

## CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

**Recent death: Br. Paddy Graven 96 years** – Superior in Westcourt for 6 years in the late 1980s + 7 years in active retirement (2010-'17). Funeral in Dublin on Sat. 12 May.

**Readers:** 6.30 p.m. Paddy McGuire; 8.30 a.m. Bridie Bergin; 11.00 .....

**Ministers of the Eucharist:** 6.30p.m. Bernie Bulter & Molly Foley; 11.00 a.m. Paul Clarke & Olivia Quirke.

**Feast of Ascension: celebrating 'goings and comings':** What was Ascension Thursday has for some years now been transferred to the following Sunday. This Sunday we celebrate Ascension – the risen Lord leaving his disciples to ascend into heaven. For the disciples it was a moment of deflation and sadness. The one who had triumphed over death and adversity and who had empowered them to go out and proclaim the Good News was now leaving them again. But they realised that he had to go in order that the Holy Spirit might come. Life too is full of comings and goings – the child going to school for the first time, graduating from school, leaving home to find work, getting married, death of a spouse etc.. – all these are mini-ascensions, moments of sadness intermingled with joy. People often realise their true potential only when the person on whom they depended is taken from them. The Feast of the Ascension is challenging us to look beyond the immediate. It challenges us to seek out the larger picture. The hidden benefits attached to 'these goings' we might say is the Holy Spirit working in our day-to-day lives. We like to hang on to the *status quo* – we fear change because we feel we might not be able to manage it. We feel 'the devil we know is better than the devil we don't know'. Ascension is essentially being able to see the bright side to what we would normally perceive as negative – leaving home, saying farewell to a loved one etc..

**Does repealing the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment of our Constitution serve the common good of our citizens?** Many people are confused and conflicted on how to vote in the up-coming referendum. Some who

proclaim themselves to be unconditionally 'pro-life' and could never see themselves having recourse to abortion feel that they should not place obstacles in the way of others that might not share their views. We hear again and again of the number of Irish people travelling to England each day to procure abortions and that we should be showing them greater compassion and care. This is a subtle and disingenuous form of argumentation for abortion. It aims at sowing the seeds of doubt in the hearts of ordinary people who have a profound regard for the sacredness of human life. Here our legislators (our politicians) are abdicating their duty of making laws that serve the common good. Instead they are intent on strenuously avoiding any discussion or debate on how the legalizing of abortion will impact on the common good of our citizens. **Hence, we cannot vote 'Yes' for repeal of the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment without at the same time intending to vote for legalised abortion.**

When we vote on the 25 May we are **not being asked to give our permission to individuals to procure an abortion but to change an article of our**

**Constitution.** Our laws and our Constitution must always aim at promoting the 'common good of our citizens'. There are times when an individual might feel that his or her good comes into conflict with the law promoting the 'common good' of all e.g. the current law going through the Oireachtas totally outlawing the consumption of alcohol when in charge of a vehicle. The fact that the new law will discommode some rural dwellers is not in itself a reason for not pushing ahead with the law in the interests of the 'common good'. Here the emotive terms 'care' and 'compassion' for those living in rural isolation are conspicuously absent. The legislator is the first to admit that trying to formulate a law embracing all difficult cases and exceptions makes for bad law. The purpose of all law is to serve the 'common good' (safety on our roads) and not the convenience of the few.

The 'common good' is not be served by repealing the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment and handing over to our politicians the right to introduce as liberal an

abortion regime as they see fit. The pro repeal movement is focusing on the hard and difficult cases which amount to no more than 1-3% of all abortions. The Government could have opted to amend the Constitution to deal with these cases while still leaving the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment in place. Abortion has led to much loss of life, trauma and heartache all over the world. It is estimated that 8 million babies have died in Britain since its legalising there 50 years ago. In Western Europe the average rate of abortion means that 1 in every 5 pregnancies end in abortion. Abortion has divided and convulsed American culture since it was introduced there in 1973. In Ireland the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment has meant 29 women a day not choosing to travel as our vastly lower abortion rates show. When abortion was introduced in these cultures far less information on the stages of development of the foetus was available. Today we know that at 22 days the unborn baby's heart is beating and at 7 weeks he or she can move their arms.

**There is also the moral issue.** We may never vote for an intrinsically unjust law i.e. a law that is unjust in itself and no circumstances can change it. Pope John Paul II spells it out very emphatically in his encyclical *the Gospel of Life*: "Laws which legitimise the direct killing of innocent human beings through abortion or euthanasia are in complete opposition to the inviolable right to life proper to every individual ... it is never licit to vote for such laws" (ns. 72-73). If a person votes for abortion he/she is intentionally enabling and facilitating the procurement of abortion by others. Abortion is always gravely wrong because it does not respect the fundamental dignity of the human person. "Human dignity means that each person is of value and priceless worth. Dignity is so important that it can never be removed. As Christians we believe that this dignity if God-given ... we must then defend the dignity of the unborn boy or girl. It is not for us to decide when a person acquires their dignity – we don't – our laws merely serve to reflect how it is that we value that dignity in others" Bishop Dermot Farrell, Pastoral Letter on the Right to Life, May 2018).

We must not allow ourselves to be misled into thinking that voting to repeal the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment is an act of 'compassion' and 'care' towards the person with an unwanted pregnancy. This is a total abuse and misuse of language. How can one reconcile the deliberate and intentional taking of a human life as the exercise of care or compassion? Care and compassion are exercised primarily in and through our respect for the dignity and rights of others – not the rights of one at the expense of the other. Each human life is sacred and of equal dignity in the eyes of God. In order to be genuine that care and compassion must be extended in equal measure both to the mother and the unborn child. This cannot be so when the action amounts to the total destruction of one human life. In a very small percentage of cases the destruction of the unborn child may result from medical intervention to save the life of the mother. This has always been accepted in Catholic teaching. Reputable gynecologists and obstetricians tell us that the 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment as it stands has never posed an obstacle to necessary medical intervention to save the life of a mother.

**Cemetery Masses 2018 – usual times and dates**

**Kilbride – Frid 29<sup>th</sup> June 2018, 8 p.m.**

**Coolagh – Frid 6 July 8 p.m.;**

**Newtown: Friday 27 July, 7.30 p.m.**

**Whitechurch – TBA by Fr. Jim Greene**

**Please let family members and neighbours know dates and times in good time**