

CALLAN PARISH NEWSLETTER

10th October 2018

Readers: 6.30pm Padhraic Moran; 8.30am Paddy McGuire; 11.00am Olive Power.

Eucharistic Ministers: 6.30pm. Patricia Corcoran & Breda Butler; 11.00am. Olivia Quirke & Mary McGrath.

Months Mind: Josie Lynche, Abbey View – Sun. 11.00 a.m..

Recent deaths: Veronica McGuire, Ahenure – funeral in St. John's Church, Kilkenny on Wed. last. RIP.

The death has occurred of Bishop Laurence Forristal former Bishop of Ossory (1980- 2007) on 10 Oct. 2018: Larry Forristal, born June 1931 and a native of Jerpoint, Thomastown, having completed his secondary school with the monks in Roscrea, began his studies for the priesthood in Holy Cross College, Clonliffe, Dublin in Sept. 1949. Next to him sat Fr. Bob Raftice who died only a month ago and whose wake Bishop Forristal attended in Windgap. On completion of his studies at UCD and Clonliffe College he transferred to Propaganda Fide College Rome to continue his studies. He was ordained priest in Rome in Dec. 1955 to serve in Dublin Diocese. He pursued further studies in Canon Law before returning home to work in his Diocese. He worked for several years in administration in Archbishop's House before entering full-time parish ministry.

In January 1980 he and Fr. Brendan Comiskey (former Bishop of Ferns) were ordained as auxiliary bishops for Dublin Diocese. In March 1981 Bishop Birch died suddenly and in July of that year the prophetic words of Bishop Brendan to Bishop Larry as Bishop Birch was being lowered into the grave would come through - 'Larry you're standing on your own grave'. Bishop Forristal transferred back to Kilkenny to take charge of the diocese of his birth – Ossory. He was installed as successor to Bishop Birch in September 1981. For the next 26 years he journeyed the length and breadth of the diocese celebrating Confirmations and officiating at parish and other

local functions. He was always the last to leave any gathering and had a word for everyone. Kilkenny was his new home and was seldom strayed very far from it.

He had an incredible knowledge of the Diocese and I would safely say that he knew more people in every corner of the Diocese than anybody could imagine. He was blessed with an encyclopedic memory for names and family histories and had the extraordinary ability to make connections, trace relations and store it away when family-tree building was still only in its infancy. This remained so right up to the very end. He never tired of meeting people. He witnessed many changes and challenges in Church life throughout his long stewardship of the Diocese. When the issue of child abuse raised its ugly head back in mid 1990s Bishop Forristal being one of the senior and experienced bishops was called upon to head up a commission to draw up a framework document towards a church response.

He took a keen interest in schools and education and got to know many teachers throughout the Diocese. He was highly respected in Department of Education circles for his interest in and enthusiasm for education and his meticulous oversight of boards of management in schools.

His interest and love for Kilkenny hurling was his great hobby. He was a true black and amber supporter and took particular pride in knowing the Kilkenny hurlers and attending their celebrations.

I always got the feeling that he was very much at home among his own people, dedicating himself untiringly to the proclamation of the Good News. He was a country man at heart.

His funeral Mass takes place in St. Mary's Cathedral on Sat. 12 Oct. at 12.00 noon followed by burial in the Cathedral Grounds.

Winners in recent Mission & Altar Society Draw: €200 Mary Ireland, Danesfort; **€100** – Dina Tobin, Danesfort; **Food Hamper:** Tony Meagher, Nine Mile House; **Bottle of Brandy:** Gretta Power, Kilmacow; **Cheese & wine hamper:** Sr. Cecilia, Convent of Mercy; **Box of Biscuits:** Paddy Costigan.

SAGE Advocacy Information Evening: An information evening on SAGE Advocacy presented by Caroline Hanley will take place in the

Bl. Edmund Rice Centre , Westcourt on **Thursday Oct. 18, 8.30 p.m.** SAGE is a support and advocacy service for vulnerable adults, older people and health care patients. Advocacy is all about informing people of their rights and helping them to pursue and vindicate them. Come along to hear our speaker on Thur. night next.

Mission Sunday, Oct. 20/21: Next Sunday is Mission Sunday – the day when we salute the heroic work of our missionaries and pledge our support to them. We have two missionary priests from the parish – Fr. Philip O'Halloran who has worked in very testing, even sometimes dangerous conditions in Uganda for 30 years and is now Regional Superior in Dublin and Fr. Jim Greene who has also worked for several years in Malawi Africa and is now preparing to take up a new appointment in the Sudan. Our solidarity is very important to our missionaries. It breathes new life into them. Please support our Mission Collection

Bishop Farrell enunciates some thoughts on the future of the faith in Ossory: Bishop Farrell has been in situ now for six months. He has had time to look around, to talk to people and to reflect. Since arriving in the Diocese he has buried three parish priests and a bishop – three of whom were admittedly retired – but concretely speaking he has three less priests to work with given the retirement of Frs. Crotty & Comerford in the past few weeks and the untimely death of Fr. Nicholas Flavin.

In the latest edition of the **Ossory Times (Sep. 2018)** he speaks of our 'need to face the reality that there has been a steady haemorrhaging of the faith and that over time it will disappear when there is no religious practice. The real issue in Ireland right now is a deep crisis of faith. A particular expression of this is the lack of vocations. To date far too much energy has been devoted to the maintenance of existing structures rather than the proclamation of the Gospel'. Bishop Farrell then goes on to focus on what ought to nurture existing faith. It is the liturgy. The Second Vatican Council singled out the liturgy as the 'source and summit of the whole Christian life'. The liturgy is that fountain from which all of us must drink and be nurtured. Failure to do so will invariably sound the

death-knell for faith. Bishop Farrell then goes on to focus on our celebration of the liturgy. Is it life-giving or less than life giving? 'Some of our liturgies have been less than inspiring. We need to examine the quality of both of our liturgy and our preaching of the Word of God which has been confided by the Church to the priest so that it may be heard by and welcomed by the faithful. This is an opportunity for all priests to come to the realization that their primary mission is to preach the Word of God'.

The implications of our bishop's observations are both profound and challenging. Preaching is a two-way exercise, a dual carriageway – it is the task of the preacher to break the word and of the congregation to respond and demonstrate that they are hearing it. Empty pews do not and cannot respond. The 'breaking of the word' suffers as a result. How do we face down the empty pew problem? This is an issue we must resolve together as a faith community if the existing flame of faith is not to be extinguished on our watch. We know how uplifting and nurturing our Christmas Eve liturgies are when we have packed pews. Is there something there that we can learn from that experience? (to be continued next week).