

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

New Year - New Bishop: On Wed. morning last Msgr. Dermot Farrell a priest of the Diocese of Meath and parish priest of Dunboyne, Co. Meath was announced as the new Bishop of Ossory, succeeding Bishop Freeman who retired in July 2016.

Born in Nov. 1954 in Castletown-Goeghegan, Co. Westmeath the bishop-elect studied for the priesthood at Maynooth College, graduating as Bachelor in Science from NUI Maynooth and later with Licentiate in Theology from the Pontifical University of Maynooth. After ordination he first served as curate for 4 years in Mullingar before travelling to Rome to pursue further studies. He graduated from there with a doctorate in theology. On returning to Ireland he joined the teaching and administrative staff at Maynooth Seminary. After some years there he was appointed vice-president at Maynooth and later President, a position which he held for eleven years. Since 2007 he has been parish priest of Dunboyne in his native Diocese of Meath. He comes to us with a wealth of experience in administration, teaching theology and parish pastoral leadership. We wish him well as he takes on the onerous task as bishop at a time of enormous challenge both for the Church at large and for our diocese in particular. May the Lord bless him as he embarks on his new ministry as our spiritual leader.

Ministers of the Eucharist: 6.30 p.m. Sadie Bacon & Nellie Lynch; 11.00 a.m. Paul Clarke & Catherine Lanigan.

Feast of the Epiphany, Sat 6th January 2018, Holy Day of obligation : Vigil Mass on Frid. 5th Jan, 6.30 p.m.; Sat. 11.00 a.m. for holy day – no 8.30 a.m. Mass. 6.30 p.m. Vigil Mass for Sunday as usual.

The spiritual meaning of Epiphany: This feast marks the coming of the Three Kings or Three Wise Men. In the Eastern Church this is celebrated as Christmas while in the West we often refer to it as “Little Christmas” or ‘Nollaig na mBan’. The biblical story of the star leading the wise men is one that touches a chord and holds a profound

message for people of every generation. Although they were ‘wise men’, left to their own innate wisdom they were unable to find where the Messiah had been born. The intrigue of King Herod didn’t help either. There are still plenty of Herod figures about with their own vested interests. Ultimately they were forced to fall back on the priests and scribes who in turn had to consult the Scriptures to find out where the Messiah was to be born. In other words human wisdom can take us only so far along the journey of life; if we are to complete that journey we too must turn to that wisdom from on high which the Scriptures alone can supply. Human wisdom no matter how impressive it might appear at the time is less than perfect and will ultimately fail us. Maybe this explains what is happening in our broken world right now. Have we vested too much faith in man and too little in God?

Westcourt News: January Mass for the blessings and canonisation of Blessed Edmund Rice will take place in Westcourt on **Monday 8 January at 7.30 p.m.** Callan Active Retirement is hosting the Mass. All are welcome. Happy New Year from the Brothers, Westcourt.

Word of thanks: Our celebration of Christmas went very well with large crowds participating in all our Christmas Masses. A very special word of thanks to all our choirs, cantors and musicians for making Christmas really special for all of us. The general feeling abroad is that the church attendance this year was as great if not greater in recent years. This in itself proves that Christmas without the Christ-child is utterly empty if not a contradiction.

A special word of thanks to all who contributed to the upkeep of the priests, active and retired, and the support of the parish. People often make their annual contribution to the parish at Christmas time. The most recent Christmas plate collection figures from each of the 3 churches. **Parish Church €2665 (2017) & €2660 (2016); Coolagh: €540 (2017) & €445 (2016); Newtown: €235 (2017) & €320 (2016) .**

Prayer for the New Year: Lord, as I quench the lamp and close the door on the past year, may I find the words of gratitude to honour this passing time; the gift of your design. For all that’s come and

gone, for decisions right and wrong, for unsung songs, I offer words of thanks. For days when life had plenty, for nights when hearts were empty; for undiscovered plains, when all was ventured but nothing gained. Through struggle and through pain, may we learn to rise again. Now at this threshold time make our hearts refined to dream new dreams beyond our imagining. May we step into places where courage will take us beyond our limited spaces. May we never lose the courage to seek for a better world where no child will cry hungry, while another is bored with too much. Where war is remembered in hushed tones, a memory of forgotten days. Where colour and creed can celebrate with pride in their different ways. And may your gentleness O Lord, exude from every heart. May this new year be a year of many blessings where new vision will transform the paralysed places of lonely hearts. Where we will discover the hidden beauty of each soul, all who cross our pathways and if we meet with sorrow may we find an inner light to guide us to the bright place in the company of friends and family, in the company of love. May each moment of every month unveil your abiding presence in beautiful surprises, reawakening the child within each one of us. Lord, bless all we hold so dear that you might guide our way at the birthing of the year. Liam Lawton

Members of Callan Heritage Society have their monthly meeting this Monday, 8th of January, at 8.00 PM in the old CBS School, West Street. New members welcome.

Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: This Sunday we celebrate the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord and as we do so we are invited to reflect on our own baptism and that of our children. Formerly we used to view baptism as the excising of the great wart of original sin which each one had inherited from our first parents, Adam & Eve. This explained why baptisms were carried out within the first few days of birth and normally at home where most children were then born. The earlier baptismal parish records have only a single date for birth and baptism, the inference being that the priest was summoned to the home as soon as the child was born. This changed in the 1940s & 50s

when more and more children were born in hospitals. Nevertheless the baptism was only delayed for no more than a few days, the reason being that the purpose of baptism was still primarily to rid the child of original sin. Through the centuries scholars and theologians debated the fate of children who died before baptism. Would they go to heaven or would they not! The consensus was that they were consigned to a place or state called 'limbo' (literally meaning the 'periphery' of heaven where they were spared any punishment because they had not committed any personal sin. This theological opinion caused great anguish and pain to parents and families who had to cope with the phenomenon of stillbirth. It also explains why non baptised infants were buried in a special area of the cemetery or in separate locations altogether. How could one reconcile the idea of a loving and merciful God denying a totally innocent infant the fullness of eternal happiness in heaven! A loving and merciful God punishing the innocent was deemed utterly inconceivable. Today baptism is viewed as bringing the newborn infant into that community of believers where he/she will have the best chance of overcoming the evil of the world which every person will necessarily encounter as one makes one's way through life. God's love and grace comes to us not in any magical way but through the goodness and love of other people.