sand into a container, a different colour each evening. This was placed in a glass vase creating a multi-coloured symbol (but more about that later).

The community aspect was not forgotten, with the opportunity to spend some time together after many of the masses and services having a cuppa and talking together. Daily masses were at 7am and 10am, with the evening service at 7:30pm.

The theme for Monday evening was Healing. Prayer cards were available in both churches from Saturday to write our intentions. The boxes containing the intentions were brought to the sacred space; and in the age-old tradition raised to God as incense burned before them. Fr Denis spoke of the definition of Christian healing: Jesus came to heal; We are healed; We are each called to use our talents and gifts to heal. All were invited to receive a blessing. As the sign of the cross was made on each palm, the words were quietly spoken, “May the Lord heal the hurts of your heart, Father, Son, and Spirit. I had the honour of being part of this laity led service and I found it extremely powerful and emotional. It is not often we touch another person or that another allows themselves to
be touched. I did my best to look each person in front of me in the eye, though I didn’t manage to do this for everyone. Every face was different. Every hand was different to touch. Some were hard and calloused, some frail, and some were soft and full of life. I say again I was honoured to be part of this service.

Tuesday evening’s theme, The Values We Live by Today. The evening sessions began with an opening hymn, an opening prayer, a decade of the rosary, and another hymn before Frs Laurence and Denis preached on the evening theme. To preach is to publically proclaim a religious message. Preaching this evening took the form of four gospel dramas enacted by both priests, each followed by a short reflection: What we do to/for others we do to/for God; It is not what we accumulate, rather how we share and use what we have been gifted with; Is there something that stands between me and a decision to live my faith in a fuller manner; We are all unworthy, but all called by name. While the Fathers’ drama was good they were upstaged by the schoolchildren who read and performed the Indonesian Creed, a modern worded creed that finishes with a wonderful line: “I dare to believe in God’s promises.” The blessing this evening was “of the work of our hands.” After a short reflection on our own hands, all were invited to come forward, place their hands on a crucifix and receive the blessing “May the Lord bless the work of your hands, Father, Son, and Spirit”.

Wednesday was Ash Wednesday, and tonight’s theme was Reconciliation. Fr Denis slowly read the Confiteor from the penitential rite of the mass. He invited us to reflect not on “What we have done” but rather “On what we have failed to do” questioning where each of us draws the line on being responsible. His examination of conscience was a drama of scenarios but each was viewed in two different ways. In one while acknowledging that something needed to be done, it was viewed as someone else’s responsibility; in the other responsibility was accepted and acted upon. I found it a very meaningful reflection. All were invited to come forward to receive absolution.

Thursday was a very busy day for the visiting priests. The morning mass at 7 in Jenkinstown started the day. At 9:15 there was a mass for the three schools of the parish in Conahy, and then at noon, also in Conahy was a Healing Mass and the anointing of the sick. The evening session also took place in Conahy, the
theme Remembering our Dead. The church was candlelit from front door to altar. Fr Laurence spoke beautifully from his own family experience of living life to its fullest even in the face of sickness and approaching death. As the Passion and Death narrative from the gospel was read the church lights were turned off leaving only the lighted candles. The Resurrection narrative was then read and light from the paschal candle was passed through the church to all in attendance. The names of the remembered dead were brought forward and placed at the foot of the cross.

Friday was the final day of the extremely well attended mission. The theme on this night was “Celebration of Community”. A bare tree was placed at the front of the church in Jenkintown, its nakedness was stark in contrast to the sacred space on the other side of the church and the multi coloured candles that burned in front of the altar. During this evening service the many aspects of community that are a part of the Conahy/Jenkinstown parish were acknowledged with each group being invited to place a placard on the tree. In my estimation there were about 30 different groups/organisations represented. Some I was aware of, many I was not. But the tree was naked no more, it fact it was blooming with the fully active community that makes up the parish.

THE COLOURED SAND
Each night of the mission we poured sand—to symbolise our reflections and to remember our celebrations. The base colour, yellow, represents each one of us born in the image and likeness of God. Our next colours celebrated:- Baptism, Healing, Justice and Values, God’s Unconditional love, Prayers for our dead Community. These are the sands of our time, poured and given into the timelessness of God’s love.
“We ask you Lord, to bless our time, the sands of our community, our endeavours, our hopes and our dreams.

May we live them with faith,
In hope,
With charity,
Until the sands of our time are united in the timelessness of God’s eternal love”.

When I first heard the words “Parish Mission” my initial thoughts were “Do we really go back to the past to find a solution for the future of the Church.? Surely we need to be looking forward, not backward.” How wrong my initial thoughts were. The Conahy/Jenkinstown Parish Mission opened my eyes to the active, vibrant, involved parish community in which I live. A parish community not only involved in liturgy but creating liturgy. People sharing of their talents and skills; people stepping outside of their comfort zone to help and assist in so many ways. School children, teens and adults, all giving of their time, all being involved, all being of service. Service freely given.

I express my thanks to Fr Eamonn O’Gorman for arranging to hold the mission with Fr Lawrence and Fr Denis, and to the wonder-ful people who make up the parish community; that made our parish mission 2017 such a blessed experience.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM FR LAWRENCE GALLAGHER
“What I found refreshing as a Missioner and coordinator of Parish missions was the wonderful leadership by people/parishioners who took real ownership of your Parish mission.”
“I think Conahy stands tall in celebrating a joyful and spiritual Parish Mission; which created a real welcoming atmosphere for all who attended.”
“The community on both sides of the parish took pride in stepping forward to bring the Mission alive throughout the parish. This was achieved through hospitality, through creativity in liturgy and thought. The involvement of parishioners, including children, presenting inputs an the different themed nights, shows the dymanitic living faith of Conahy parish.”
The Saint Kieran’s College Alumni Association is now up and running with the primary objective of connecting both past and present students of St Kieran’s College. We’re planning to have a Programme of Events around St Kieran’s on the weekend of June 30th/July 1st in 2017 to allow former students reconnect with each other and with the College.

**PROGRAMME OF EVENTS**

**FRIDAY, 30th June**
- **GOLF CLASSIC**: A 50 team event with each year represented. One team per year, four people per team. See separate sheet for details.

**SATURDAY, 1st July**
- **3PM. THE OFFICIAL NAMING OF “THE FR TOMMY MAHER PITCH”**: Kilkenny senior hurling manager Mr Brian Cody will unveil a plaque to mark the formal naming of “The Fr Tommy Maher Pitch”
- **1PM–6PM THE COLLEGE WILL BE OPEN TO ALL FOR VISITS WITH GUIDED TOURS GIVEN BY CURRENT PUPILS. A CHAT IN THE GLASS HALL**: An opportunity to meet, re-connect and chat with your former classmates and friends in an informal setting. See separate sheet for details.
- **7PM. EVENING EVENT WITH SIT DOWN MEAL HOSTED BY LANGTON’S KILKENNY IN THE FORMER GYMNASIUM WITH GUEST SPEAKER** (to be announced). Special Guests, Leaving Cert classes of 1967 and 1977. Event limited to 5 representatives from each year.

Contact: pastpupils@stkiersanscollege.ie 056 7721086
The Daughters and Sons of God

Albert McDonnell

The Code of Canon Law might not be the first place we would go in search of a statement of our rights as members of the Church. Yet, the 1983 code contains such a statement. Book II, Part I, Title 1 of the code presents the fundamental rights that all of Christ’s faithful enjoy, making no distinction between lay and ordained. It doesn’t contradict the understanding of the Church as a Hierarchical Communion found in Vatican II, but represents the common platform on which all baptised members of God’s people stand. This section of the code offers the broad, general principles which are applied to the detail of Christian life elsewhere. Pope John Paul II described the 1983 Code of Canon Law as the final document of the Second Vatican Council. The presentation of the obligation and rights of all the faithful is one of the novelties on the 1983 Code and mirrors the theology of the Council.

The canons on our rights begin with a summary statement. Canon 208 tells us that ‘Flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ’s faithful. Because of this equality they all contribute, each according to his or her condition and office, to the building up of the Body of Christ’. If Pope Francis has a favourite canon, this might well be it! This canon prohibits clericalism. Our baptism gives us a shared, radical equality. Faith and baptism, the sacrament of faith and gateway to the sacraments, matter above all else. A faithful implementation of canon 208 would transform our Church, assist in the conversion of its members and in the celebration of the dignity of each and every, baptised person.

This broad introductory declaration has a great many practical implications many of which are elaborated in the other canons in this section and elsewhere in the Code.

Rights co-exist with duties as two sides of the same coin. Rights and duties make sense only in the context of our communion in and through Christ. Canon 209 reminds that we are in communion with each other as members

PAGE 32
of the Church, again emphasising that which we hold in common. We are also reminded that this communion is something active that we are to ‘carry out with great diligence’. Canons 210 and 211 tell us that we are all called to holiness and we each have a role to play in the growth and sanctification of the Church. Members of the Church also have the right to make their spiritual needs known to their pastors (canon 212§2). We also have the right and at times the duty to express our opinions regarding the good of the Church to their pastors and to the broader Church community (canon 212§3). This requires accountability by pastors to those whom they serve and careful discernment by the faithful, inasmuch as the pastors in the Church represent Christ (canon 212§1). Underlying all this is a recognition of the value of listening to each other – nobody has a monopoly of wisdom. Elsewhere in the Code we have reference to structures that facilitate this right and duty. These include pastoral and finance councils at both parish and diocesan level. A member of the faithful can also exercise this right/duty as an individual and if appropriate in confidence. No person irrespective of the office they may hold in the Church exists or ministers in isolation from the other members of the Church. The Spirit speaks to us through each other. Pope Francis’ emphasis on discernment and dialogue within the Church is in harmony with these canons.

The code goes onto discuss the sacraments and other spiritual matters. All the faithful have a ‘right to be assisted by their pastors from the spiritual riches of the Church, especially by the word of God and the sacraments’ (canon 213). This is a right of all the faithful and a duty of some of the faithful, i.e. the ordained. The baptised also have the right to follow the form of spirituality that they find most helpful so long as it doesn’t contradict Church teaching (canon 214). A pastor cannot impose his spirituality on the people of the parish; their traditions and preferences deserve his respect. The members of the Church also have the right to form associations to further the mission of the Church by means of prayer or charity (canons 215, 216).

This section of the Code also discusses some of the rights which flow from our dignity as people, as daughters and sons of God. We have a right to a Christian education that promotes our maturity as people (canon 217). While respecting the teaching authority of the Church, academics have the right to engage in research and to share their findings (canon 218). Our dignity as people also means that nobody can be coerced into choosing a particular path in life (canon 219), be it marriage, religious or single life. We each have a right to our good reputation (canon 220). The Church also provides us with the means to defend our rights through its tribunals (canon 221).

Underlying all these canons is the concept of respect. Every member of the Church, every baptised person in common with all people, deserves respect. Being female or male, young or old, ordained or not doesn’t change this. Baptism places each of us on the same platform. Upon that common platform are placed the varying rights and duties of each person within the ‘Hierarchical Communion’ of the Church. Much of canon law evolves over time. There have been numerous changes to the Code of Canon Law in recent decades as our understanding of Christ and His Church grows. Further development of our understanding of our rights and duties as members of the Church will come. The application of the basic principles contained in this section to all areas of Church life will take time. However, those principles which are Gospel values will endure. The radical equality of all the baptised within the Church and the respect due to every women and men is one of those everlasting principles. It is a principle that we should never tire of reflecting on and working to make visible.
Her photo had already been in a million homes and schools across Ireland, but recently Josiane Umumarashavu had the opportunity to visit Ireland for the first time.
Josiane’s visit to Diocese of Ossory

Hannah Evans, Church Outreach Officer, Trócaire

In 2004 she was the girl on the Trócaire box. Back then, she was 12 years old and struggling after the Rwandan genocide. Trócaire’s Lenten campaign that year changed her life. Josiane recently visited Ferrybank parish to share her story and show how support from Ireland is changing lives in the developing world.

This little girl seen skipping with the sunny smile and the yellow dress captivated the hearts and minds of thousands of people across Ireland thirteen years ago. That particular Lenten campaign was called ‘The Generation after Genocide’, and we learned of how Josiane’s father and two brothers had cruelly lost their lives in the Rwandan genocide and of how her mother was rebuilding their families home step by step. She had three small children, a small piece of land and constantly faced the threat of hunger.

In 2003, her mother joined a women’s group supported by Trócaire. They provided her with seeds, agricultural training and a small business loan. As a result, she was able to set up a shop selling sorghum and was able to afford a home and a small piece of land to tend. The family was also given a goat from Trócaire through our Christmas global gifts campaign.

After the genocide, many NGO’s left Rwanda. However, Trócaire’s work there was only really just beginning. Long after the TV cameras had gone, Trócaire remained to try and help people to rebuild their lives, homes and livelihoods. Josiane and her mum were just one example of the families that we worked alongside.

Fast forward thirteen years and Josiane has blossomed into a proud, confident and professional woman with a third level qualification in accountancy. She has even began working as a finance intern in Trócaire’s office in Kigali, Rwanda. Trócaire is immensely proud of her and of her hard work and determination.

Ferrybank parish kindly hosted Josiane in March. She commented on how friendly and hospitable the people were there. People greeted her like they had known her all of their lives and shook her hand congratulating her on all of her achievements in life. It was a joyous and memorable occasion to witness the Trócaire box come to life.

By supporting Trócaire, you are enabling us to be there before, during and after disasters or conflict like the genocide in Rwanda. When you give to Trócaire each Lent, you are helping the hopes and dreams of young children like Josiane to come true. Josiane is a living testimony to this. The true potential of women, men and children is being realised with every donation made. Last year alone, donations from our annual Lenten collection allowed us show Gods mercy and our brothers and sisters and to reach out to almost 2.4million vulnerable people.

Thank you to every parish in the Diocese of Ossory for your ongoing support and steadfast work on behalf of Trócaire!
It was a marvellous occasion in the history of St Patrick’s parish. Men, women and children joined the clergy in prayer and celebration as the new Church of St Fiacre was opened and blessed by Bishop Laurence Forristal, the then Bishop of Ossory, 25 years ago on Easter Sunday, April 19, 1992. It was a quiet Sunday afternoon for the normally busy L and N (now Super Valu) Supermarket and most neighbouring stores but the adjoining car park was turned into a playground of prayer as hundreds who failed to gain admission to the official ceremonies joined in through a public address system.

Buntings, balloons and banners greeted Bishop Forristal as he arrived to concelebrate 4p.m. Mass. There was a festival atmosphere, a day of great joy, an evening for parishioners and friends who live in the huge catchment area of...
Loughboy and surrounding areas who joined together and heralded a new era. Bishop Forristal sprinkled the Holy Water and the Church of St Fiacre, a fine piece of modern architecture, was officially open for devotion and prayer. Nineteen clergy joined in the celebration of Mass.

It was a nostalgic and very happy return for Fr Brian Flynn, who, according to Bishop Forristal at the time, had initiated the idea of building a second (counting St Joseph’s Church in Foulkstown, it was the third church) church in the parish. The first reading was by “Kilkenny People” composer Pat Griffin, and the psalm was by housewife Rita Shore. The second reading was by Sarah O’Brien. The Gospel reading was by Fr Larry Wallace. The Paschal Candle was brought from St Patrick’s Church by noted entertainer Noel Power.

There were many tributes from Bishop Forristal and from Fr Larry Wallace. Builders, architects, designers, foremen, clerk of works, the then County Manager, engineers, the parish team at the time. All who played any part were complimented. There was an apology from Bishop Noel Willoughby of the Church of Ireland.

The Church opening was very special for the O’Connor family, of Archer’s Court. First to be baptised was Eamon Michael O’Connor. All were then invited to renew their Baptismal Vows. Gifts were then brought by David Heffernan, Tommy Thompson, Mary Heffernan, Kay Casserley and Claire Muldowney. After Holy Communion the Blessed Sacrament was carried through the Church, to the Tabernacle.

Even one of the parish dogs came in for a mention. Bishop Forristal said at the time that he was delighted to see a dog wandering about. He recalled that a dog had taken some of the limelight during the Irish visit of Pope John Paul II in 1979. “It would not be a proper Catholic occasion without a dog”, he quipped at the time, and added: “I was almost going to say the dog was as happy as Larry”.

Clergy present were Monsignor Tom Phelan, Loughboy; Msgr. James Carey, V.G.; Msgr. Paul Fitzgerald, P.P., V.G., Thomastown; Msgr. Michael Ryan, President, St Kieran’s College; Fr Brian Flynn, P.P., Kilmacow; Fr Larry Wallace, Team Leader, St Patrick’s; Fr John Creegan, Team Member; Fr Sean O’Neill, Team Member; Fr Jackie Robinson, C.C., Castlecomer; Fr Frank Purcell, C.C., Mooncoin; Fr Columba Hennessy, O.M.I., Dublin; Fr Patrick Dowling, O.F.M., Capuchin Friary; Fr Michael Grant, Mill Hill Fathers; Fr Willie Dalton, St Kieran’s College; Master of Ceremonies, Fr Desmond, O.F.M., Capuchin; Fr Pat Comerford, V.F., St Canice’s and Fr Tom Corcoran, C.C., St John’s.

Singing was by the Adult Folk Choir, conducted by Siobhan Byrne. Congregational singing was led by Rita Shore.

**PARISH CENTRE OPENED**

The newly completed St Patrick’s Parish Centre and Homes for the elderly was formally opened by Kilkenny senior hurling team manager and parish resident, Brian Cody on Sunday, January 17, 2010. Following the opening, the impressive building complex, bedecked in the county and club colours for the occasion was blessed by Bishop Seamus Freeman assisted by the parish team led by Fr Dan Carroll, Fr Roderick Whearty and Fr Liam Taylor. Also in attendance was the then recently crowned “King of the Castle” Mr. Michael Costello and his team who during the “Election”, made the project the centre of their fundraising campaign. After the ceremony the guests were treated to refreshments by the hard working organising committee. As it celebrates its 25th anniversary, St Fiacre’s Church in Loughboy is served by two priests. They are Fr Roderick Whearty, team leader, and Fr Mark Condon, team member.
DEAR YOUNG PEOPLE,
THE CHURCH EXPECTS
GREAT THINGS
OF YOU AND YOUR
GENEROSITY,
DON’T BE AFRAID TO
AIM HIGH

Pope Francis

The Aim High Parish Ministry Programme was developed to encourage young people to take an active part in their Church, parish and community.

Aim High is open to all young people, 16 years and over. The Award is flexible, non-competitive and requires an ongoing commitment. The programme is coordinated through the Parish, in conjunction with parish organisations, secondary schools and youth clubs.

Diocese of Ossory
PARISH MINISTRY PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

Contact us 086-3404730
Email: aimhigh@ossory.ie
Agenda for ‘Aim-High’ programme at St Luke’s Hospital, Kilkenny held on Saturday, March 25th, 2017

Brian Griffin

11.05am  Presentation on the Services at St Luke’s including a tour of the new Day Ward and Oncology unit (Pat Shortall, Deputy Manager)

11.35am  Ten minute presentation-(Margaret Ryan, Maternity)

11.50am  Ten Minute Presentation-(Fr Paddy Carey, Chaplain)

12.05pm  Ten minute presentation-(Kate Walsh, Bed Management)

12.20pm  Ten Minute presentation-(Mary B Brennan, Palliative Care)
          Each presentation will be interactive with questions and/or comments encouraged

12.50pm  Depart St Luke’s and walk to Villa Maria for brief history of Villa Maria, the involvement of the Mercy Sisters in St Luke’s hospital and a short Prayer Service

2.00pm   Refreshments

‘The Aim High team would like to express their deepest gratitude to Pat Shortall (Deputy Manager, St Luke’s), Margaret Ryan (Maternity), Fr Paddy Carey (Chaplain), Kate Walsh (Bed Management), Mary B Brennan (Palliative Care), Sr Margaret Mary & all the Mercy Sisters at Villa Maria for their time, encouragement and generous support. It is very much appreciated.’
My name is Danny Coyne and I am a TY student in St Kieran’s College. As part of our TY programme I get to do a thing called ORC. In ORC I get to work with Primary School students to help them prepare for their Confirmation. We worked with the priest and staff in St Mary’s Cathedral. The priest gave us instructions on how to help the children and some of the things we get to do were things like games to get everyone comfortable and then everyone had to introduce themselves. The games were good fun and you got to know the children through the games. We also made up goody-bags for the children and at break we set up the tables and served them soup. After break we played a treasure hunt and this taught the children more about the church itself because we had to find all different things in the church. Through ORC I learn social skills and how to interact more with people. Overall I really liked ORC and it was a great experience for me.

Danny Coyne

I really enjoyed my experience at the ORC programme. It was set up because the original Confirmation Retreat hosted in Peace in Christ building was shut down. Four students from St Kieran’s and Loreto turn up to the Chapter House on set dates. We set up ice-breaker games for the Confirmation kids from schools all over Kilkenny. After the ice-breakers we make up the goody-bags whilst the kids do meditation. The bags consist of seven prayers of the Holy Spirit, bracelets and stickers. Next we set up the room for lunch in which they get soup and a roll. It is a great day overall and the kids really enjoy it. After lunch we clean up the room and the kids go for a treasure hunt inside the Cathedral. After the treasure hunt, there’s Mass in a sub-chapel under the Cathedral. The kids help set up and help during the service, such as readings and prayers of the faithful. I really enjoyed it and would recommend it to other students in Transition Years.

Aaron Brennan
I really enjoyed my visit to St Luke’s Hospital and Villa Maria on Saturday. I thought it was great to find out about all the different facilities and jobs in the hospital. I also thought the short reflection in the oratory of Villa Maria was lovely and the soup and rolls topped the day off!

Bronagh Doheny

Firstly, I would just like to thank you and everyone involved for a lovely day last Saturday. It was really nice to get to see the hospital when we would generally not be permitted to. However, I would have really liked to see more of the hospital but it was nice to get a tour around the new wing as the place is colossal! The talks gave me a good insight into daily life at the hospital and as I am strongly considering pursuing medicine as a career I found this to be very beneficial. The whole day was run very efficiently and was extremely organised. There was also a lovely atmosphere as everyone was extremely welcoming, caring and considerate. The prayer service and lunch at Villa Maria was a great touch and a lovely end to a brilliant day. Thank you very much again.

Amy O’Connell

In the morning I usually leave with three other lads that are written on the ORC sheet for that day. We then meet the Loreto girls at St Mary’s Cathedral and we begin setting up the Chapter Room for the amount of people that are coming. They then play a few games where the kids have to talk to each other and find out different things about each other. The kids then watch videos about lessons in life and then do meditation. We then set up the room for lunch while the kids are outside. When they are finished eating, we clean up while they are on a treasure hunt. We then get goody-bags ready for them and give them to the children after Mass. I really enjoyed by experience.

Tommy Farrell
St Mary’s Cathedral is the mother church of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Ossory. It is situated on James’s Street, Kilkenny. The Cathedral was designed by William Deane Butler. The foundation stone was laid 18th August 1843 and the Cathedral was consecrated on the 4th October 1857.
Congrats to the winners from the Ossory Times Issue 13 competitions:

Adult Crossword:
Ms Margaret McGrath
Boherkyle, Castlecomer
Co Kilkenny

Children’s Wordsearch, age 8-13:
Tadhg Moore
Danganroe, Castletown
Co Laois

Children’s Colouring, age 5-8:
Oisin Dalton
14 Hawthorn Wood, The Curragh, Co Kildare
**Colouring Competition**

For ages 5-8

[Image of a colouring page]

[Website: http://www.getcoloringpages.com/images/zh/zhmfl6u.jpg]

**Wordsearch Competition**

For ages 8-13

Easter Story

Word Search

- SCBME JESUS CHRIST
- KAAPODYC VA REJOICE
- JRVMSPRAYR WC BVFS
- YNOIXIFICURCTMEL
- LAPCOISEQXBBN OOL
- TRESURRECTION REST
- TEPFUSETSA YEMELS
- SHLUVYKTVFDMTEKO
- OCARNEXRESTHIRMWARE
- CMFEPEWIDMANAOIEA
- EBXINGAPAPIJRRRRV
- TTHX CHY NTNHRSMN AOX
- NCNCAMICROCTYS ACSJ
- EKEROSEWNEIDALSU
- PUTONER&W RPYAOEAD
- LEZWREWDMRQITYFOPA
- BSMNDISCOPELCXGS

- APOSTLES
- BITRANAL
- GAVE
- CHURCH
- CROSS
- CROWN
- CRUCIFIXION
- DISCIPLES
- RUTH
- GOOD FRIDAY

- JESUS CHRIST
-judas
- lamb
- last supper
- lent
- mary
- miracle
- pasover
- pentecost
- prayer
- redemption
- seven
- sunday
- son
- thorns
- tomb

Answers to Ossory Times Issue 13

[Image of a wordsearch puzzle]
IN ST KIERAN’S COLLEGE

Retreats & Parish Evenings

PARISH GROUPS
FIRST COMMUNION & CONFIRMATION PARENTS
PPCS
AND MANY MORE...

... a chance to take time to come to pray together.

A time of stillness and reflection

To book please contact
Ossory Adult Faith Development Office
056-7753624 or email afd@ossory.ie
Under 8 Hurling & Camogie Blitz

Sunday, 7th May 2017

Hurling:
- Northern Clubs: 10am-1pm
- Southern Clubs: 2pm-5pm

Camogie: 10am-1pm

Entries closing date: 28th April 2017

- Guest Refs -
Kilkenny Senior Hurlers