

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

Recent deaths: **John Vickers**, Canon Kennedy Court – funeral on Frid. 9 Feb.; **Richard (Dick) Grace**, Rathcoole, Dublin and formerly of Boylefluich, Windgap – funeral on 14 Feb. in Dublin.

Sr. Maureen Ryan, Convent of Mercy – funeral on Sat. 10 Feb in Convent Chapel.

Florence McDonnell nee Gordon formerly of Newtown died recently in U.K.. Memorial Mass in Newtown, Sun. 18 February 2018, 9.30 a.m..

Feast of Our Lady of Lourdes, 11th February: International Day of the Sick: To mark this special day the Sacrament of **Anointing of the Sick will be celebrated during the 6.30 p.m. Saturday evening Mass.** This sacrament is for those who are sick of any age – physically or psychologically, and those advanced in years even though they may not be aware of any illness. In the interests of upholding the integrity of the sacrament it is not intended for younger people or for those in the fullness of health. In order that we might benefit from the grace that Lord offers us we too must be prepared to do our bit and not simply lie down listlessly under the weight of our illness. The Healing Lord always expects and cherishes our feeble efforts so that he might build on them. Think of the miracle of the loaves and fishes. He does not dispense with the few loaves and fishes the disciples have to offer. Instead he takes them, he blesses them and makes them great. If we are to experience healing we too must engage in the process, thereby making it possible for the Lord to work a miracle on our behalf. If we do not experience healing maybe it is because we have failed to engage with the Lord or to meet him half way.

Bake sale after Sat evening & Sunday morning Masses on behalf of 2 secondary school pupils from the parish travelling to Lourdes as helpers with the Ossory Diocesan Pilgrimage. Proceeds to help defray travel costs. Your support will be much appreciated.

ASH WEDNESDAY: Wed. next 14 March – Masses & blessing of ashes: parish church 8 a.m. , 10.00 a.m.; Liturgy for distribution of ashes at Strathmore Lodge & Mount Carmel; primary and secondary schools. Blessed Ashes available in Coolagh & Newtown churches during the day. Please help yourself to it.

MASSES DURING LENT: 8 a.m. & 10 a.m. each morning in parish church, Mon – Frid. (unless a funeral – in which case the funeral Mass replaces the 10.00 a.m. Mass. The 8 a.m. Mass, however, goes ahead as usual even if there is a funeral).

ASH WEDNESDAY: Come to Mass and receive the **ashes**. If you have someone at home or nearby who cannot come, bring home some ashes in the envelope provided. Dampen the ashes with Holy Water and make the sign of the cross on the forehead of the person saying: **“Remember that you are dust, and into dust you will return” or “turn away from sin and be faithful to the Gospel”.**

Ash Wednesday is a day of Fast and Abstinence. Fasting is cutting down on what you eat and drink (and smoke) and spend on treats. Abstinence means abstaining from meat and meat dishes. In order that our fasting be authentic in the sight of God we should give whatever amount we save on food or clothes or personal treats etc. to those in need. The Old Testament Lenten readings from the Prophets are particularly insistent that our fasting be genuine and undertaken with a proper religious spirit e.g. helping out the poor etc.. Lenten fast is a form of self-denial. Choose to fast other days in Lent. Talk to your children about the meaning of fasting etc. and have them join in too.

What to do for Lent:

1. **Self –denial:** Lent is traditionally a time of self-denial i.e. denying oneself something in order to make reparation for past sins and failings. Many people give up drink or cigarettes. These are good in themselves in that they are beneficial to our health. They have spiritual value only to the extent that we give to charity what we save through denying ourselves. **The Trocaire Box** is the best reminder of all of this aspect of Lent. Trocaire boxes are available at end of each of the churches. Please take one home and encourage your children to contribute their share as well. It is a character-forming habit that will serve them well in life and help us wage war on our inherent inclination towards selfishness and putting ourselves first all the time.

2. **Make space and a spot for God each day:** Choose one or two days in the week that you will make a special effort to get to Mass. If you miss one don't get discouraged. Also you might think of creating a little sacred space in your home – a blessed candle, a statue, some holy water and the Bible. We all need reminders because we forget so easily. There is adoration / private prayer in the parish church, Mon. – Frid. 9.30 – 10.00 a.m. and continuing each Friday until 3 p.m.; each Thur. night 7-8pm in Blessed Sacrament Chapel.

3. **Open the Scriptures:** Read a few verses of Scripture each day and mediate on them.

4. **Make a start at paying off one's debts:** Many people right now find themselves in debt due to all that has been happening in our economy over the past number of years. Lent is a time for trying to come to agreement with one's creditors with a view to paying off as much debt as possible and just to expect. Being the season for self-denial we might put what we save towards our more urgent debts.

5. **Sundays of Lent:** The Sundays of Lent are special celebrations in the Church Year. The prayers of the Mass on these Sundays are the most ancient compositions in the altar missal and date back to the early centuries of the Church. This illustrates the importance that the first generation Christians attached to attending Mass on the Sundays of Lent. Make a special effort to get to Mass each weekend during Lent.

6. **A time for rediscovering the Lord:** Over the course of the past year we may have lapsed from the practice our faith and failed our children in this regard also. Lent is like a parish mission extending over a period of six weeks – a time for re-establishing and rekindling contact with one's God and one's Church. During Lent the Lord reaches out the hand of welcome to all who for one reason or another may have strayed from his ways. A very worthwhile Lenten exercise would be to bring ourselves and our families to church each Sunday (Saturday evening) during Lent. Better still come as a family.

7. **Spend more quality time with the children.** Turn off the television, the iPads, the Tablets and play-stations and talk to one another instead. Anything that promotes real human, person-to-person communication can only do good. Switch off apps. We have been hearing much debate and discussion about the dangers of allowing our children unsupervised access to snapshot, youtube and other apps that they can reach on a smart phone. Lead by example. Switch off you mobile or confine its use to a set period each day. Use the time saved to communicate with other members of your own family.

8. **Lent a time to engage in the corporal works of mercy:** to feed the hungry; give drink to the thirsty; clothe the naked; welcome the stranger; heal the sick; visit the imprisoned and bury the dead.