



OSSORY ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT

September 2019 – Issue 21

# OSSORY TIMES

Sharing the life of our Diocese



# ADVENT 2019

DIOCESE OF OSSORY



## Retreats & Parish Evenings

**SHORTER PARISH-BASED RETREATS FOR  
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These will take place in your parish and will provide parents an opportunity to come together for a mini-retreat. Contact AFD office 056 7753624 to book.

### **PARISH EVENINGS**

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**Ossory Adult Faith Development**

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## Editorial

Welcome to the latest edition of the *Ossory Times*.

This is the twenty-first edition of this publication. A coming of age, of sorts, and tradition would suggest that it is time to issue a set of keys. Thinking about this, we recognise that the house this *Ossory Times* reflects is noticeably different than the one we occupied when this publication first started, just seven years ago. Greater lay involvement is, thankfully, the norm. Many things once only spoken about as possibilities are now part of the normal life of our Church: lay leadership; a changed church; the involvement of many; the talents of all at use in our communities and the now established new pastoral areas. The journey towards these green shoots of new life have been, and continue to be, reflected in the *Ossory Times*.

This edition, then, is no different as it documents the life of our Diocese and Church today: honouring our past though the annual St Kieran's College Reunion, the sacred life of John Henry Newman and documenting the life and contribution of Br Damien; celebrating our present though the enrichment programme for our young secondary school students; Pope Francis' letter to priests today and the life one of our truly special schools; and embracing our future by preparing choirs; training for lay leadership in liturgy and beginning a journey of education and independence.

Our church is changing as it is responding, led by the Spirit, to the needs of our day. It is good that we are part of this - in God's eyes we must be ready for it and this is reason for great hope. After all, the keys he has entrusted to us are not those of some mere house but rather those of the Kingdom.

As always I 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:

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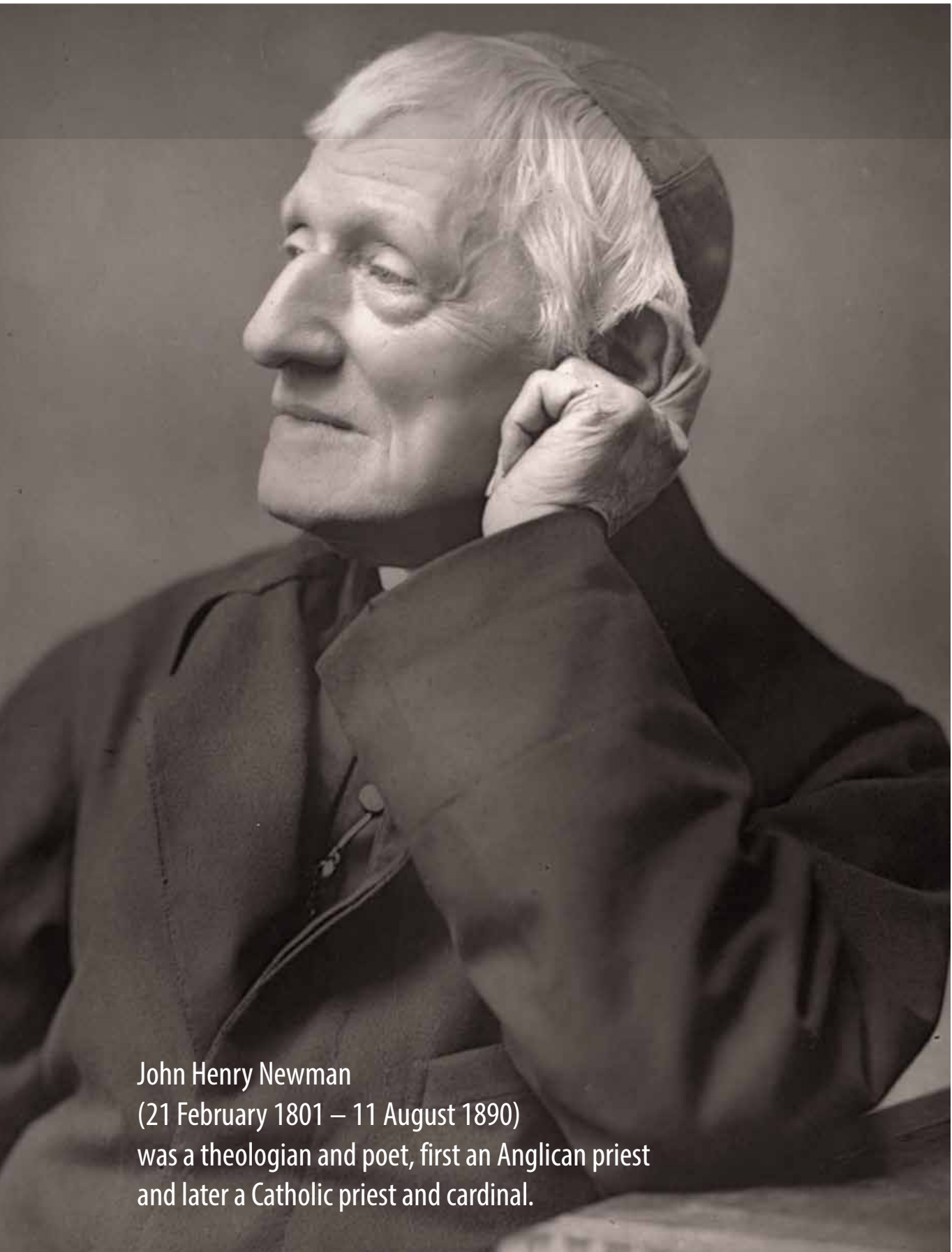
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John Henry Newman  
(21 February 1801 – 11 August 1890)  
was a theologian and poet, first an Anglican priest  
and later a Catholic priest and cardinal.

His religion was going to have to be grounded and founded upon revealed truth for the very simple reason that he was convinced that God had spoken.

# The Canonisation of John Henry Newman 2019

Tom Norris

On the second Sunday of this October, Blessed John Henry Newman will be canonised a saint in St Peter's by Pope Francis. He was beatified by Pope Benedict during the latter's visit to England and Scotland in 2010. Blessed John Henry's long life spanned almost the entire nineteenth century (1801–1890). But who was this man and what was the inspiration and focus of his life?

It was another pope who put his finger on the significance of Newman as far back as 1963. Pope Paul VI, now a saint, identified the importance of Newman as residing in the pastoral, intellectual and spiritual journey of his long life. The journey travelled by John Henry was, according to Pope Paul, 'the most toilsome, but also the greatest, the most meaningful, the most conclusive, that human thought ever travelled during the last century, indeed one might say during the modern era.'<sup>1</sup> An Anglican historian puts it in these words, 'Never was a mind so unceasingly in motion. But the motion was always growth, and never revolution.'<sup>2</sup>

## 'The greatest journey'

There is a tide in the affairs of men which, taken at the tide, leads on to fortune. The insight of the great poet finds verification in the case of John Henry Newman. Newman tells us in his famous autobiography, the *Apologia pro vita sua*, what happened him when he was only fifteen years of age. The principal of his school, a Walter Mayers, gave the young Londoner some books of a religious character for the Summer vacation. Their impact on the young pupil was powerful. 'When I was fifteen (in the autumn of 1816) a great change of thought took place in me. I fell under

the influence of a definite Creed and received into my intellect impressions of dogma which, through God's mercy, have never been effaced or obscured... As well can there be filial love without the fact of a father, as devotion without the fact of a Supreme Being.'<sup>3</sup>

His conviction was grounded on the fact that 'we must know concerning God, before we can feel love, fear, hope, or trust towards him.'<sup>4</sup> His religion was going to have to be grounded and founded upon revealed truth for the very simple reason that he was convinced that God had spoken. 'The very idea of Christianity in its profession and history,' he wrote, 'is a definite message from God to man distinctly conveyed by his chosen instruments, and to be received as such a message.'<sup>5</sup>

The teenager went up to Oxford to Trinity College the following year. Within a few years Oriel College nominated him a fellow. There followed a brilliant career of teaching and discovery and writing. He entered Anglican Orders and became the minister of St Mary the Virgin in Oxford where his sermons descended on an increasing listenership as if a new revelation.

They heard messages like, 'God has created me to do Him some definite service; he has committed some work to me which he has not committed to another. I have my mission - I never may know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next.' It was at this time that he made the discovery of the Fathers of the early Church, people like Augustine and Ambrose, Athanasius and Gregory Nazianzen, who lived in the fourth and/or fifth centuries. Their writing and teaching, he admits, 'came like music to the inner ear.'

The Oxford Movement was about to begin, in fact in 1833, to invite the Anglican Church to live and move according to the spirit and principles of

the Fathers. With Oxford colleagues, such as Edward Pusey, John Keble and Hurrell Froude, he wrote many of this group's texts. These 'tracts for the times' began to impact the Anglican Communion. They emphasised the truth that the early Church of the Fathers was doctrinal (as having a definite Creed which it formulated and defended in Councils and in their own writings), sacramental (as the gift of rebirth and grace arriving in appointed channels where earthly signs become the bearers of heavenly graces), and hierarchical (the bishops of the early Church were custodians of the faith 'given once for all to the saints' (Jude 3)).

For a time Newman was content to develop a Via Media for the Anglican Church since she had avoided the exaggerations and deviations of the Roman Church and the extremism of the Protestant Reformation.

In the Summer of 1839 he read the history of the monophysite heresy whose adherents denied the full human nature of the Saviour. The Council of Chalcedon in 451 roundly repudiated this as the denial of the true incarnation of the eternal Son of the Father. But for Newman what struck him most was the fact of the intervention of one bishop, the bishop of Rome.

The man who later turned back the barbarian hordes of Attila almost at the walls of Rome, was Leo the Great. He wrote to the four hundred bishops at Chalcedon. His intervention was not only accepted but pointed undeniably towards the authority of the bishop of Rome as successor of Peter!

A second discovery was soon to remove his last major difficulty with the Roman Church. The presumed deviations of that Church in doctrine, devotion and structure could be explained with the help of an adequate theory of doctrinal development!

That development was not of the revelation – it was closed with the passing of the last Apostle. The development was that of understanding: after all, divine revelation was mysterious and is always greater than our capacity to understand. With the emergence of his idea of doctrinal development the last obstacle to his embracing the Catholic Faith fell away! On October 8, 1845 he was received into the Church.

## 'The most meaningful journey'

The second half of his life saw him found a secondary school, take on the task of setting up the Catholic University in Dublin, continue his theological work particularly in the area of faith and reason with *A Grammar of Assent*, and, above all, continue his pastoral work.

The man who translated his principal works into German in the 1920s – and in the process engaged the young Jewish convert, Edith Stein as one of his team of translators – was Erich Przywara S.J.

In John Henry Newman he saw an Augustinus redivivus, a St Augustine come back to life. 'Newman's exploration of faith,' writes Cardinal Vincent Nichols, 'depth of personal courage, intellectual clarity and cultural sensitivity make him a deeply admired follower of Christ.'

1 Pope Paul VI, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 28 October 1968.

2 Owen Chadwick, *Newman, Past Masters Series*, Oxford-New York, 1983, 5.

3 *Apologia*, 4 and 49.

4 *A Grammar of Assent*, 120.

5 *Ibid.*, 386.

Statue outside the Church of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, popularly known as Brompton Oratory, in London





William Carrigan  
(29 August 1860 – 12 December 1924)  
was an Irish Roman Catholic priest and historian,  
who was appointed canon of the Diocese of Ossory

The role of the archivist is to preserve the past for future generations to use, with how that information is used changing over time

## The Carrigan Wills – a summer in the archives

*Ronan Doheny*

During the summer I was delighted to be able to volunteer in St Kieran's College, indexing the wills recorded by Canon William Carrigan, compiled from his time conducting historical research into the history of Ossory in the 1880s and 1890s. While I was apprehensive at the start, being a past pupil of the CBS, for the good of the Diocese I decided to put my tribal loyalties to one side. The wills recorded by Carrigan range from the early 1600s to the early 1800s and are an invaluable resource to genealogists and historians of all subject matters. The wills are recorded in over 100 small notebooks handwritten by Carrigan and record the various bequests to varying detail, sums and length. The wills are mostly from people from Ossory but also include people from places as diverse as Cork, Offaly, Dublin, Mayo, Down and London. They are an invaluable resource for historians as it records details that were most likely destroyed in the burning of the Public Records Office in the Four Courts in 1922.

In the 1970s, the wills were indexed in a typed document that went a large way into sorting the wills. My job over the summer was to copy the typed transcript into an easily searchable file on the computer so that now researchers will be able to quickly find a specific name, date, townland, etc. The file will also make it possible for researchers to find out additional information that was previously not possible such as if there were any statistical spikes around certain decades or from specific areas. The main reason for this work was to provide easier and quicker access to the Carrigan wills for both the researcher and the person working in the archives in St Kieran's College as well as opening to the researcher other potential research tools. The project on the Carrigan wills was the perfect preparation for the Masters in Archives & Records Management I am now starting. The role of the archivist is to preserve the past for future generations to use, with how that information is used changing over time. The importance of archives is often overlooked and the work

that archivists do undervalued. Archives vary in size and subject matter. They can range from private companies like Guinness to the National Archives holding all the governmental papers to private organisations such as the UCD Archives. While archives often struggle to find funding, it is vital that their contents are preserved as it is our history. Pope Saint John Paul II during his Pontificate warned of the effects of the pervading destructive 'throwaway culture' on society. Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Pope Francis have followed echoing those warnings. We must resist the modern urge to have a 'throwaway' attitude to the past and to our archives as it is only through mature reflection and study that we appreciate and learn from the past.

In Ossory we have a proud tradition and appreciation for our history. Bishop Patrick Francis Moran, Bishop of Ossory from 1872 to 1884, wrote important histories mainly dealing with the early Church in Ireland as well as setting up the Ossory Archaeological Society in 1872. Moran encouraged Carrigan's historical pursuits with Carrigan becoming active in the Ossory Archaeological Society, contributing articles. Carrigan's four volume study from 1905, *The History and Antiquities of Ossory* remains an important study with few other Dioceses in Ireland getting such a thorough historical treatment from pre-Christian times up to the past Clergy and Bishops at Carrigan's time.

As we enter a difficult time for the Diocese and the Church in general. It is important that we not lose touch with our rich heritage, which is as vitally important to Catholics as it is to Irish society in general. Preserving the past in our archives is vital for the study of our Diocese and can give us pause for thought to consider how the Church survived tragedies and enjoyed triumphs in the past centuries. Hilaire Belloc wrote in *The Path To Rome*, 'One's native place is the shell of one's soul, and one's church is the kernel of

that nut.' Our archives in Ossory fuse the two: Kilkenny with its Church. Study of the past can let us learn from mistakes, appreciate our history and hopefully gain insights into where the future may lead us. As we approach the canonisation of Blessed John Henry Newman we should not forget his famous reflection that the man who is a student of history, is drawn inevitably to the Catholic faith.



LETTER OF HIS HOLINESS  
POPE FRANCIS  
TO PRIESTS  
ON THE 160th ANNIVERSARY  
OF THE DEATH  
OF THE HOLY CURÉ OF ARS,  
ST JOHN VIANNEY





### To my Brother Priests

Dear Brothers,

A hundred and sixty years have passed since the death of the holy Curé of Ars, whom Pope Pius XI proposed as the patron of parish priests throughout the world.[1] On this, his feast day, I write this letter not only to parish priests but to all of you, my brother priests, who have quietly "left all behind" in order to immerse yourselves in the daily life of your communities. Like the Curé of Ars, you serve "in the trenches", bearing the burden of the day and the heat (cf. Mt 20:12), confronting an endless variety of situations in your effort to care for and accompany God's people. I want to say a word to each of you who, often without fanfare and at personal cost, amid weariness, infirmity and sorrow, carry out your mission of service to God and to your people. Despite the hardships of the journey, you are writing the finest pages of the priestly life.

Some time ago, I shared with the Italian bishops my worry that, in more than a few places, our priests feel themselves attacked and blamed for crimes they did not commit. I mentioned that priests need to find in their bishop an older brother and a father who reassures them in these difficult times, encouraging and supporting them along the way.[2]

As an older brother and a father, I too would like in this letter to thank you in the name of the holy and faithful People of God for all that you do for them, and to encourage you never to forget the words that the Lord spoke with great love to us on the day of our ordination. Those words are the source of our joy: "I no longer call you servants... I call you friends" (Jn 15:15).[3]

PAIN

"I have seen the suffering of my people" (Ex 3:7)

In these years, we have become more attentive to the cry, often silent and suppressed, of our brothers and sisters who were victims of the abuse of power, the abuse of conscience and sexual abuse on the part of ordained ministers. This has been a time of great suffering in the lives of those who experienced such abuse, but also in the lives of their families and of the entire People of God.

As you know, we are firmly committed to carrying out the reforms needed to encourage from the outset a culture of pastoral care, so that the culture of abuse will have no room to develop, much less continue. This task is neither quick nor easy: it demands commitment on the part of all. If in the past, omission may itself have been a kind of response, today we desire conversion, transparency, sincerity and solidarity with victims to become our concrete way of moving forward. This in turn will help make us all the more attentive to every form of human suffering.[4]

This pain has also affected priests. I have seen it in the course of my pastoral visits in my own diocese and elsewhere, in my meetings and personal conversations with priests. Many have shared with me their outrage at what happened and their frustration that "for all their hard work, they have to face the damage that was done, the suspicion and uncertainty to which it has given rise, and the doubts, fears and disheartenment felt by more than a few".[5] I have received many letters from priests expressing those feelings. At the same time, I am comforted by my meetings with pastors who recognize and share the pain and suffering of the victims and of the People of God, and have tried to find words and actions capable of inspiring hope.

Without denying or dismissing the harm caused by some of our brothers, it would be unfair not to express our gratitude



to all those priests who faithfully and generously spend their lives in the service of others (cf. 2 Cor 12:15). They embody a spiritual fatherhood capable of weeping with those who weep. Countless priests make of their lives a work of mercy in areas or situations that are often hostile, isolated or ignored, even at the risk of their lives. I acknowledge and appreciate your courageous and steadfast example; in these times of turbulence, shame and pain, you demonstrate that you have joyfully put your lives on the line for the sake of the Gospel.[6]

I am convinced that, to the extent that we remain faithful to God's will, these present times of ecclesial purification will make us more joyful and humble, and prove, in the not distant future, very fruitful. "Let us not grow discouraged! The Lord is purifying his Bride and converting all of us to himself. He is letting us be put to the test in order to make us realize that without him we are simply dust. He is rescuing us from hypocrisy, from the spirituality of appearances. He is breathing forth his Spirit in order to restore the beauty of his Bride, caught in adultery. We can benefit from rereading the sixteenth chapter of Ezekiel. It is the history of the Church, and each of us can say it is our history too. In the end, through your sense of shame, you will continue to act as a shepherd. Our humble repentance, expressed in silent tears before these atrocious sins and the unfathomable grandeur of God's forgiveness, is the beginning of a renewal of our holiness".[7]

#### GRATITUDE

"I do not cease to give thanks for you" (Eph 1:16).

Vocation, more than our own choice, is a response to the Lord's unmerited call. We do well to return constantly to those passages of the Gospel where we see Jesus praying, choosing and calling others "to be with him, and to be sent out

to proclaim the message" (Mk 3:14).

Here I think of a great master of the priestly life in my own country, Father Lucio Gera. Speaking to a group of priests at a turbulent time in Latin America, he told them: "Always, but especially in times of trial, we need to return to those luminous moments when we experienced the Lord's call to devote our lives to his service". I myself like to call this "the deuteronomic memory of our vocation"; it makes each of us go back "to that blazing light with which God's grace touched me at the start of the journey. From that flame, I can light a fire for today and every day, and bring heat and light to my brothers and sisters. That flame ignites a humble joy, a joy which sorrow and distress cannot dismay, a good and gentle joy".[8]

One day, each of us spoke up and said "yes", a "yes" born and developed in the heart of the Christian community thanks to those "saints next door"[9] who showed us by their simple faith that it was worthwhile committing ourselves completely to the Lord and his kingdom. A "yes" whose implications were so momentous that often we find it hard to imagine all the goodness that it continues to produce. How beautiful it is when an elderly priest sees or is visited by those children – now adults – whom he baptized long ago and who now gratefully introduce a family of their own! At times like this, we realize that we were anointed to anoint others, and that God's anointing never disappoints. I am led to say with the Apostle: "I do not cease to give thanks for you" (cf. Eph 1:16) and for all the good that you have done.

Amid trials, weakness and the consciousness of our limitations, "the worst temptation of all is to keep brooding over our troubles"[10] for then we lose our perspective, our good judgement and our courage. At those times, it is important



– I would even say crucial – to cherish the memory of the Lord's presence in our lives and his merciful gaze, which inspired us to put our lives on the line for him and for his People. And to find the strength to persevere and, with the Psalmist, to raise our own song of praise, "for his mercy endures forever" (Ps 136).

Gratitude is always a powerful weapon. Only if we are able to contemplate and feel genuine gratitude for all those ways we have experienced God's love, generosity, solidarity and trust, as well as his forgiveness, patience, forbearance and compassion, will we allow the Spirit to grant us the freshness that can renew (and not simply patch up) our life and mission. Like Peter on the morning of the miraculous draught of fishes, may we let the recognition of all the blessings we have received awaken in us the amazement and gratitude that can enable us to say: "Depart from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man" (Lk 5:8). Only then to hear the Lord repeat his summons: "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be fishers of men" (Lk 5:10). "For his mercy endures forever".

Dear brother priests, I thank you for your fidelity to the commitments you have made. It is a sign that, in a society and culture that glorifies the ephemeral, there are still people unafraid to make lifelong promises. In effect, we show that we continue to believe in God, who has never broken his covenant, despite our having broken it countless times. In this way, we celebrate the fidelity of God, who continues to trust us, to believe in us and to count on us, for all our sins and failings, and who invites us to be faithful in turn. Realizing that we hold this treasure in earthen vessels (cf. 2 Cor 4:7), we know that the Lord triumphs through weakness (cf. 2 Cor 12:9). He continues to sustain us and to renew his call, repaying us a hundredfold (cf. Mk 10:29-30). "For his

mercy endures forever".

Thank you for the joy with which you have offered your lives, revealing a heart that over the years has refused to become closed and bitter, but has grown daily in love for God and his people. A heart that, like good wine, has not turned sour but become richer with age. "For his mercy endures forever".

Thank you for working to strengthen the bonds of fraternity and friendship with your brother priests and your bishop, providing one another with support and encouragement, caring for those who are ill, seeking out those who keep apart, visiting the elderly and drawing from their wisdom, sharing with one another and learning to laugh and cry together. How much we need this! But thank you too for your faithfulness and perseverance in undertaking difficult missions, or for those times when you have had to call a brother priest to order. "For his mercy endures forever".

Thank you for your witness of persistence and patient endurance (*hypomoné*) in pastoral ministry. Often, with the *parrhesía* of the shepherd,[11] we find ourselves arguing with the Lord in prayer, as Moses did in courageously interceding for the people (cf. Num 14:13-19; Ex 32:30-32; Dt 9:18-21). "For his mercy endures forever".

Thank you for celebrating the Eucharist each day and for being merciful shepherds in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, neither rigorous nor lax, but deeply concerned for your people and accompanying them on their journey of conversion to the new life that the Lord bestows on us all. We know that on the ladder of mercy we can descend to the depths of our human condition – including weakness and sin – and at the same time experience the heights of divine perfection: "Be merciful as the Father is merciful".[12] In this way, we are "capable of warming people's hearts,



walking at their side in the dark, talking with them and even entering into their night and their darkness, without losing our way".[13] "For his mercy endures forever".

Thank you for anointing and fervently proclaiming to all, "in season and out of season" (cf. 2 Tim 4:2) the Gospel of Jesus Christ, probing the heart of your community "in order to discover where its desire for God is alive and ardent, as well as where that dialogue, once loving, has been thwarted and is now barren".[14] "For his mercy endures forever".

Thank you for the times when, with great emotion, you embraced sinners, healed wounds, warmed hearts and showed the tenderness and compassion of the Good Samaritan (cf. Lk 10:25-27). Nothing is more necessary than this: accessibility, closeness, readiness to draw near to the flesh of our suffering brothers and sisters. How powerful is the example of a priest who makes himself present and does not flee the wounds of his brothers and sisters![15] It mirrors the heart of a shepherd who has developed a spiritual taste for being one with his people,[16] a pastor who never forgets that he has come from them and that by serving them he will find and express his most pure and complete identity. This in turn will lead to adopting a simple and austere way of life, rejecting privileges that have nothing to do with the Gospel. "For his mercy endures forever".

Finally, let us give thanks for the holiness of the faithful People of God, whom we are called to shepherd and through whom the Lord also shepherds and cares for us. He blesses us with the gift of contemplating that faithful People "in those parents who raise their children with immense love, in those men and women who work hard to support their families, in the sick, in elderly religious who never lose their smile. In their daily perseverance, I

see the holiness of the Church militant". [17] Let us be grateful for each of them, and in their witness find support and encouragement. "For his mercy endures forever".

#### ENCOURAGEMENT

"I want [your] hearts to be encouraged" (Col 2:2)

My second great desire is, in the words of Saint Paul, to offer encouragement as we strive to renew our priestly spirit, which is above all the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Faced with painful experiences, all of us need to be comforted and encouraged. The mission to which we are called does not exempt us from suffering, pain and even misunderstanding.[18] Rather, it requires us to face them squarely and to accept them, so that the Lord can transform them and conform us more closely to himself. "Ultimately, the lack of a heartfelt and prayerful acknowledgment of our limitations prevents grace from working more effectively within us, for no room is left for bringing about the potential good that is part of a sincere and genuine journey of growth".[19]

One good way of testing our hearts as pastors is to ask how we confront suffering. We can often act like the levite or the priest in the parable, stepping aside and ignoring the injured man (cf. Lk 10:31-32). Or we can draw near in the wrong way, viewing situations in the abstract and taking refuge in commonplaces, such as: "That's life...", or "Nothing can be done". In this way, we yield to an uneasy fatalism. Or else we can draw near with a kind of aloofness that brings only isolation and exclusion. "Like the prophet Jonah, we are constantly tempted to flee to a safe haven. It can have many names: individualism, spiritualism, living in a little world..."[20] Far from making us compassionate, this ends up holding us back from confronting our own wounds,



the wounds of others and consequently the wounds of Jesus himself.[21]

Along these same lines, I would mention another subtle and dangerous attitude, which, as Bernanos liked to say, is "the most precious of the devil's potions".[22] It is also the most harmful for those of us who would serve the Lord, for it breeds discouragement, desolation and despair. [23] Disappointment with life, with the Church or with ourselves can tempt us to latch onto a sweet sorrow or sadness that the Eastern Fathers called *acedia*. Cardinal Tomáš Špidlík described it in these terms: "If we are assailed by sadness at life, at the company of others or at our own isolation, it is because we lack faith in God's providence and his works... Sadness paralyzes our desire to persevere in our work and prayer; it makes us hard to live with... The monastic authors who treated this vice at length call it the worst enemy of the spiritual life." [24]

All of us are aware of a sadness that can turn into a habit and lead us slowly to accept evil and injustice by quietly telling us: "It has always been like this". A sadness that stifles every effort at change and conversion by sowing resentment and hostility. "That is no way to live a dignified and fulfilled life; it is not God's will for us, nor is it the life of the Spirit, which has its source in the heart of the risen Christ" [25], to which we have been called. Dear brothers, when that sweet sorrow threatens to take hold of our lives or our communities, without being fearful or troubled, yet with firm resolution, let us together beg the Spirit to "rouse us from our torpor, to free us from our inertia. Let us rethink our usual way of doing things; let us open our eyes and ears, and above all our hearts, so as not to be complacent about things as they are, but unsettled by the living and effective word of the risen Lord". [26]

Let me repeat: in times of difficulty, we

all need God's consolation and strength, as well as that of our brothers and sisters. All of us can benefit from the touching words that Saint Paul addressed to his communities: "I pray that you may not lose heart over [my] sufferings" (Eph 3:13), and "I want [your] hearts to be encouraged" (Col 2:22). In this way, we can carry out the mission that the Lord gives us anew each day: to proclaim "good news of great joy for all the people" (Lk 2:10). Not by presenting intellectual theories or moral axioms about the way things ought to be, but as men who in the midst of pain have been transformed and transfigured by the Lord and, like Job, can exclaim: "I knew you then only by hearsay, but now I have seen you with my own eyes" (Job 42:2). Without this foundational experience, all of our hard work will only lead to frustration and disappointment.

In our own lives, we have seen how "with Christ, joy is constantly born anew". [27] Although there are different stages in this experience, we know that, despite our frailties and sins, "with a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, God makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and start anew". [28] That joy is not the fruit of our own thoughts or decisions, but of the confidence born of knowing the enduring truth of Jesus' words to Peter. At times of uncertainty, remember those words: "I have prayed for you, that your faith may not fail" (Lk 22:32). The Lord is the first to pray and fight for you and for me. And he invites us to enter fully into his own prayer. There may well be moments when we too have to enter into "the prayer of Gethsemane, that most human and dramatic of Jesus' prayers... For there we find supplication, sorrow, anguish and even bewilderment (Mk 14:33ff.)". [29]

We know that it is not easy to stand before the Lord and let his gaze examine our lives, heal our wounded hearts



and cleanse our feet of the worldliness accumulated along the way, which now keeps us from moving forward. In prayer, we experience the blessed "insecurity" which reminds us that we are disciples in need of the Lord's help, and which frees us from the promethean tendency of "those who ultimately trust only in their own powers and feel superior to others because they observe certain rules".[30] Dear brothers, Jesus, more than anyone, is aware of our efforts and our accomplishments, our failures and our mistakes. He is the first to tell us: "Come to me, all you who are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Mt 11:28-29).

In this prayer, we know that we are never alone. The prayer of a pastor embraces both the Spirit who cries out "Abba, Father!" (cf. Gal 4:6), and the people who have been entrusted to his care. Our mission and identity can be defined by this dialectic.

The prayer of a pastor is nourished and made incarnate in the heart of God's People. It bears the marks of the sufferings and joys of his people, whom he silently presents to the Lord to be anointed by the gift of the Holy Spirit. This is the hope of a pastor, who with trust and insistence asks the Lord to care for our weakness as individuals and as a people. Yet we should also realize that it is in the prayer of God's People that the heart of a pastor takes flesh and finds its proper place. This sets us free from looking for quick, easy, ready-made answers; it allows the Lord to be the one – not our own recipes and goals – to point out a path of hope. Let us not forget that at the most difficult times in the life of the earliest community, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles, prayer emerged as the true guiding force.

Brothers, let us indeed acknowledge our weaknesses, but also let Jesus transform them and send us forth anew to the mission. Let us never lose the joy of knowing that we are "the sheep of his flock" and that he is our Lord and Shepherd.

For our hearts to be encouraged, we should not neglect the dialectic that determines our identity. First, our relationship with Jesus. Whenever we turn away from Jesus or neglect our relationship with him, slowly but surely our commitment begins to fade and our lamps lose the oil needed to light up our lives (cf. Mt 25:1-13): "Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me... because apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:4-5). In this regard, I would encourage you not to neglect spiritual direction. Look for a brother with whom you can speak, reflect, discuss and discern, sharing with complete trust and openness your journey. A wise brother with whom to share the experience of discipleship. Find him, meet with him and enjoy his guidance, accompaniment and counsel. This is an indispensable aid to carrying out your ministry in obedience to the will of the Father (cf. Heb 10:9) and letting your heart beat with "the mind that was in Christ Jesus" (Phil 2:5). We can profit from the words of Ecclesiastes: "Two are better than one... One will lift up the other; but woe to the one who is alone and falls, and does not have another to help!" (4:9-10).

The other essential aspect of this dialectic is our relationship to our people. Foster that relationship and expand it. Do not withdraw from your people, your presbyterates and your communities, much less seek refuge in closed and elitist groups. Ultimately, this stifles and poisons the soul. A minister whose "heart



is encouraged" is a minister always on the move. In our "going forth", we walk "sometimes in front, sometimes in the middle and sometimes behind: in front, in order to guide the community; in the middle, in order to encourage and support, and at the back in order to keep it united, so that no one lags too far behind... There is another reason too: because our people have a "nose" for things. They sniff out, discover, new paths to take; they have the *sensus fidei* (cf. *Lumen Gentium*, 12)... What could be more beautiful than this?"[31] Jesus himself is the model of this evangelizing option that leads us to the heart of our people. How good it is for us to see him in his attention to every person! The sacrifice of Jesus on the cross is nothing else but the culmination of that evangelizing style that marked his entire life.

Dear brother priests, the pain of so many victims, the pain of the people of God and our own personal pain, cannot be for naught. Jesus himself has brought this heavy burden to his cross and he now asks us to be renewed in our mission of drawing near to those who suffer, of drawing near without embarrassment to human misery, and indeed to make all these experiences our own, as eucharist. [32] Our age, marked by old and new wounds, requires us to be builders of relationships and communion, open, trusting and awaiting in hope the newness that the kingdom of God wishes to bring about even today. For it is a kingdom of forgiven sinners called to bear witness to the Lord's ever-present compassion. "For his mercy endures forever".

#### PRAISE

"My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord" (Lk 1:46)

How can we speak about gratitude and encouragement without looking to Mary? She, the woman whose heart was pierced (cf. Lk 2:35), teaches us the praise

capable of lifting our gaze to the future and restoring hope to the present. Her entire life was contained in her song of praise (cf. Lk 1:46-55). We too are called to sing that song as a promise of future fulfillment.

Whenever I visit a Marian shrine, I like to spend time looking at the Blessed Mother and letting her look at me. I pray for a childlike trust, the trust of the poor and simple who know that their mother is there, and that they have a place in her heart. And in looking at her, to hear once more, like the Indian Juan Diego: "My youngest son, what is the matter? Do not let it disturb your heart. Am I not here, I who have the honour to be your mother?"[33]

To contemplate Mary is "to believe once again in the revolutionary nature of love and tenderness. In her, we see that humility and tenderness are not virtues of the weak but of the strong, who need not treat others poorly in order to feel important themselves".[34]

Perhaps at times our gaze can begin to harden, or we can feel that the seductive power of apathy or self-pity is about to take root in our heart. Or our sense of being a living and integral part of God's People begins to weary us, and we feel tempted to a certain elitism. At those times, let us not be afraid to turn to Mary and to take up her song of praise.

Perhaps at times we can feel tempted to withdraw into ourselves and our own affairs, safe from the dusty paths of daily life. Or regrets, complaints, criticism and sarcasm gain the upper hand and make us lose our desire to keep fighting, hoping and loving. At those times, let us look to Mary so that she can free our gaze of all the "clutter" that prevents us from being attentive and alert, and thus capable of seeing and celebrating Christ alive in the midst of his people. And if we see that we are going astray, or that we are



failing in our attempts at conversion, then let us turn to her like a great parish priest from my previous diocese, who was also a poet. He asked her, with something of a smile: "This evening, dear Lady /my promise is sincere; /but just to be sure, don't forget / to leave the key outside the door".[35] Our Lady "is the friend who is ever concerned that wine not be lacking in our lives. She is the woman whose heart was pierced by a sword and who understands all our pain. As mother of all, she is a sign of hope for peoples suffering the birth pangs of justice... As a true mother, she walks at our side, she shares our struggles and she constantly surrounds us with God's love".[36]

Dear brothers, once more, "I do not cease to give thanks for you" (Eph 1:16), for your commitment and your ministry. For I am confident that "God takes away even the hardest stones against which our hopes and expectations crash: death, sin, fear, worldliness. Human history does not end before a tombstone, because today it encounters the "living stone" (cf. 1 Pet 2:4), the risen Jesus. We, as Church, are built on him, and, even when we grow disheartened and tempted to judge everything in the light of our failures, he comes to make all things new".[37]

May we allow our gratitude to awaken praise and renewed enthusiasm for our ministry of anointing our brothers and sisters with hope. May we be men whose lives bear witness to the compassion and mercy that Jesus alone can bestow on us.

May the Lord Jesus bless you and the Holy Virgin watch over you. And please, I ask you not to forget to pray for me.

Faternally,

**FRANCIS**

**Rome, at Saint John Lateran, on 4 August  
2019,**

**Memorial of the Holy Curé of Ars**

[1] Cf. Apostolic Letter *Anno Iubilari* (23 April 1929): AAS 21 (1929), 312-313.

[2] Address to the Italian Bishops' Conference (20 May 2019). Spiritual fatherhood requires a bishop not to leave his priests as orphans; it can be felt not only in his readiness to open his doors to priests, but also to seek them out in order to care for them and to accompany them.

[3] Cf. SAINT JOHN XXIII, Encyclical Letter *Sacerdotii Nostri Primordia* on the hundredth anniversary of the death of the holy Curé of Ars (1 August 1959): AAS (51 (1959), 548.

[4] Cf. Letter to the People of God (20 August 2018).

[5] Meeting with Priests, Religious, Consecrated Persons and Seminarists, Santiago de Chile (16 January 2018).

[6] Cf. Letter to the Pilgrim People of God in Chile (31 May 2018).

[7] Meeting with the Priests of the Diocese of Rome (7 March 2019).

[8] Homily at the Easter Vigil (19 April 2014).

[9] Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 7.

[10] Cf. JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO, *Las cartas de la tribulación* (Herder, 2019), 21.

[11] Cf. Address to the Parish Priests of Rome (6 March 2014).

[12] Retreat to Priests. First Meditation (2 June 2016).

[13] A. SPADARO, Interview with Pope Francis, in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 3918 (19 September 2013), p. 462.

[14] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 137.

[15] Cf. Address to the Parish Priests of Rome (6 March 2014).

[16] Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 268.

[17] Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 7.

[18] Cf. Apostolic Letter *Misericordia et Misera*, 13.

[19] Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 50.

[20] *Ibid.*, 134.

[21] Cf. JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO, *Reflexiones en esperanza* (Vatican City, 2013), p. 14.

[22] *Journal d'un curé de campagne* (Paris, 1974), p. 135; cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 83.

[23] Cf. BARSANUPH OF GAZA, *Letters*, in VITO CUTRO – MICHAŁ TADEUSZ SZWEMIN, *Bisogno di paternità* (Warsaw, 2018), p. 124.

[24] *L'arte di purificare il cuore*, Rome, 1999, p. 47.

[25] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 2.

[26] Apostolic Exhortation *Gaudete et Exsultate*, 137.

[27] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 1.

[28] *Ibid.*, 3.

[29] JORGE MARIO BERGOGLIO, *Reflexiones en esperanza* (Vatican City, 2013), p. 26.

[30] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 94.

[31] Meeting with Clergy, Consecrated Persons and Members of Pastoral Councils, Assisi (4 October 2013).

[32] Cf. Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 268-270.

[33] Cf. Nican Mopohua, 107, 118, 119.

[34] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 288.

[35] Cf. AMELIO LUIS CALORI, *Aula Fúlgida*, Buenos Aires, 1946.

[36] Apostolic Exhortation *Evangelii Gaudium*, 286.

[37] Homily at the Easter Vigil (20 April 2019).



## FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL BY WENDY SILVA

I wonder what you're  
doing right now  
and if everyone is  
treating you kind.  
I hope there is a  
special person,  
a nice friend that you  
can find.  
I wonder if the teacher  
knows just  
how special you are to  
me.  
And if the brightness of  
your heart  
is something she can  
see.  
I wonder if you are  
thinking about  
me and if you need a  
hug.  
I already miss the  
sound of your voice  
and how you give my  
leg a tug.  
I wonder if you could  
possibly understand  
how hard it is for me to  
let you grow.  
On this day know that  
my heart breaks,  
for this is the first step in  
letting my baby go.

© Wendy Silva

Heading off to Catholic primary school means that the seeds of faith planted by parents can be nourished as their understanding of the world and humanity grows.

## Back to school

Gemma Mulligan

As soon as the school summer holidays begin it seems that the conversation turns to 'back to school'. Before the holidays have even begun the shops are full of uniforms and school bags and 'all you need' to get you back to school. In our house for the past few years the back to school organising has gone quite smoothly and without too much fuss. This year however it brought with it a lot of mixed emotions. The 'Baby' was starting school.

All summer people told me "ah he is ready anyhow", "no bother to him", "you won't know yourself"... and while all that may be true, starting school really is a big step.

I can still remember my first day at school and while I liked school as a little girl it didn't get off to a great start. It was so traumatic for me I can remember everything about it. Perhaps that old memory was at the back of my mind as I sent my little guy off to the local school.

I need not have worried. The first morning just the junior infants went in and everything was waiting for them including a very warm welcome. All the children settled around the table making Lego and chatting to each other while the parents stood not wanting to leave

just yet. We feel very lucky to have a small local primary school where most of the children starting already know each other from pre-school or the local hurling field and have been to visit the school and meet their teacher before the first of September.

This new beginning for my guy and the other children starting school involves a letting go on all our parts. Heading off to Catholic primary school means that the seeds of faith planted by parents can be nourished as their understanding of the world and humanity grows. Pope Francis in *Amoris Laetitia* reminds us that "The family is the place where parents become their children's first teachers in the faith and parents have a serious responsibility for this work of education while also reminding us that children are not the property of a family, but have their own lives to lead."

So it is with this understanding I let him go and as everyone predicted it's no bother to him.

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*Amoris Laetitia, The Joy of Love, Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family, Pope Francis, 2016, No.16*

*Amoris Laetitia, The Joy of Love, Apostolic Exhortation on Love in the Family, Pope Francis, 2016, No.18*

## Why not join your Parish Choir for the benefit of your body and soul?

# "Bis orat qui bene cantat"

*Frances Dunne*

"Bis orat qui bene cantat" ("Who sings well prays twice") is an ancient proverb (often attributed to St. Francis or St Augustine) with which the General Instruction of the Roman Missal introduces its section on "The Importance of Singing at Mass". The choir, as well as singing its own parts, should foster the active participation of the people in singing and there should be a cantor or a choir director to lead and sustain the peoples' singing.

With this in mind, no doubt, the Ossory Adult Faith Development Team in the Diocese arranged a workshop entitled 'Music in the Liturgy' for singers, choirs and musicians and all who were interested in music in the liturgy on Tuesday 11th June 2019 in St Kieran's College.

Choir members, directors and musicians gathered from the four corners of the Diocese for the evening of music led by Dr John O'Keeffe, who is Director of Sacred Music in St Patrick's College, Maynooth, where his activities include preparation and composition of music for the liturgies of the National Seminary at St Patrick's College, and which he, thankfully, shares with Dioceses and parishes around the country.

Participants were met on arrival by pleasant young gentlemen students of the college who ushered and directed everyone to car parking areas and to the event itself.

Once inside the college the buzz of connection between people from different parishes who hadn't seen each other for a while could be heard all along the hallowed corridors.

Fr Dermot Ryan welcomed everyone to the evening and hoped that all both enjoyed it and found it a useful occasion for taking new music and options for liturgy back to their respective parishes.

John O'Keeffe then introduced himself to the audience and gave a resume of his work to date. He began the workshop working from the second edition of his publication *Feasts & Seasons 2* which brings together a selection of compositions which are closely linked with particular times of the year and which form an integral part of the annual liturgical journey.

So, starting with Advent we sang and worked our way through the liturgical



year covering processional hymns, responsorial psalms, appropriate music for Christmas, Lent, Easter, General Sundays, Eucharist, Funerals, etc., as well as doing some parts of the Mass of St Mel which was commissioned by the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois to mark the restoration and re-dedication of St Mel's Cathedral in Longford in 2016.

Two hours flew by as our dulcet tones drifted towards the vaulted ceiling of the theatre and hopefully to the higher echelons. It is hard to believe how much we covered on the night, which ended with a prayer and an extracted promise by Fr Scriven for each choir to do one new piece between now and Christmas.

This was followed by the longed for cuppa and chat at the end before we wended our way to our homes and parishes filled with music and planning for the liturgical year ahead.

If you are reading this and are not a member of a choir I'm sure every choir in the Diocese - be they large or small - would be happy to welcome you as an addition to their numbers.

Did you know that scientific research has shown that singing is good for your health? 'Singing in a choir for just one hour boosts levels of immune proteins in people...'

In fact, there are eleven recognised and surprising health benefits to singing:

- Singing strengthens the immune system.
- Singing is a workout.
- Singing improves your posture.
- Singing helps with sleep.
- Singing is a natural anti-depressant.
- Singing lowers stress levels.
- Singing improves mental alertness.
- Singing can widen your circle of friends.
- Singing broadens communication skills.
- Singing boosts your confidence.
- Singing increases your ability to appreciate other singers.

So, why not join your Parish Choir for the benefit of your body and soul? I'm sure every choir would be delighted to welcome new members - both men and women.



School yard



Bee Garden



Horticulture



Soft Play



Mother of Fair Love perfectly tailors everything to match personal ability and for those who attend the school, a world of support unfolds.

# Mother of Fair Love School

*Marian O'Driscoll*

Situated on prime location in Kilkenny city, Mother of Fair Love school with its striking name has long held a special place in the hearts of Kilkenny people. In an environment that embraces individualized learning and turns challenges into positives, Mother of Fair Love celebrates everyday what past students coming back to visit recall as amongst the happiest days of their lives. Small, personalised and welcoming, here is a primary and a secondary school in one. The school does not have the student numbers of most of its neighbouring mainstream schools in Kilkenny. Mother of Fair Love might rather be better classified in the world of education as a 'boutique' school – small but on closer inspection, a wonderful place to learn.

Mother of Fair Love perfectly tailors everything to match personal ability and for those who attend the school, a world of support unfolds. Children now have access to staff specifically trained in the area of Special education and with long experience with complex student profiles. All students attending Mother of Fair Love have a learning disability which can often coexist with other conditions, notably autism. Such complex profiles in turn require the input of other professionals. The school's staff work hand in hand with health professionals, with therapists, care

workers, fostering agencies, the DES and the NCSE and many others in order to meet the daily needs of the child, thereby enabling them to access a full curriculum. Despite such complexity to the typical backdrop to a child's education in Mother of Fair Love, this is a school like any other and the children who attend are children like any other. The school functions throughout under the auspices of the DES and its directives. The school curriculum is the same as that employed by mainstream schools but tailored under parallel specific guidelines. Mother of Fair Love employs part time secondary teachers as do their mainstream counterparts, such as for Home Economics, Woodwork, Drama and Horticulture. Sports play a central part in the timetable and students enjoy an active sports fixture calendar with other special schools in the south east. Students are avid swimmers and students here are competitive, often taking first prize in art competitions and repeatedly in textiles in international textile competitions against mainstream secondary schools. Every year the Mother of Fair Love Scholarship, the possibility to be Head student or to win the Bishop Birch medal keeps everyone on their toes. The school Debs always takes centre stage. All pupils enjoy daily Meditation and love the school sensory suite and for the new comers, the school

Buddy system. The goal of education at Mother of Fair Love is to make sure students leave school with a high level of independence for the road ahead. Their JCL2 certificate will be completed, their social skills training fully organized and a workplace or further training identified and in place with the assistance of their HSE guidance officer.

Parents today can sometimes struggle with the widening level of choice in terms of placement options for children with autism while at the same time attempting to meet the demands of choosing an appropriate school placement for a learning disability. Those who choose to enrol their children at Mother of Fair Love do so however because it is difficult to bypass the perfect fit which the school provides. Parents are always encouraged to bring the child themselves to the school when considering enrolment. Invariably, the child's immediate ease and ability to understand together with the instant response of peers is more often than not something which parents have not witnessed beforehand. The result is a match for their child within a setting which has been designed solely with their profile in mind. A match made in Mother of Fair Love School.



# Lourdes Pilgrimage 2019

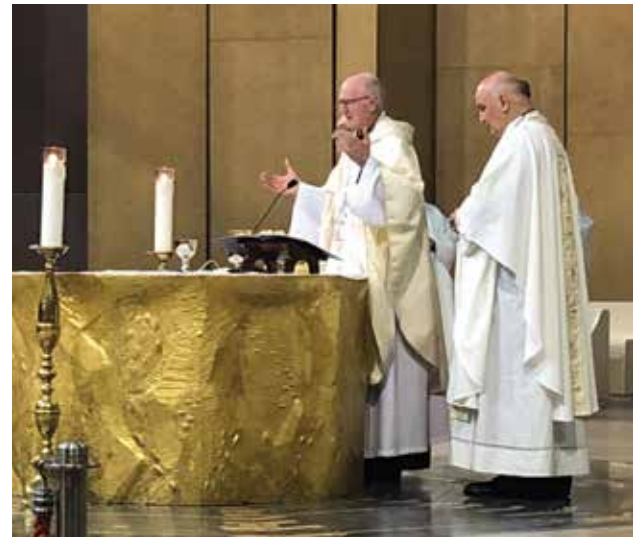




Youth volunteers who



o assisted the pilgrims.



If we are not engaged in constructing the kingdom of God,  
we are busy constructing one of our own...

# St Kieran's College Reunion 2019

*Homily of Bishop Dermot Farrell on the occasion of St Kieran's College Priests' Annual Reunion 2019  
Tuesday, 20th August 2019*

I welcome you to St Kieran's College today for the annual reunion. I especially want to congratulate those who are celebrating diamond, golden and silver jubilees of their ordination to the priesthood.

Today's readings exemplify the diversity of Scripture. In the First Reading from the Book of Judges (6:11-24), we meet Gideon, who is going to be a great liberator of Israelites against their enemies, the Midianites. In today's narrative Gideon is being given his "vocation." He was not too enthusiastic about the job he was invited to perform. He didn't believe that the Lord would be with him.

I am sure there are times when many of us can identify with the reaction of Gideon, particularly when we are confronted by the massive challenges of life today and ministering in a culture often in opposition to the Gospel. We can sometimes resist such a calling, especially knowing prophets will experience suffering in carrying out their mission. The marks that we bear on our bodies are those of Jesus

Christ (see Gal 6:17). Here I am reminded of a notably sharp observation made once by St Bernard of Clairvaux, whose memorial we celebrate today: "Only the man who has misery in his life can console the miserable" (St. Bernard of Clairvaux, *De gradibus humilitatis et superbiae*, 3.6, PL 182).

Gideon had to learn that prophecy is not a simple prediction of the future but a call, right now, in the present, to acknowledge God whose loving mercy is without limit. The purpose of prophecy is not to paralyse us, but to challenge us to play our part in changing ourselves, and our world. It calls us to place our trust in the God who, at the end of history, will make all things new (see Rev 21:15).

Sometimes we can cling to a God of grace and not of truth. When we do, we miss the truth of who God really is. God can be seen as Santa Claus with only an abundance of grace. GRACE and TRUTH are inseparable. "Do not come to me as grace alone" (Bernard of Clairvaux). If God comes as grace and truth we



cannot hide from ourselves (see Sermon 74).

An authentic preacher of the Gospel cannot be a preacher either of grace only, or of truth only. Our preaching, on the one hand, cannot be characterised by an active and robust preaching of moral and dogmatic truth and Church law while saying nothing about God's prodigal kindness and compassion. We cannot speak exclusively, on the other hand, of the grace of God, and of the mercy of God, but say nothing about God's truth or God's law.

Like many another great man who had been called by God to some

tremendous task, Gideon hesitated from strong feelings of unworthiness and inadequacy. How do we feel when God asks us to do something? Are we challenged? I think of the "rich young man", the one who walked away sad upon hearing that finding the treasure in heaven would require letting go of his earthly possessions. The treasure of the Church is not financial treasure, but the treasure of life in Christ, especially through the Eucharist.

The real thrust of today's Gospel comes when Peter, the usual foil in Gospel for misunderstanding, says, in effect, we have left everything, but what's in it for us? That was Peter's question, and

maybe at times, it has been ours too. For all followers of Jesus, the answer is as challenging as it was for the rich man.

We have been anointed in order to make the kingdom of God present in this world, a kingdom of justice and peace, a kingdom of joy and hope, a kingdom of forgiveness and love, a kingdom of rejoicing, a kingdom of reconciliation. Our world is full of 'little ones' – people who count for nothing, who are routinely ignored. Do we believe that God has commissioned us to deliver such people from what oppresses them? The kingdom of God, which is inseparable from Jesus, does not come about through being passive. If we are not engaged in constructing the kingdom of God, we are busy constructing one of our own. Today, Jesus continues to come, he continues to make himself present, he continues to speak to the hearts of men and women through His church which is so much more than its bricks and mortar, its doctrines and morality, as important as those are. The exercise of ministry as mission involves more than maintaining institutions—no matter how basic they may be, like the parish or the diocese. We need to come to the realisation that everything we see and build is not the ultimate measure of our life. Our horizon is not the ultimate horizon. Ministry as mission means ongoing engagement beyond the comfortable associations of

our language, culture, social class, age, gender or sexual orientation. It is to that vast, diverse world that Jesus sent his very first followers and to which he still sends them, sends us, today.

What would your reaction be to God's invitation? Would you be like Gideon and demand a sign? Would you make God wait, as Gideon did? Patience is a fundamental characteristic of God (see 1Cor 13). God waits for us. The future will be fulfilled according to the promise of God, not the planning of ourselves, nor our own wishes. Paul Claudel wrote in his spiritual diary: "the secret of holiness is to let it be God who is at work and not place any obstacle in the way of his will." Then he adds, "It is a naïve trust." The truth is we do make God wait. We place so many barriers in the way of a call, of the original summons which God places in our heart. We become calculating to the extreme, with a prudence that very often is nothing more than an excuse for not accepting and spreading the love of God. "A naïve trust." I have to make space for God to go where He wishes to go and not merely where I think He ought to go.

Is there something that God might be asking of us today? If so, how are we going to answer God's call?



## THIS ADVENT 2019

**Ossory Adult Faith Development Tel 056 7753624 Email: afd@ossory.ie**

This Advent why not have a short daily message sent to your phone – a line of scripture, or a thought for the day. **This will come at NO cost to you.** The text might encourage you to reflect for a moment on something, to pause and say a brief prayer, think of someone, or decide to do something small that day.

If you would like to receive these daily texts – at no cost – please:

- **TEXT** your mobile number to the Ossory Adult Faith Development Group at 085-8313100
- or **EMAIL** afd@ossory.ie
- or **TELEPHONE** 056-7753624
- or **WRITE** your mobile number on the sheets provided in parishes



give me a crash course in...

# VACCINATIONS

*Michael Shortall*

It's September, the days are closing in and the children are back at school.

It can be a significant time for parents when their young ones go to school for the first time and for the young people beginning secondary school as they begin to become more independent.

**Before school begins and through the school system, children and young people are vaccinated.**

Vaccination is an important part of public health. A vaccine is a way to artificially set in motion an immune system to protect someone against an infectious disease. It protects the person and keeps others safe who might be vulnerable to infection.

**It has been one of the greatest success stories of modern medicine.**

Without doubt. For example, just before beginning school children will get a repeat dose of the MMR vaccination against Measles, Mumps and Rubella. In Britain and Ireland, Congenital Rubella is at record low levels. Of the cases reported, most children, or mothers, were born in countries without a reliable vaccination programme.



## MORALITY MATTERS

### **But many parents and Catholics are concerned.**

Yes, and for a number of reasons. Firstly, some vaccines were first developed from cells that came from an aborted foetus in the 1960s.

### **I can understand that some would be sensitive to this issue.**

Unfortunately, alternatives are not so widespread, practical or sometimes, as effective. The National Catholic Bioethics Centre (NCBC) in the United States is the foremost group reflecting on issues in medicine from the point of view of Catholic morality. It stated:

One is morally free to use the vaccine regardless of its historical association with abortion. The reason is that the risk to public health, if one chooses not to vaccinate, outweighs the legitimate concern about the origins of the vaccine. This is especially important for parents, who have a moral obligation to protect the life and health of their children and those around them.

### **So while we can still say the original abortion cannot be justified, the vaccines that came from it can be used?**

Yes, public health is part of the common good. Alongside parental responsibilities, there is the responsibility to our neighbours, especially the most vulnerable. In the Catholic tradition, we call this the common good. The common good is idea that there are basic things that are needed for everyone person to flourish, like safety, shelter, food and many other things, such as a healthy setting. Vaccination, if rightly developed,

can help upbuild the common good.

### **What are the other reasons?**

Other parents are concerned about the sometimes said link between the vaccination and autism. As the NCBC said there is a moral obligation on parents to protect the life and health of their children and others. The responsibility of parents must be based on the best information available to them. Currently, the most definitive research has shown no link.

Yet, worries should not be carelessly dismissed. To go back to the idea that public health is part of the common good. Another key part of the common good is education because it helps create communities in which everyone can flourish. Education is also a vital aspect of public health. Good public health education programmes empowers parents to make the best decisions. I sometimes feel that our health system can take parents for granted, adding to their anxiety. All parents should have their concerns addressed, taking as long and as patiently as necessary.

### **Speaking of education, best wishes to all those starting or returning to school!**

1. See Dr Adrian Treloar, 'Measles, Mumps and Rubella (MMR) Vaccines: The Ethics and the Need for an Alternative Vaccine,' Catholic Medical Quarterly, August 2019, 13-17.

2. <https://www.ncbcenter.org/resources/frequently-asked-questions/use-vaccines/>

3. Reviews of the evidence have been developed by Centres for Disease Control and Prevention, USA (2008), the American Academy of Paediatrics, the Institute of Medicine of the US National Academy of Sciences (2004), and the UK National Health Service (2004).

A tribute to Fr James McGrath  
of Clogh, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny and the  
Shrewsbury Diocese of England on the occasion of his  
Diamond Jubilee of Ordination. (31 May 1959 – 2019)



In 1959 there was a full quota of priests in Ireland, the young men in formation for priesthood expected to be sent out as missionaries from Ireland

# A tribute on the occasion of his Jubilee of Ordination

*Pauline Haughney*

Last summer the talk began in our family around the question of how to celebrate our Uncle James's Jubilee of his priestly ordination? I felt a special affinity to my Uncle in his Jubilee year as I was born that same year, and as a young child James was a curate in the church across the road from our home in Stockport, Cheshire. James gave my family our first bible and wrote on it, 'hope it will be well used!' I am not sure my mother embraced the reading of it but I read it as a young teenager making copious notes in it. Fast forward to 52 years later and I find myself for the first time this year walking into St Kieran's College, this is where James attended secondary school and later on did his seminary training. I walk along the hallway, the walls of which are covered with photos of ordinations. I see the Ordination group photo of May 31st 1959, here is James's ordination photo, and it is outside the room I am entering to facilitate a small bible study for the weeks of Lent. I smile and think, that Revised Standard Bible given to us in the 1960s is beginning to bear fruit!

In 1959 there was a full quota of priests in Ireland, the young men in formation for priesthood expected to be sent out as missionaries from Ireland. James first preference was Glasgow. In answer to the question 'why Glasgow?' he replied

that he felt it was a city in need of hearing the Good News. This gave me some insight into his passion to go and bring the Good News like the disciples of the early church into places that would provide many challenges. However that was not to be James destination, he was sent to his second choice Shrewsbury Diocese in England which has been his home since 1959, apart from six years he spent in Kisii diocese in Kenya, an outreach of Shrewsbury in England.

My husband and family spent a holiday with James in his parish at Lymm Cheshire some years ago. We had the privilege of seeing how James ministered in this parish, and it was clear that he was 'appointed and anointed' by God for the work of priesthood. The parish worked on a circular dynamic, James and the parishioners working together for the good of the Gospel. The parish house in which James lived doubled up as the community centre. Faith was alive and active, there were bible studies to accommodate the differing needs. Alpha faith development courses were being run for adults and young people, there was Sunday school provision running in tandem with the celebration of Mass. Parishioners shared in the financial running of the parish. Reflecting on what I have observed of James over the years

in parish and in family and community, reminds me of the gospel story of Jesus washing the disciples' feet, (John 13: 1-17) James lives the message given by Jesus in this passage; 'I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.' (v 16).

Family and neighbours had a wonderful, joy filled celebration the weekend of June 1st and 2nd with James celebrating the Eucharist in his home church of Clogh. This was the same church where he was baptised, received Jesus in the Eucharist, made his confirmation and celebrated his first Mass. Over the years hee has been supported by his family and his neighbour in times of sorrow and bereavement and in times of joyful celebration of marriage. Gratitude was the feeling expressed by those gathered to celebrate with him, gratitude for James and for the blessing he is to us and to the wider church community in which he serves. As one of James's nephews's commented James (and his two sisters who entered the Presentation Order) have imaged for our family all that is good and wholesome and holy in religious life as true followers of Christ.

James shared with us some wisdom given to him on reaching this Jubilee year. There were three things he was advised to attend to; expressing gratitude for all and to all who have helped him on his journey, asking for forgiveness, and requesting and welcoming the gift of prayer from others. James reflected to us during his Jubilee Mass that it was the saintly people he saw in his community that fashioned and formed the ground for the seed of priestly vocation in his heart.

James was ordained in the year Pope John XXIII convoked the Second Vatican Council. The early years of his priesthood were very much influenced by Vatican 2 and he was enthusiastic in embracing the changes that the Council brought, as a means of making the message of the Gospel more relevant to people in the twentieth century. The Catholic Charismatic

movement which began in the late sixties impacted positively on James' pastoral ministry.

There was something very right and fitting that P.J (nephew) and his wife Marie should host a family celebration for James in his childhood home place. He loved the farm and every year when he came home for his holidays he would don his working clothes and boots and work on the farm alongside his brothers Michael and Paddy, and later his nephew P.J. Technology has enabled James to keep up to date with life on the farm. He now receives regular updates by email.

James is retired from parish work but not from priestly duties and works as it might be described as a 'free-lance agent' supplying help to parishes where there is a need.

Our Eucharistic celebration on 1st June was greatly enhanced by the music and singing provided by the Choir in Clogh. The beautiful song by Liam Lawton, 'There is a place' sung after Holy Communion summed up all that James had shared with us in his homily; 'there is gold that is gleaming in a past we once knew, in our tears and our laughter t'was love brought us through.'

We hope we have more 'great times' to come with James. James and his sisters, Kathleen, Phyllis and Monica are the remaining four of a family of thirteen children. I conclude with further lines from 'There is a Place,' and I dedicate them to all the people, family, friends, community, who make our lives richer, those who are with us and those who have left this earthly life, this we believe; 'for wherever we gather in the light of God's grace and for all whom we remember there will ever be a place.'

James, may the seeds of goodness and love that you sow, continue to bear fruit for this generation and the generations to follow. Amen – so be it.

This leadership is carried out in the name of and on behalf of the church and with that leadership comes responsibility and privilege.

## Leading God's People in Prayer – forming Prayer Leaders in our parishes



### Kathleen Maher

Over the summer of 2018, a working group from the Northern Deanery Pastoral Council, met a number of times to come up with a plan for the year ahead. The NDPC members felt that while we had very lively and enjoyable meetings, we

had nothing concrete to show for it. The working group decided on a three-pronged approach, a Pilgrimage to help the group to bond, Training for Lay Led Liturgies and a Survey of what is happening and what needs to happen in our parishes, so that we could share best practice.

We enlisted to help of Fr. Liam Lawton and we organised the Pilgrimage on Sunday October 7th. We met in Aghaboe and carpooled from there and headed to Seir Kieran, with a number of stops on the way for prayer, silent reflection and a blessing. We arrived in Seir Kieran and had a lay led liturgy, with priests and laity taking part. The liturgy included prayer, song, readings, blessing and anointing. It was a very conscious decision that we would not have the distribution of Holy communion.

Refreshments were served in the community hall in Seir Kieran and while everyone brought food to share we could have fed the 5,000 all over again. Training for Presiders for Lay led Liturgies was the next obvious step. While we had enjoyed preparing and taking part in the pilgrimage, we had no formal training to continue this work in our own parishes. Fr. Martin Delaney enlisted the help of Julie Kavanagh, of Kildare and Loughlin, who is no stranger to training people in this way.

Over 30 people from the parishes of the Northern Deanery gathered in the De la Salle Brother's centre in Castletown, Co. Laois to embark on training to become Presiders at Lay Led Liturgies under the guidance of Julie Kavanagh. The ground rules were set on the first night. We would begin and end each session on time and we would have homework each night. Sustained by the refreshments half way through we were ready to learn more. During this time the talk from everyone was how inspirational the session had been and all were eager to hear and learn more.

Over three nights we were led through a process of discernment to discover a way forward for what will happen in our parishes in the future. This discernment begins with a willingness and openness to God's will for each of us and our parishes, to be free to explore the possibilities, to have an openness to new ideas, to

engage in honest dialogue and to seek consensus accompanied by peace in the Lord.

The parish is the place where most of us experience being Church. This is where we care for one another. It is not about one person being a leader but about a small group of people taking leadership on behalf of the parish. For a shared task of leadership to take place we must have volunteers. This leadership is carried out in the name of and on behalf of the church and with that leadership comes responsibility and privilege.

We can exercise such leadership because of our Baptismal identity as a member of the priestly people of God and the need of the parish to continue to gather to pray as a community. The nature of the church itself is made up of people who are gifted in many ways and who are called to share those gifts for the good of the community and in response to the needs of the community.

Qualities and skills of leadership were discussed among the group. Qualities such as willingness, commitment, sensitivity, ability to communicate, understanding of leadership, reliability and a sense of welcome and hospitality towards others.

Skills such as organisation, familiarity with materials and practical elements, an ability to engage, to pray aloud, knowledge of gestures and taking care with beginnings and endings.

Above all leaders need to be a people of prayer.

Julie took us through the various options open to us, which she based on the ancient tradition of daily gathering for Liturgy of the Hours. While the primacy of Sunday must be maintained because of the importance of Sunday assembly and Eucharist, it can be diminished if that is all we do. Weekday worship is not just a nice

thing to do. It is the parish community fulfilling this ancient tradition.

There were a number of options available to us in our own place (other than going to another church to celebrate or staying at home).

Julie focussed on the celebration of the Word without the distribution of Holy Communion. She went through the various elements of such a liturgy, explaining them and how in time we would come to put our own liturgy together following a prescribed text. Over the three nights we came to a greater understanding of what was involved in this role and what best practice was, in undertaking such a role.

The final night began with a beautiful liturgy in the chapel at the Castletown Centre. There were many volunteers to take part in the liturgy. We saw at first hand how it works with a number of people working together to make it a success. After the liturgy we had a final session to tie everything together. There was time for questions, discussion, sharing of ideas and thoughts throughout the three nights. While the sessions were very focussed throughout, no one felt under pressure. Everything was explained very clearly and we came away feeling we could put our training to good use.

One of the measures of success of this initial training was that all those who attended wanted more and went away looking forward to coming back again.

I cannot finish without saying a special and heartfelt word of thanks to Brother Stephen who welcomed us each night and the ladies who organised the beautiful refreshments for us.

Thank you to Julie Kavanagh for taking us through the process in such an engaging way. Thank you also to the participants without whom we couldn't have had this training.

## Tony Holohan

My name is Tony Holohan. I reside in the Parish of Rathdowney, Co Laois. I was born in 1947. I am married and I have five children. I'm retired now having served 28 years in the Army, then shopkeeping, and lastly as a postal sorter in An Post, Portlaoise. In the month of May this year, my Parish Priest Rev. Fr. Martin Delaney asked me if I would be willing to undertake the duties of a "Prayer Leader" within the Parish. I was already aware of the shortage of ordained priests in the Diocese of Ossory and throughout the country. My wife and I are currently Eucharistic ministers.

With this in mind, myself and two other Parishioners attended three training sessions during the months of June/July in Castletown. These three sessions were to prepare parishioners from the Northern Deanery with a view to undertaking the aforesaid duties of "Prayer Leaders".

### Shaping the Future

Julie Kavanagh was our facilitator. The following is my overall view at the end of the three sessions. Shaping the future with hope was more or less the main theme. This was laid out in a very practical and organised way.

- Stage one was about listening. It involved the selection candidates from Parishes. People had lots to say. What was said was important and from that experience of listening emerged key themes which was teased out by our facilitator.
- Stage two about prioritising and planning. The general feeling was that as many people as possible are engaged in the listening and planning opportunities that will emerge at local level in parishes. I think this is a vital development and a very exciting one. People of all ages and all experiences in our faith should be encouraged and pray for this initiative.

### **Format Celebration of the Word**

The facilitator proceeded from there to the formal procedures for the:-

- Introductory Rites
- Liturgy of the Word
- Concluding Rite

She explained in great detail the duties, layout and procedure under the aforesaid heading as above. She then took it to the next step:-

### **Format Celebration of Word with Distribution of Holy Communion**

She explained the duties, layout and procedures as hereunder:-

- Introductory Rites
- Liturgy of the Word
- Communion Rite
- Concluding Rite

This was very informative as the amount of questions, comments and observations expressed by all the parishioners present was most enlightening and productive. I think all present had a very good grasp of the procedures and requirements expected from them, to carry out this very important duty. It was emphasised time and again that the main highlight of Mass is the "Consecration" and without Mass – the distribution of the Holy Sacrament by the Eucharistic ministers together with the prayers leader.

### **Skills and Qualities for Prayer Leaders**

The facilitator outlined some of the requirements that should be taken into account for prayer leaders:-

- An ability to communicate well with clergy and parishioners alike.
- An understanding of leadership as a service, rather than domination, power and control.
- Reliability – someone who will follow through on a commitment.
- A willingness and desire to work with others.
- A sense of prayer, both private and communal

### **Among the skills needed**

I think that skill can be innate, but they

can also be acquired with training and practice. Some of them might include:-

- Leaders of prayer must first of all be people of prayer
- Taking a prayer service and having the ability to let that prayer breath
- Setting the right pace.
- The ability to pray aloud, diction, projection, enunciation, good phrasing, posture and eye contact.

### **Morning and Evening Prayer**

The layout for morning and evening prayer seemed strange to me. My only memory of evening prayer was the Rosary at home every night and Devotions in Church. This was held two evenings a week for approx half an hour. The structure and lay out I don't recall, but my parents always ensured we attended. The format that the facilitator explored with us was fine, but I can't see it being a runner in the Parishes. I feel that to encourage young people to attend Mass is a chore for them. Encouragement and simplicity to start with and then introduce for morning and evening prayer.

### **To Summarise**

To me, the syllabus for the course was well put together. It flowed from one subject to another. The lesson plans and handout were most informative. The assimilation by the parishioners on the course seemed excellent. This was due to the diligent work and preparation by the facilitator Julie Kavanagh. "Just a Reminder" :- I look in anticipation to the publication of the booklet on the lay out and sequence for "Prayer leaders" by the Diocese of Ossory.

### **The Clergy**

I think the clergy in each parish has a mammoth task on their hands to sell and convince parishioners that, going forward, prayer leaders shall be a requirement.

The whole weekend was a great spiritual and social occasion.

# Carmelite Pilgrimage to Knock 2019

*Frank and Mary Aylward*



The Pilgrimage, under the Spiritual Director Fr Sean O'Connor, left Ballyhale at 8.00am and Knocktopher at 8.30pm. The pilgrims included people from the new Parish Pastoral area: Aghaviller, Ballyhale and Mullinavat. We also had a few people from Danesfort, Thomastown, Dunnamaggin and Callan. The pilgrimage was organised by Frank Aylward, Mary Aylward, Bridget Murphy, Nora Dermody, Catriona Fitzpatrick, Mary Holden and Alice Kelly.

First stop was Tullamore for breakfast. Then on to Knock for lunch at 1.30pm. A tour of Knock was arranged which was optional for the group. The pilgrims met for a photograph at 4.30pm and then Fr Sean celebrated Mass in the Apparition Chapel at 4.45pm. After Mass the group went back to Knock House Hotel with dinner at 8.30pm.

The next morning a museum tour was arranged at 11am. Ceremonies in the Basilica started at 2.30pm with the anointing of the sick. The Mass started at 3.00pm and there was a great crowd in the Basilica and we had special seats booked facing the altar. After Mass the procession took place around the grounds and the Rosary was recited. We left Knock at 5.30pm and then on to Tullamore for dinner.

We had a wonderful visit to Knock and we thank all who organised it. The whole weekend was a great spiritual and social occasion. People have said they received special blessings and many favours on our trip. The trip was such a success we have Knock House Hotel booked for 2020 and many people have already booked their places.



Damien Brennan  
(1960 - 2019)

an Irish Christian Brother, a teacher, deputy  
principal and a principal in Coláiste Éamann Rís



When your why is big enough  
you will find your how...

# Br Damien Brennan

*Michael Rice*

On the 3rd September 2019 Br Séamus Damien Brennan passed away peacefully in St. Vincent's Hospital in Dublin. The news of his passing quickly spread throughout the country and the feeling of immense loss was immediate for all who knew him. Br Damien has left an indelible mark on all those he has met since his birth in Arles, Co. Laois 59 years ago. Often, it is only when someone is gone that we realise how special that person was. However, it is apparent from the couple of days following his passing that it was already accepted and recognised that Br Damien was unique. Having joined the Christian Brothers on the 7th September 1976 he devoted himself to helping others and living his life in the image of Blessed Edmund Rice. He took on the burdens of others and always put the needs of others first. His family and friends have shared many fond memories of his time with us and although the stories come from many different walks of life, we can see recurring themes – love, compassion, empathy, honesty, forgiveness. So many of us came to him with our troubles, often ones we felt were insurmountable. Having spent time with Br Damien we would leave with a lighter heart and a

belief that it was going to be OK. And it always was OK.

Br Damien resided in Westcourt, Callan, Co. Kilkenny with six more Christian Brothers, who are deeply saddened at his untimely death. This, the birthplace of Edmund Rice, is a beautiful place and somewhere he developed with his colleagues. His love for nature is visible with the fishpond, the chickens and ducks, the pheasants and fantailed doves, Erin the dog, a rabbit and of course the goats.

Br Damien dedicated much of his life to helping young people. He was a teacher, deputy principal and most recently a principal in Coláiste Éamann Rís in Callan. He was an excellent teacher who captured the imagination of his students in his main subjects of Gaeilge and History. He continuously gave extra help to students, not only from Coláiste Éamann Rís but from various schools throughout Kilkenny and beyond. This extra tuition was not restricted to his main subjects. If a student came needing help in English, Biology, Agricultural Science or others he duly obliged. Students performed better

in their exams because of his help. There was also the immeasurable benefits of a student's confidence and self-belief which grew under the guidance of this amazing man.

Br Damien was instrumental in the establishment of Bunscoil McAuley Rice in 2007, the local primary school in Callan, which has gone from strength to strength since the amalgamation of the boys' and girls' school. Most recently he was heavily involved in the process of agreeing on the amalgamation of the two secondary schools in the town.

He was appointed as Community Leader in Callan for the Christian Brothers from 1997 to 2003. From 2005, while he was Community Leader in Kilkenny, he continued to teach in Callan. The leadership skills which Brother possessed were evident throughout his life with periods as deputy principal from 2012 and principal in Coláiste Éamann Rís from 2015. In September 2018 he was appointed to the Provincial Leadership Team of the Christian Brothers. He continued as school principal up to his death.

Anyone who knew Br Damien understood that he had a great passion for hurling. His initial involvement with the John Locke's GAA club in Callan was actually the coaching of the junior football team. The players were struck by the level of passion that he showed for improving individuals and the team as a whole. In 1999 he was part of the management team which led the club to an intermediate county title. He served on the board of the club and was the club's county board representative up until his passing. Previous to this success he managed the Coláiste Éamann Rís team to win the 1998 Leinster 'A' Colleges title and had a great influence on many players who passed through the school. It wasn't long before the Kilkenny County Board came calling and in 2001 he became a selector for the county minor hurling team. In 2002, with Br

Damien continuing as a selector, Kilkenny won the All-Ireland minor title defeating Tipperary in the final. The following year with Br Damien at the helm as manager Kilkenny repeated their All-Ireland success, this time defeating Galway in the final. In more recent years Br Damien worked as a selector with Tullaroan hurling club. He is held in high esteem in hurling circles because of his passion, knowledge and love of the game. There is also the extra work which he did behind the scenes for so many players from both club and county. Br Damien worked with many players from the successful Kilkenny teams throughout the 2000's up to his passing. He helped players if they had an injury or if they needed to improve some aspect of their skill. However, it was the mental and emotional side of the game which is where he did his greatest work with these players. He took away the fear of failure. He allowed them to flourish and enjoy the game that they loved. He allowed them to play with freedom. The development of these players was not restricted to the hurling field. He helped them with their studies, with their work life or with some other aspects of their life that they may have been struggling with.

Over the coming days, weeks, months and years we will have times in our lives when for a moment we'll think: 'I must give Brother a ring about that' but he won't be there. No longer will we be able to drop in and see him in Westcourt or in Coláiste Éamann Rís where he would have eased our burden. We'll have to answer our own questions. Although we didn't always recognise it, that's what he had us doing for the time we were lucky enough to know him – answering our own questions. He had many gifts and we were fortunate to have been on the receiving end of those gifts that he shared.

Thank you, Br Damien.  
Ní bheidh a leithéid ann arís.

"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us" ( 2 Cor 9:11)

## Enriching the lives of the students we work with on a daily basis



### Peter Connellan

As part of transition year in St Kieran's College every student has the unique opportunity to enrol in an activity called enrichment activities include working in charity shops, teaching younger children in primary school the skills of GAA, interacting with elderly people and teaching them the essential. Among the copious amounts of activities available

to transition year students in St Kieran's College enrichment is unequivocally the most beneficial and enlightening.

Toward the end of 3rd year, as the dreaded junior cert loomed, Mr Lynch informed us that an enrichment programme would be available for us in ty half the year instantaneously arrived at Mr Lynch classroom at the break to sign up I decided I would work in a charity shop because It suited my age as I was only 15 at the time fast forward 3 months,

in the tranquil year of TY, I was assigned to work in St .Vincent de Paul every Tuesday from 11am – 12:50pm. I was very thankful as the participation was exorbitant and the spaces were few. I and another TY student Tomás were out together. Our Tuesday morning was a great relief to us as we were dismissed from the “thrills” of TY schoolwork.

St Vincent de Paul is situated across from the Butt's Green, Co. Kilkenny. the first day we arrived, we were greeted by the benevolent, conscientious Linda. Linda is the owner of the shop and organise the day-to-day running of it we were offered a cup of tea which we gratefully accepted especially in the depths of a freezing winter then we were assigned to a job for the day myself and Tomas habitually worked at the till however our skills were quite fallible we were most suited at arranging the order of CDs and DVDs sorting out the new arrivals of clothes and toys ,cleaning the storage room and at Christmas decorating the place just before we departed ,Linda kindly offered us a couple of sweets and biscuits ,time flew by and it didn't seem like 'work'

I really enjoyed my experience at S.V.P. as did many other students who enrolled in 'Enrichment'. The priceless satisfaction of doing something out of kindness was a reward that illuminated both myself and Tomas. It has unambiguously improved my awareness of others, dealings with people and willingness to help others who are less fortunate than ourselves.

## AnnMarie Butler & Laura Wemyss

Senior School teachers in School of the Holy Spirit, Callan Rd, Kilkenny

In the current society we live in it is harder than ever as teacher's to enrich the lives of the young people we work with. X Box,

PlayStation and the general fast pace of life has now put more obstacles in our way.

But, what is enrichment! Enrichment to us is an inbuilt natural connection with life, with our local community and with the people, we come into contact with on a daily basis.

To be enriched means to be connected. As Teachers in the School of the Holy Spirit in Kilkenny, we put huge emphasis on experiential learning, social skills and community integration.

Our role as teachers is to make our students lives as enriched as possible. One such programme we engage with is Transition year integration visits from students from St. Kieran's College (a group come to our school once a week over the school year). This experience has been beneficial for both groups of students involved. Our students get to engage with their peer group. They soon find out that their interests are usually similar. The simple things soccer, sport, music, gaming. The students from St Kieran's we feel get a good insight in the life of the young person with autism. Yes, they have their own challenges, often some of the challenges can be the same adolescence, relationships, exam worries, trying to fit in. This programme definitely mirrors the quote, “Tell me and I forget, Teach me and I remember, Involve me and I learn”.

Sadly, more often than not learning today is associated with page 1-99 in a textbook and unless I am looking in this I am not learning.

We are constantly reminding our students that learning takes place in more places than the textbook.

Real learning takes place through the connections we make in our local community, the relationships we make and the conversations we have. We learn

so much from stepping into the shoes of others. The Kieran's boys get to step into the shoes of the School of the Holy Spirit students to see life from their perspective. During their time in our school "the boys" as they become to be known get involved in everyday class life. Over the years the young men from St.Kieran's have shown great kindness and good humour as they play bingo, chess and an array of other board games and get involved in various class projects. One year 'the boys' taught the students of School of the Holy Spirit to play bowls and this became part of our students Gaisce programme. Both sets of student's have also engaged with fantastic art projects together. While the boys bring kindness and good humour, the students from our school bring an openness to new friendships and a unique perspective on the world both sets of students share.

Being involved in this transition year programme allows us as teachers to see two groups of students from different settings coming together and forming relationships, friendships and community. It is to witness generosity – generosity of time, generosity of skills and generosity of self. Students of both schools give and receive with generosity and this is true enrichment.

We are very lucky in School of the Holy Spirit to have a very enriching school community and we place huge emphasis on the importance of relationship.

We would like to thank the 4th Year students from St. Kieran's College, Our Friends. A world without friendship is a world without enrichment! A concept that should be returned to again and again in every school in the country. Long may our friendships continue.

"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us" ( 2 Cor 9:11)

## Adult Faith Development ADVENT 2019



### SCRIPTURE REFLECTION BOOKLET FOR EACH OF THE SUNDAYS OF ADVENT

A simple booklet offering reflections on the Sunday Gospels of Advent

#### ADVENT DAILY TWEET

Sign up for these by following @OssoryDiocese

#### ADVENT DAILY TEXTS

Submit your mobile number to 085-8313100 or 056-7753624 or email afd@ossory.ie to receive a short daily text

#### VARIOUS ADVENT RESOURCES

Issued to all parishes - further information to follow

#### ONLINE ADVENT RESOURCES

Download AFD Advent Resources which may be an aid for parishes or groups during Advent from the Diocese of Ossory website [www.ossory.ie](http://www.ossory.ie)

#### KNOWING OUR OSSORY FAITH (VOL. III)

A simple booklet for use by children (8-12 yrs) and parents exploring Advent through colour, games and activities

#### ADVENT LECTURES

As part of your Advent journey why not join us for evenings of theology exploring the Heart of our Christian Faith.

#### READERS' GUIDE

A resource to help and support those who are Ministers of the Word in our parishes

#### EVENING RETREAT FOR READERS OF OUR DIOCESE

An opportunity for all readers of our Diocese to come together for an evening of reflection

#### SHORTER PARISH-BASED RETREATS FOR COMMUNION OR CONFIRMATION PARENTS

These will take place in your parish and will provide parents an opportunity to come together for a mini-retreat.

#### PARISH EVENINGS

Your own parish evening - a time to come together and reflect. Contact AFD office to book.

CONTACT AFD OFFICE 056-7753624 FOR FURTHER INFORMATION



# Sacraments are for people

*Albert McDonnell*

Paula Podest Ruiz and Carlos Cuffardi Elorriaga are typical of many modern couples. She is aged 39, he is 41 and they both work as flight attendants with Latam, the Chilean airline. They got married civilly eight years ago and have two daughters, aged six and three, Rafale and Isabela. They would have liked to get married in Church but had never got around to it.

On 18 January, 2018 they were both rostered to work on the same flight. That day turned out to be a day to remember. The flight they were assigned to, was no ordinary flight. Pope Francis was on board as he travelled to the final stop on his apostolic visit to Chile. This flight, and their encounter with Pope Francis, was to be significant. During the flight the



## CANON LAW MATTERS

couple asked Pope Francis to bless their rings. They got chatting. The Holy Father had met Carlos on a previous flight, but this was his first time talking to Paula. They explained to the Pope that they had decided to get married in Church eight years previously. They had completed their pre-marriage course and had arranged to be married on 27 February

2010. However, their parish Church was destroyed in an earthquake and their plans had to be abandoned.

The Pope listened. They assured him that they were free to marry and that sacramental marriage was important to them. Pope Francis made an extraordinary suggestion. Why not get married here and now! A shocked Paula and Carlos said yes. It was a simple ceremony. The marriage took place outside of Mass. There were no flowers or other trappings – just the essentials. They were both dressed in their airline uniforms, the witnesses were two other passengers and the handwritten certificate was signed by the Pope.

A few days later, the Pope gave his customary press conference as he returned to Rome. Inevitably, the question of Paula and Carlos' wedding was raised. The Pope responded that having chatted to the couple, he concluded they had made a commitment to each other for life. All the requirements for a sacramental marriage were fulfilled, so why not go ahead.

In explaining his decision to marry Paula and Carlos, the Pope said that the sacraments are for people. This principle has informed the Pope's pastoral ministry over the years. While he was archbishop of Buenos Aires, Pope Francis urged his priests not to deny the sacraments to those who requested them. As Pope, he has simplified the nullity procedure so as to help people in a second relationship to receive the grace of sacramental marriage.

Paula and Carlos' wedding at 11,000 metres highlights some aspects of the celebration of the sacrament of marriage that are in danger of being lost sight of:

- There are situations when it is appropriate to celebrate the sacrament of marriage outside of Mass. If the Eucharist is central to the life of the couple, their families and guests then it is natural to celebrate their marriage during Mass. However, if they have drifted away from practise of the faith, does it make sense to celebrate their marriage during Mass? Most priests have had disheartening experiences of congregations at nuptial Masses being totally unfamiliar with the liturgy and the responses;
- Sacramental marriage does not need to cost money. All you need for a valid celebration of the sacrament of marriage is that the couple express consent 'say I do' in the presence of two witnesses and the priest. There are lots of accretions that may well add to the beauty of the celebration, but they are not essential;
- Paula and Carlos got married in an aircraft in flight. The law of the Church has a definite preference for sacraments to be celebrated in Church. However, exceptions are permitted. Canon 1118§2 states 'The local ordinary [bishop] can allow a marriage to be celebrated in another suitable place.' The Pope has ordinary jurisdiction in all dioceses and opted to give the necessary permission to

allow this marriage. He decided that in this concrete case that an aircraft was a suitable place.

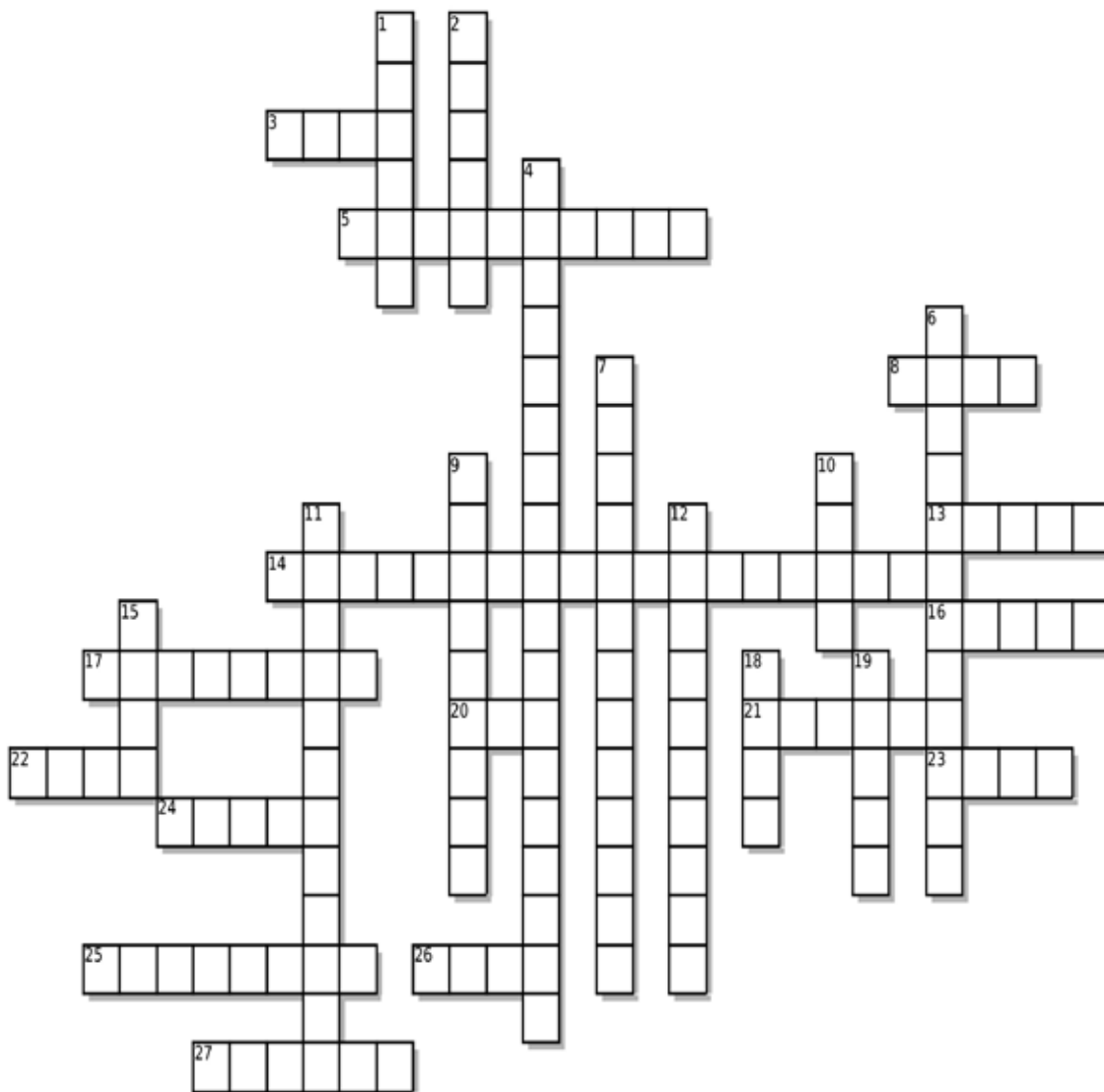
How might Pope Francis' principle 'The sacraments are for the people' and his response to Paula and Carlos' situation, serve to influence our pastoral practise in Ireland?

In 2018, 47.6% of marriages in the Republic of Ireland were Catholic ceremonies. In the 1990s, nine of every ten weddings were celebrated according to the Catholic rite. This dramatic change has occurred in the context of an increasingly secular Ireland as spirituality ebbs. Many people choose a civil or humanist wedding because sacramental marriage no longer speaks to them.

Nevertheless, it is likely that some couples who choose a civil or humanist celebration of their marriage are attracted by convenience. Some consider themselves to be Catholic and draw strength and consolation from their faith. Irish bishops rarely avail of canon 1118§2 to permit sacramental marriages to be celebrated outside of churches. Some couples might have opted for a sacramental marriage in the venue where their reception is being held, if that were permitted. It is too easy to dismiss couples who seem to value convenience over sacramental grace as lacking in faith. Faith is a life-long journey that required nourishment and all starting points are valid.

Sacraments are for the people. Might the wider application of canon 1118§2 in Ireland result in more couples entering a sacramental marriage? If Pope Francis hadn't suggested marriage to Paula and Carlos, would they have ever received the sacrament. Pope Paul VI spoke of seeds of the word – perhaps canon 1118§2 offers a means of nurturing some saplings.

# Crossword



## ACROSS

- 3 Ordinary...
- 5 Deliverance from sin
- 8 City in which Acts ends
- 13 The fighting... (Notre Dame)
- 14 Mulligan - not a golf shot
- 16 Paul was shipwrecked here
- 17 To ask of the Lord
- 20 Holy...
- 21 A church new year
- 22 Paul
- 23 The leader of worship in a mosque
- 24 They often start a Mass
- 25 Caring for students in our schools
- 26 Medieval English monk
- 27 Samuel's mother

## DOWN

- 1 Am I my brothers...
- 2 A dialogue with God
- 4 Meditations, prayers and reflections of Ignatius of Loyola
- 6 Celebrated by a bishop
- 7 The new grouping of parishes and resources in Ossory
- 9 A Bishop whose anniversary we approach
- 10 Prophets of this god competed with Elijah
- 11 Ahead for Newman
- 12 The "making" of a priest
- 15 Binding a confession
- 18 An Abel brother
- 19 1959 Played minor and senior on that same day

Send your entries, with your name, address, email and mobile number, to:

"Ossory Times Competition",  
Ossory Adult Faith  
Development,  
St Kieran's College,  
College Road,  
Kilkenny,

by 22nd November 2019, first  
correct entry from the hat wins!

Prize for age 5-8  
Colouring  
Competition

**€20 Voucher**  
for Toy Shop

Prize for age 8-13  
Wordsearch  
Competition

**€30 Voucher**  
for Toy Shop

Prize for Adult  
Crossword  
Competition

**€50 Voucher**  
for Chapter House  
Bookshop

*Congrats to the winners  
from the Ossory Times  
Issue 20 competitions:*

**Adult Crossword:**  
Mary Smith

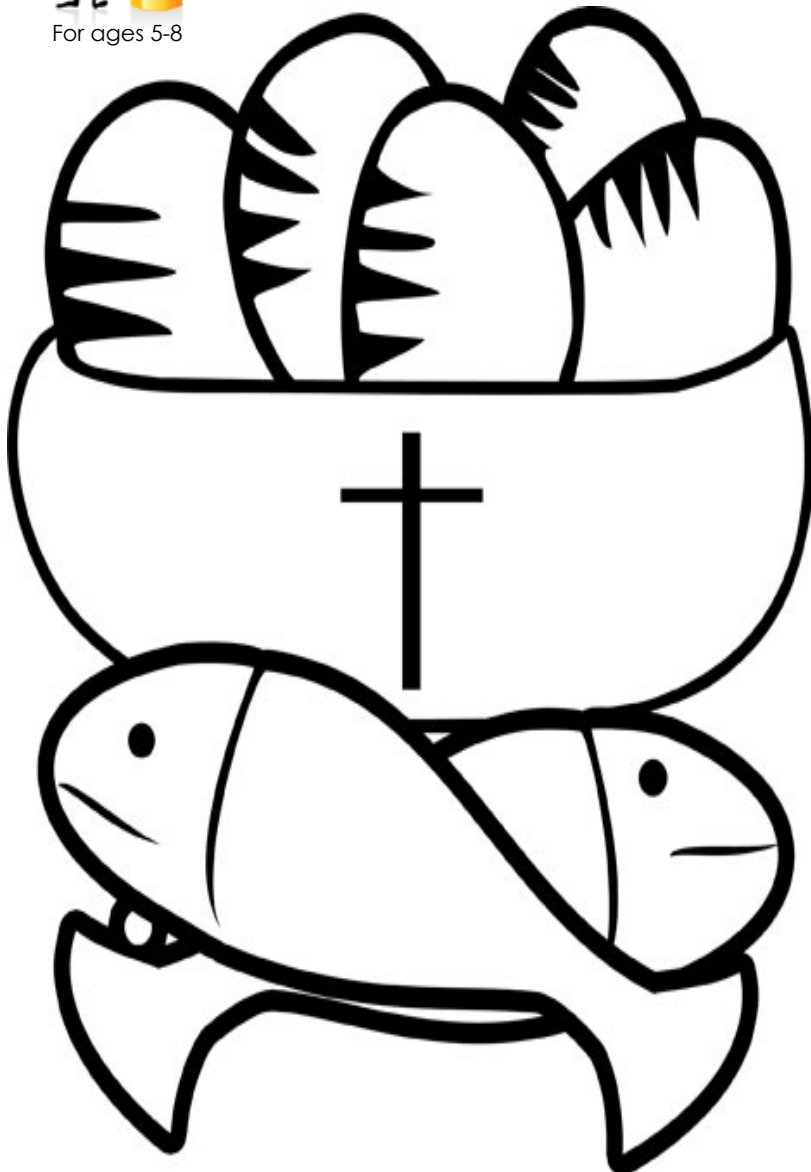
**Children's Wordsearch,  
age 8-13:**  
Sarah Hickey

**Children's Colouring,  
age 5-8:**  
Daragh Brennan



## Colouring Competition

For ages 5-8



## Wordsearch Competition



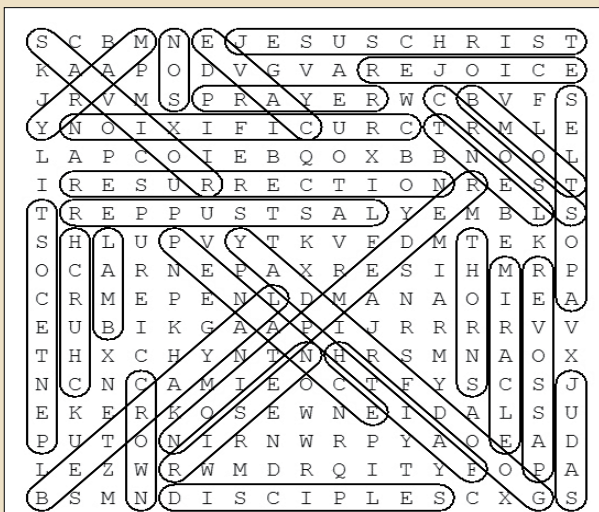
For ages 8-13

KNOWSDELTHGILSI  
VBURDENDENIAMER  
DNEIRFIENSNRDSE  
REHTIENTUEOSEOP  
JUDGMENTILDSTOE  
ASDEVORPCCIDFHN  
NKBTRA EHDA SRICT  
DIFEGUIORRHILHR  
REVEALSPGITNJEH  
ESNHDRUAIMRKEXU  
HVERESATEO AISCM  
TUENAAOBTLENUB  
ANNRSEVDLOPGSPL  
FIGENTLEOENINTE  
SSDEPTHSHNMSEHSA

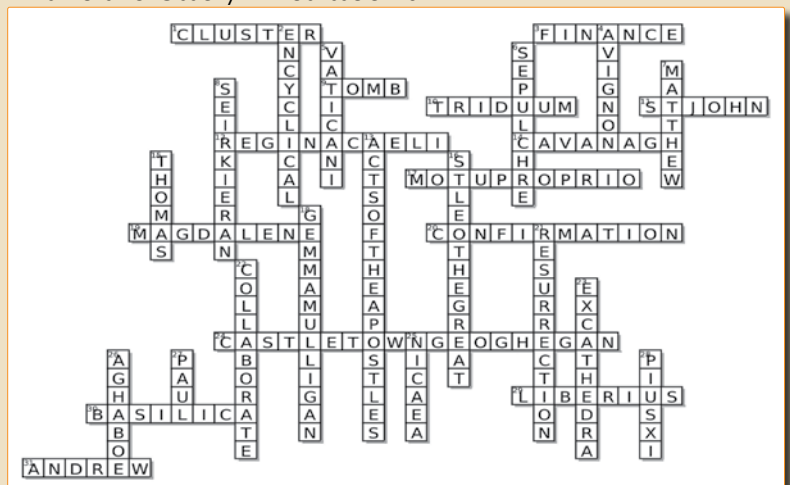
ASHES  
CITIES  
DEPTHS  
EARTH  
EXCEPT  
FATHER  
FRIEND  
GENTLE  
HEART  
JESUS  
KNOWS  
LIFTED

LIGHT  
PRAISE  
REVEAL  
SIDON  
SKIES  
SODOM  
BEARABLE  
BURDEN  
CHILDREN  
CHOOSES  
GLUTTON  
HEAVEN

HIDDEN  
HUMBLE  
JUDGEMENT  
LEARNED  
MIRACLES  
NEITHER  
PLEASURE  
REMAINED  
PROVED  
REPENT  
SINNERS  
DRINKING



Answers to Ossory Times Issue 20





# DIOCESE OF OSSORY ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL **RESTORATION FUND DRAW** **2019/2020**

12 MONTHLY DRAWS

**March 2019 to February 2020**

## MONTHLY PRIZES

|                  |        |
|------------------|--------|
| 1st Prize .....  | €2,000 |
| 2nd Prize .....  | €1,000 |
| 3rd Prize .....  | €500   |
| 4th Prize .....  | €300   |
| 5th Prize .....  | €300   |
| 6th Prize .....  | €200   |
| 7th Prize .....  | €200   |
| 8th Prize .....  | €100   |
| 9th Prize .....  | €100   |
| 10th Prize ..... | €100   |

### Promoters' Prize

€100 1st Prize Winner Promoter  
€100 2nd Prize Winner Promoter

**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.**

*For further information contact Ossory Diocesan Office, James's Street, Kilkenny. Tel: 056 7762448*

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Ecstasy of  
St Teresa by Bernini



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