



OSSORY ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT

November 2020– Issue 24

OSSORY TIMES

Sharing the life of our Diocese



Vocations in Ossory

How do I take a first step on
the road of discovery?

How do I know what life path
I should take?

take a first step
on the journey of
discovery...



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Editorial

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

A phrase often incorrectly attributed to Charles Darwin that most likely emerged from a reading of his "On the Origin of Species" by a then business professor, Leon C. Megginson, of Louisiana State University, notes that Darwin's theory suggests that: it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; it is the one that is able to adapt to and to adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself that survives. The ability to adapt, then, is one of the most important characteristics we can possess in life. As experience tells us in recent months this is certainly true! Thankfully, our Church has shown the ability to adapt. We meet online, we pray together but remain apart – radio and the internet our new norms of gathering. Yes it is sad that we must endure this – but isn't it wonderful to see how creative we have been!

These pages of the *Ossory Times* reflect, then, the manner in which we are adapting – they reflect what it is to be Church at this time: what it is to exist behind closed doors; how can we continue to be there for one another; how do we open our school year with Mass; what is our experience of lockdown and how did we experience Sacraments in these times. But the normal continues too – questions of morality remain; we still must respect the seasons and do things like remembering our dead; we must celebrate significant moments and still look to the past with curiosity. Yes, we have adapted, but in doing so we have kept true to who and what we are – a community of faith and a strength for each other.

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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Pastoral Reflection: Remembrance of the Dead



Diocese of Ossory
Bishop Dermot Farrell

The Commemoration of All the Faithful Departed has a long history in the Church—it is very much part of our shared faith and of our culture. Something of this is captured well by one writer who put it like this: “These days of November... make me remember. They send me to the cemetery—at least inwardly—[and] make me aware that I am not the giver of my own life. Into the cloak of my life is woven all the affection and tenderness of the people who are no longer here and whom I remember” (Dorothee Söelle, *The Mystery of Death*).

As the intangible Coronavirus spreads, its effects make themselves felt in every corner of this land, and in every land across the globe. Its power and danger leave us in no doubt: on this island alone it has robbed us of 2,600 lives. Lives cut short, families brought face-to-face with helplessness and grief, in exceedingly difficult circumstances, without the usual supports at times of loss, distanced in all senses of the word from family, friends, and neighbours.

Today is a day we stand with each other, to support, to pray, and simply—but so importantly—to be with people in their grief and loss. It is a moment of solidarity with those who have lost a loved one; it is a moment of faith, and opportunity to offer the consolation and hope that faith brings.



*The Church of St Augustine and Monica, Casciago, Italy.
Marko Rupnik*

Covid-19 with its threat of death brings into focus a key horizon in human life. It may also spur us to ask whether our priorities were previously askew. The effects of new priorities are evident everywhere, codified in the new labels “essential” and “non-essential”—though it is not always clear what determines ‘essential’ or ‘not.’ Death quickly puts what is essential for us into perspective. The pandemic brings our vulnerability home, and our dependence on each other, the gift that life is: it helps us see what is truly important in life, what matters.

The pandemic has also robbed many of their hopes for the end of their lives, replacing consolation and closeness with solitude, holding loved ones at a distance, too far away to whisper our love. This is not to minimise the heroic contribution of so many nurses and doctors working in Intensive Care Units, pushed to their limits, and beyond. The fear of Covid-19 forbade your visits to hospital or nursing home, and it meant that funeral Masses were much smaller and less supportive than would have been the case otherwise. 'Online' is no replacement for in-person, for hands joined, for voices raised together in hymn and prayer, for the healing silence that carries us in grief. The absence of togetherness at the time of death was painful. Mourning demands long hours of grieving together in quiet, a stream of neighbours and friends showing up with trays of sandwiches and cakes.

What are we to say? First, and most importantly, our hearts go out to all those who lost loved ones in this difficult time. Second, we unite ourselves to them by sharing in their sorrow and pain, and we pledge our prayers, and our presence to them. Third, to remember the dead is to give thanks for them, for their being in our lives—and for the grace that was, but also to ask for mercy for them, and for forgiveness for ourselves, because death leaves us all with “unfinished” business, things we should have done or said, and “things we failed to do.” Forgiveness is not just our business, it is also—and ultimately—God’s as forgiveness brings healing in its wake, and that is the work of God. Fourth, we re-dedicate ourselves to our families, our neighbours, and our friends; we re-dedicate ourselves to a life where we take responsibility for our own well-being and the health of others. Care is not “either/or”, but “both/and”. We give thanks for all this care and

support, for this strength in meekness, this witness to the Kingdom, to God’s closeness and God’s presence.

Christ’s suffering and death was not his last word. The crucified one is also the risen one. His resurrection and ours is the ultimate horizon on life. His wounds remain; the cross is not cast aside, it becomes the tree of life. It gives us a new vision, renews our strength, and offers consolation and hope through the one in whom death was defeated.

It is therefore with hope that we turn to our Father—the source of all life. We turn as Jesus did—in prayer, a wellspring in these dark times. And we pray with the psalmist—as did Jesus, Mary and Joseph—sharing their hope and trust in God:

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord,
Lord, hear my voice!

O let your ears be attentive
to the voice of my pleading.

If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt,
Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness:
for this we revere you.

My soul is waiting for the Lord.

I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord,
more than watchman for daybreak.

With the Lord there is mercy
and fullness of redemption,
[His people] indeed he will redeem
from all our iniquity. [Psalm 130 (129)]

Glory be to the Father....

**+Dermot Farrell,
Bishop of Ossory**

*The Commemoration of All the Faithful
Departed, (All Souls' Day)
2nd November 2020*



The Pope uses the phrase 'dark clouds over a closed world' to describe our world today.

Let us Dream Together

Albert McDonnell
Radharc na nOileán Pastoral Area, Kildysart, Co Clare.

COVID-19 has led us all to wonder. We wonder when it will end, how it will end, what we can do to help bring it to an end. We also wonder what our world and our lives will be like when it is all over. Do we want to go back to life the way it was before? Certainly, there are a great many things we would like to have back again – most of all an end to worry and anxiety. Nevertheless, there are many things we would like to be different. We don't want our post COVID-19 world to be simply a photocopy of life before the pandemic.

Pope Francis has recently published an encyclical letter along those lines. What needs to change in our world? He chose as the title of his letter a phrase from St Francis of Assisi in which he described all people as brother and sisters *Fratelli Tutti*. The Pope believes that what the world needs most of all is fraternity, that we may grow as sisters and brothers inspired by mutual respect and love.

The Pope uses the phrase 'dark clouds over a closed world' to describe our world today. There is a great deal of division and bitterness in our contemporary

world, Nations, groups of all kinds and even many individuals find it so much easier to list what separates other nations, groups and individuals rather than what unites us. He speaks of the racism which endures in our world and which like a virus 'quickly mutates ... goes into hiding, and lurks in waiting'. The dignity of every man and woman is so often lost sight of in a world where fear of the stranger abounds, borders are valued, the creation of wealth triumphs human rights and an endless stream of information usurps wisdom.

A beautiful reflection on the parable of the Good Samaritan forms the heart of the papal letter. Only the stranger stopped to help the man left for dead by robbers. The others just kept walking thereby making themselves allies of the attackers. They were busy people and didn't see the wounded man as deserving of their time. Pope Francis invites us to enter into the story and ask ourselves which character we resemble; the victim, the aggressors, the indifferent or the foreigner who stopped to help. This is not an easy question especially for those who believe in borders and division.



CANON LAW MATTERS

The letter calls for an open world where the dignity of every person is valued. To be fully human we need to move beyond ourselves, our families, communities, social groups and nations. The fact that a person was born in a place with fewer resources does not diminish his/her dignity. Our common humanity and dignity supersede race, gender, age, nationality, material wealth, language and formal education. Diversity brings mutual enrichment. A healthy openness to the other nourishes rather than never threatens our own identity.

Politics plays a key role in the development on a world where the dignity of each person is recognised and valued. The politics that we need to make wonderful things happen is the politics of love. Individuals can do a great deal, but many things depend on how society is structured. An individual can help a person to cross a river, but building a bridge requires political action. Politics needs to draw us together as a people, unite us and combine 'love with hope and with confidence in the reserves of goodness present in human hearts'.

Dialogue is what keeps families, communities and ultimately humanity together. 'Approaching, speaking, listening, looking at, coming to know and understand one another, and to find common ground' is what is needed. The Pope calls on us to 'arm our children with the weapons of dialogue'. The letter also reminds us that kindness is a fruit of the Holy Spirit which makes life more bearable as we share each other's problems, needs and fears. Kindness is about esteem and respect for each other which once it becomes a culture within society transforms lifestyles and relationships and facilitates consensus.

A world where fraternity reigns is a world without war since every war 'leaves our world worse off than it was before'. War is always a failure and consumes resources needed to nourish humanity. Equally other forms of violence such as the death penalty are a denial of human dignity.

A society built on dialogue and mutual respect is open to hearing, engaging with and cherishing every voice and tradition. People of faith have a particular duty to work for fraternity and have a distinct and valuable contribution to make. Our preaching, teaching and lives as Christians must speak directly and clearly about the dignity of every person so that we may accept and love each other as brothers and sisters. No one is saved alone.

The letter concludes with a prayer:

Lord,
May our hearts be open
to all the peoples and nations of the earth.
May we recognize the goodness and beauty
that you have sown in each of us,
and thus forge bonds of unity, common projects,
and shared dreams. Amen.

The English language version of the Pope Francis' encyclical letter Fratelli Tutti can be found on the Vatican website www.vatican.va

How, then, do we speak?
Not just in these pandemic times...

One Another

Dermot Ryan

A simple reciprocal pronoun "one another" lies at the heart of our understanding of how we are called to live our faith – of how we are Church. We bear one another's burdens (Gal 6:2); we comfort one another (1 Thes 5:11); we care for one another (1 Cor 12:25); we admonish one another (Rom 15:14); we forgive one another (Col 3:13); we are servants of one another (Gal 5:13); and we love one another (1 Pet 1:22)¹ And yet, in these past months, this core element of Church has been taken from us – not completely – but certainly visibly and tangibly, and it is troubling.

Being together and coming together is Church. We need one another for salvation. Rahner reminds us that Christ was the last word spoken of our salvation; he was the word of grace, reconciliation and eternal life spoken, then, for all - and for all time.² Even in accepting this it is, in many respects, only by my partaking in that conversation today that I can truly feel that it was also spoken

for me. The Church, then, exists to facilitate that conversation anew for each generation so that it may be continually heard. This is asked of us - it is expected of us. We are, then, to be for one another that spoken word of salvation. We, in being together and coming together, mediate God to one another.

How, then, do we speak? Not just in these pandemic times, since we must admit as we entered this crisis that many in our communities were, for some time now, not hearing that word as being spoken for them. Are we troubled because we lost the "few" in these pandemic months or because we were losing the many in ordinary weeks? What have we done, as Church, to speak anew this salvation to one another? As we emerge from this questions must be asked. What is the life of our parishes? What is the work of our communities of faith? What did we have to stop in these months... and was it missed? If it was, what did we do; and if it wasn't what is that saying? Were we



CHURCH MATTERS

too easily silenced or were our voices missed?

We speak so well of God in so many ways to one another: we think of how we are Church at times of bereavement and loss - carrying one another when the journey seems unbearable; how we are Church in times of illness - offering one another great solace and comfort; how we are Church in times of despair - gifting one another hope; how we are Church in times of special celebration - sharing one another's joy. These voices have been missed and their silence noted.

But we need to reflect, change and adapt. We do this because change is what we've always had to do to have the Word of God spoken visibly in our world. If being for one another is such an integral aspect of Church - and if this recent pandemic has given us occasion to see how lessened we are without one another - then it is also an occasion for us to ask how strengthened we would be if God's word was heard by more. We must

reimagine the voice of our Church - we know its beauty and its depth - how can we have it heard?

Recognising the difficulty we face, Pope Francis recently observed in *Fratelli Tutti* "the pain, uncertainty and fear, and the realisation of our own limitations, brought on by the pandemic have only made it all the more urgent that we rethink our styles of life, our relationships, the organisation of our societies, and, above all, the meaning of our existence" (#33). This rethinking, then, must call us in Church to continue to explore new ways of communicating the Love of God for one another. Pope Francis continues "if everything is connected, it is hard to imagine that this global disaster is unrelated to our way of approaching reality, our claim to be absolute masters of our own lives and of all that exists (#33)". Not framing this as any form of divine retribution but maybe old ways had to die, their coming, as it were, to a natural end.

Church, then, must continue this change, prompted not only by dramatic shifts in the world around us, not only by promptings of the prophets in our midst, but also from a simple desire to bring, ironically, the unchanging message of God, that already spoken word, in new, engaging and novel ways to one another, to a people now listening with different ears.

1. Cf Gerard Lohfink, *Jesus and Community*, Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984, 98-99 Here Lohfink, in exploring the praxis of togetherness, points to a far from exhaustive list of how we are with one another: Rom 12:10; Rom 12:16; Rom 15:7; Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 11:33; 1 Thess 5:11; 1 Thess 5:13; 1 Thess 5:15; Eph 4:2; Eph 4:32; Eph 5:21; James 5:16; 1 Pet 4:9; 1 Pet 5:5; 1 John 1:7; Rom 1:12; 12:5; 10; 13:8 14:9; 15:5; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; Eph 4:25, 32; Phil 2:3; Col 3:13; 1 Thess 3:12; 4:9, 18; 2 Thess 1:3; Heb 10:24; 5:14; 1 John 3:11, 23, 4:7, 11, 12; 2 John 5 - the point is made.

2. Karl Rahner *The Church and the Sacraments*, London: Burns & Oates, 1963, 15.



Funeral Vestments from the episcopacy of
Bishop Collier

The items in the sacristy tell the story of the Cathedral and of Catholicism over the last few centuries.

An inventory of the Sacristy

Ronan Doherty

Last August and September I conducted an inventory of the sacristy of St. Mary's Cathedral for Fr. Richard Scriven. Having completed a Masters in Archives in August, I was glad for the opportunity to volunteer and get some practical experience. Many of the items in the sacristy were forgotten about or untouched since the 1970s. While others date back to the old St. James' Church known as the 'old cathedral' which, prior to the construction of St. Mary's, stood in the carpark opposite the Cathedral. The items in the sacristy tell the story of the Cathedral and of Catholicism over the last few centuries. I will describe a few of the more interesting items I discovered.

The Cathedral holds many valuable and interesting chalices, ciboriums and monstrances. Perhaps the most valuable chalice is the gold Rothe chalice which was donated in 1712 by Catherina Rothe. Another silver chalice donated by Richard Archer from 1711 asks for prayers for 'John Langton'. In 1941 Richard Duggan donated an ornate monstrance and chalice in memory of his friend Rev. O'Keefe who was administrator of the Cathedral (1912-1927). A special donation of an ornate monstrance, chalice and ciborium by Thomas Peart in 1853 bears the inscription 'To the R.C. Parish of St. James', meaning the former

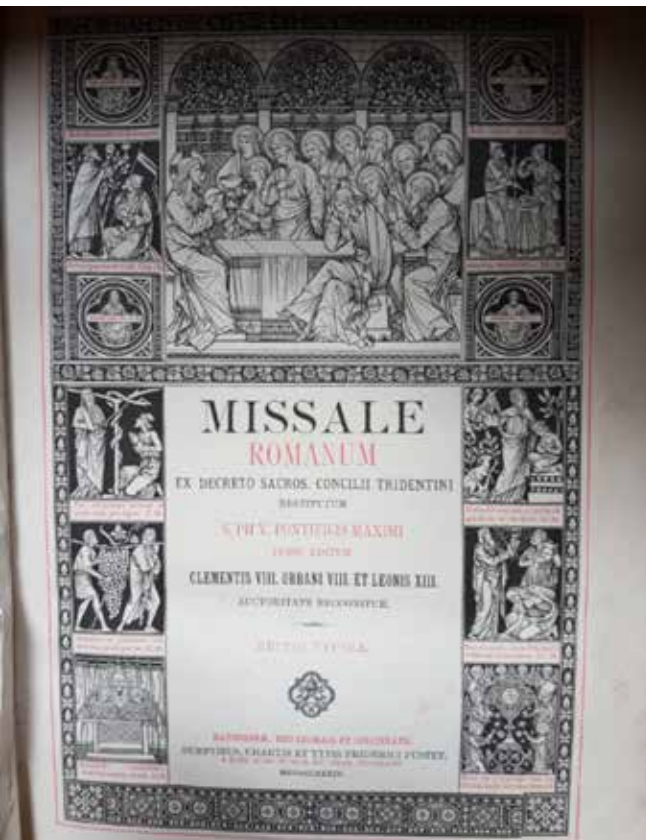
church. I wrote an article about the Molloy monstrance in the Kilkenny People on the 2nd of October and the article is available online. A Kilkenny native from Galmoy, Julia Molloy was married in the Cathedral to an Austrian Count who later donated in 1911 among other items a beautiful monstrance.

The sacristy contains a large cabinet which holds vestments drawers to hold vestments no longer in use. Many of these vestments date back before the Second Vatican Council and include items such as maniples, dalmatics and copes which are rarely if ever used now. There are many complete sets of vestments still intact. Although it is difficult to date the vestments, some of them date to at least the 1890s and possibly back to the 1880s during the episcopacy of Bishop Patrick Francis Moran. There are beautiful sets of vestments from the early 1900s most likely bought in celebration of the jubilee of Bishop Abraham Brownrigg's ordination in 1909. There are exquisite full sets of vestments from the episcopacy of Bishop Patrick Collier. Elsewhere in the sacristy there are Post-Conciliar chasubles from the episcopacy of Bishop Peter Birch to the present day.

Also in the sacristy are a variety of Roman Missals, Lectionaries and other religious



Roman Missal 1861



Roman Missal 1920



Roman Missal 1884

books: the oldest dates back to 1852. The oldest Roman Missal that for sure was used in St. Mary's is from 1861 from the episcopacy of Bishop Edward Walsh. The beautiful missals tell a story not only showing the minor changes made in the Tridentine Mass by Pope Leo XIII, Pope Benedict XV and Pope Pius XII but also telling the story of the Bishop or Administrator at the time. There is a rulebook of the Confraternity of the Holy Family which was active in the Cathedral from the 1870s up until the middle of the 20th century. This confraternity was very popular across Ireland, in particular in Limerick stemming from the Redemptorists. Members of the confraternity would have held weekly devotions and a regular mass at the side altar to the Holy Family in St. Mary's. Some of the most interesting items in the sacristy are the most ephemeral. One of the most fascinating items is an experimental funeral rite pamphlet from 1967 written months after the close of the Second Vatican Council. The experimental rite could 'be used only by the permission of the bishop in the places specified by him and for a specified trial period. Priests who have permission to use it are asked to report their observation and suggestions at the end of the trial period.' This fascinating pamphlet has great importance to historians of the Post-Conciliar era in the Church especially in areas such as liturgy as it likely would not have been kept in most sacristies.

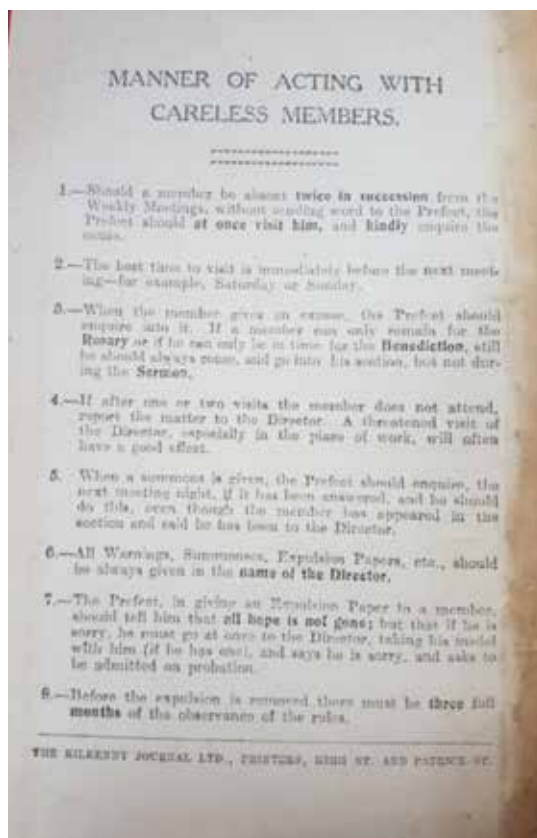
The items in the sacristy of St. Mary's tell the story of our Church, the Cathedral and the Diocese over the last few centuries. From an archival point of view it is important that these items are preserved for future generations, as Catholics it is also vital that these important items are preserved as it tells the history of Irish Catholicism: in doing so contributing to the rich tapestry and ever-changing story of Catholicism. It is also key that items which can still be used such as chalices, monstrances and ciboriums should still be used as they represents a continuity with the past, with our parish and the generations of Catholics that have gone before us. No doubt sacristies across Ossory and Ireland hold many undiscovered items of historical and religious importance.



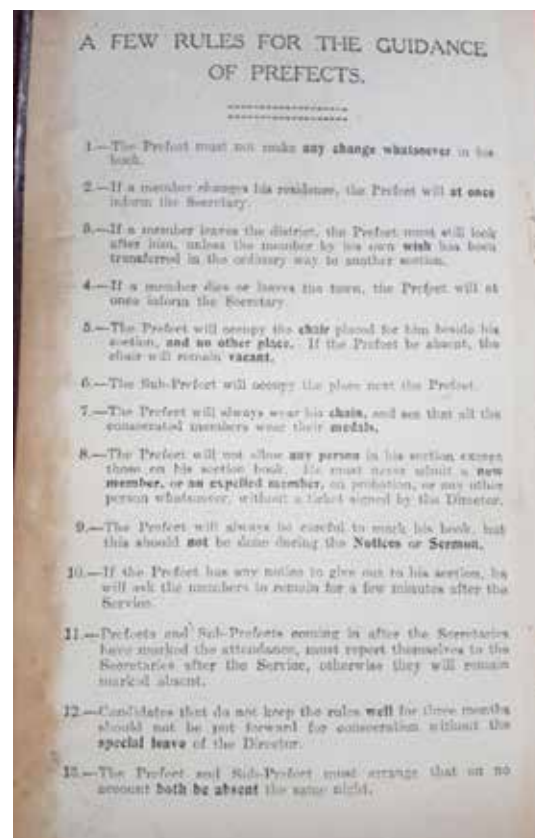
Rothe Chalice



Duggan Monstrance, 1941



Rulebook of the Confraternity of the Holy Family



Rulebook of the Confraternity of the Holy Family

Homily of Bishop Dermot Farrell



18th Sunday at RTE Mass, 2nd August 2020

We gather today, as did the people in the gospel; they came from afar to be with Jesus in the wilderness. Today this representative group of us from Clara Parish in Kilkenny, gather to celebrate the Eucharist, as we mark the 150th anniversary of the parish church.

The people heard that Jesus had withdrawn to a lonely place. They left the towns and went after him on foot. The people seek Jesus! He responds to them; he responds to them with compassion. Compassion is the one quality more than any other, that Jesus expressed in his life. In the compassion of Jesus, God shows us his face. In Jesus God stands with those who suffer, and is attentive to those who feel empty, discouraged or desolate. Real compassion demands the putting aside of our own desires to embrace the suffering of another with genuine kindness, mercy and generosity [selflessness]. Real compassion demands that we see the other with their eyes, that we see the world from their perspective. In truth, compassion is a putting of the other before ourselves. For Jesus, compassion is the root and ground of love. So, today's gospel begins in compassion.

After the response of Jesus to the crowds, comes the response of the disciples. Their reaction to the crowd contrasts with Jesus' reaction: their reaction is negative: "Send them away!" ... "All we have with us is five loaves and two fish" —a statement of desperation.

Jesus has a different perspective to the disciples: they see the problem and have a very pragmatic solution. The disciples' solution is determined by anxiety, rooted in what they can bring about. Jesus' solution, in contrast, is determined by trust and hope, rooted in what God can do. He remembers what God did in the desert—when he brought his people out of slavery in Egypt. He trusts that God will do this again. The providential love of God is clearly revealed in the life and destiny of Jesus himself: as St Paul puts it in today's Second Reading nothing "can come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom 8:39).

It is in this perspective that Jesus challenges the disciples: "give them something to eat yourselves." What a strange demand Jesus makes of the powerless disciples. However, he, like God, does not look at the world the

way they do. The disciples see their limited resources as a problem; Jesus sees the limited resources as the foundation for what God will do. The disciples see the way forward in protecting their own food, their own resources, as it were; Jesus sees the way forward in giving them away. To part with our possessions takes a tremendous amount of trust—trust in God and trust in those who are in need. The way of Jesus is clear: we are called to discover compassion, to learn generosity, and to accept God's way as the way for our lives.

Parish is where the call of Christ takes flesh. It is where we experience the compassion of Christ in the compassion of our sisters and brothers. Parish is also where we learn compassion. It took considerable time for the disciples to realise God's ways are different to our ways, and God's thoughts are not our thoughts (see Isa 55:8). In today's gospel, the disciples' initial response is a world away from Jesus'. They are at the start of their journey with him. Like the disciples, we too travel with Jesus: he is God with us (Matt 1:23), and it will take time, perhaps all of our lives, to see the world from his perspective.

In celebrating 150 years of a parish church, we are really celebrating 150 years of the parish, because a church and a parish is a living community. Today we give thanks for the parish of Clara, for this community, and its people. In the end, a church and its people, is not about buildings from the past, "but rather the call to live like Christ, trusting God and showing concern for others. ... It is about people who, generation after generation, reach out, and create a community of "worship, education, charity, and service..." In our rapidly changing world, "this will require creativity and conviction as we live our faith, not primarily by maintaining our structures and institutions, but above all, by being open to the possibility which the Spirit opens up to us" (see Pope Francis, Mass in Philadelphia, Sept 26, 2015).

We remember that this call comes to us in our poverty. The disciples had but five loaves and two fish. By the prayer of Jesus and the sharing of the disciples, these became food for the multitude. We entrust ourselves to the Lord, in our poverty. May he bless us and open our hearts to reach out to the world in its needs.

Our funerals ... have been community affairs,
as indeed all our gatherings in Church

Funerals these days

Dan Bollard

In one of the Prefaces for Funeral Masses we pray 'life is changed, not ended'. That's so true, as so many of us have discovered over the past few months. Since March we have had funerals in all the parishes of the Diocese. To say the least, all of them have been different than what was held previously.

Prevailing experiences have been the graciousness of the bereaved families, and their desire to do things right. An immediate question at death has been how many could come to Church. And then there were the family members who were out of the country, and unable to come home for the funeral. That has led to explorations as to how to reach out to them, and to the others who in the past would have been at the funeral. Technology has crept up on us. People have grown accustomed to expressing their 'Condolences' on RIP.ie, and of being present outside the Church, on the way to the cemetery or at the burial. Our undertakers have also been very anxious

to do things right and adhere to required standards.

The saddest dimension to our funerals, for family and friends, has been that there has been no proper goodbye. Families have been so happy to have the ill member at home, because otherwise it has been impossible to hold a loved one's hand, to give them the assurance of a well-known voice, to say goodbye. Knowing the former experience of funerals, family would have appreciated handshakes or hugs with sympathisers. So often the few words were healing in themselves, as stories, often unknown to the family, were shared, good memories awakened. We priests over 70 who were cocooning during the shutdown felt strange at not being able to lead the prayers at the funerals of parishioners, while the younger among us, coming from neighbouring parishes, stepped up to the mark. And then the refreshments after the burial..... when family had the opportunity to say thank you to the people who came to the



funeral, all gone, at least for the moment. And the Month's Mind Mass, we'd hoped we could have people at that, and that didn't happen either. In some regards the Month's Mind Mass was the closure to the mourning period. Nowadays, maybe at the First Anniversary?

Our funerals pre-covid have been community affairs, as indeed all our gatherings in Church. Now we are challenged, on a human level and on a Christian level, to build up community and to give expression to it.

Mgr Jim Cassin died on 5th June, at Kilkenny's St Luke's Hospital. Jim had been living in the house beside mine in the Church grounds here in Thomastown. A lung transplant patient, his concern regarding Covid 19 meant that he quarantined, and, understandably, became anxious about his condition. A very sociable person, he missed meeting people. He was in hospital for some weeks, and that was very difficult for his

brother Paddy, who could bring whatever Jim required to the Hospital, but couldn't get to meet him, leaving whatever he brought to the hospital porter. Only in the last few days did Paddy get to spend some time with Jim. The staff did all they could, as chaplain Fr. Paddy Carey did also.

Jim's death created the next hurdle – how to hold a funeral during a lockdown. Numbers were confined to 25 in the Church. Jim was well known, having worked in St. Kieran's College for many years, and then moving on to Maynooth, so his funeral would, in normal circumstances, draw big numbers of family, friends, neighbours and former colleagues. To address numbers, Bishop Farrell wrote to the clergy of the Diocese to inform them that if they hadn't been contacted re attendance at the funeral Mass, they oughtn't come to the Church. That was difficult for our colleagues, who are always anxious to say their farewells to one of us. Canon Percy Grant's family decided that the announcement of his death wouldn't be made until after his burial. A number did come to Jim's funeral and stood outside the Church, or awaited the funeral at the Cemetery, with many others.

We thought things might be lifted in time for a Month's Mass, but they weren't. As time moved on, we decided to remember Jim on his birthday, with Mass. Only 50 were admitted to this occasion, and of course there was no gathering afterwards either.

People say that we Irish do funerals well. The Covid 19 pandemic challenges us in this regard. How do we, as communities, appropriately do funerals these days? And on the level of the personal, someone once said that you need to say goodbye before you say hello to new times, without the one we have loved. How can we help that process? I've heard someone on one of the television stations when recounting the numbers who have died, say in conclusion, 'May their memory be a blessing to you'. Please God that is true for all the families who grieve the loss of a loved one these days too.



First Holy Communion



Adapted Classroom



Outdoor Mass



Outdoor Mass



We look forward to opportunities when we can once again return to church and celebrate Mass as before.

Scoil Mhichil Naofa celebrates

Tom Percy

On September 29th 2020, Scoil Mhichil Naofa celebrated an outdoor Mass on the school grounds to mark a return to school and celebrate the Feast Day of their Patron Saint, St Michael the Archangel. The Mass was celebrated by Fr Oliver Maher, on what was a beautiful morning in the countryside of north County Kilkenny. Many parents from the local community gathered in the spacious grounds to join in this celebration. One parent commented that "it was great to see people celebrate Mass in a safe environment during these difficult times".

The school has been open since 1 September and to date the reopening plan has gone smoothly. A huge effort was made to adapt the school building so that social distance between class bubbles could be achieved. Mr Thomas Percy, the school principal, stated that "an incredible amount of work has been put in by everyone to ensure we could reopen safely so that children and staff could recommence the important process of teaching and learning. Everyone is delighted to be back and please God we can remain so into the future".

These sentiments were shared by all the children who have shown great happiness at returning to school. Once again, they are able to meet and play with their classmates. This was one aspect of school the children missed most during the school closure. Moreover, while the teachers, SNAs and children have developed their digital skillsets to facilitate remote learning during the lockdown, everyone is in full agreement that human face-to-face interaction is invaluable throughout daily school life. Mr Percy stated, "This pandemic challenges people's flexibility, adaptability and creativity to find solutions to problems we never considered before."

Finally, Scoil Mhichil Naofa's third class celebrated receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist in the Church of the Immaculate Conception, Galmoy, on Saturday September 26th. Fittingly, this school Mass provided the children with another opportunity to receive Jesus into their lives.

We look forward to opportunities when we can once again return to church and celebrate Mass as before.



CHURCH MATTERS

From Behind Closed Doors

Kieran O'Shea

When the annals of 2020 are eventually written, events once considered bread and butter material for such chronicles, such as the recent political turbulence in the USA as they attempted to extract a President from the rubble of the election will ultimately be eclipsed by the story of how a tiny organism has left a deadly imprint on every facet of the life of the global community. Covid-19 has not just destroyed lives and placed extreme pressure on human and material resources, it has changed the landscape for all of us in how we live and interact with each other. Some of these changes will leave an indelible mark, mapping out how we will live and work and communicate with each other for the foreseeable future. We are told that when we emerge from behind closed doors that a 'new normal', a new *modus operandi* will shape our living on this planet. We wait and see.

Emerging from behind closed doors is a theme that we as followers of Jesus can identify with easily. In a post resurrection account from St John's Gospel we hear that the disciples were gathered in a space traditionally recognised as the Upper Room where Jesus had eaten the Last Super with them. We are told that 'the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were for fear of the Jews' (Jn 20:19). Then the risen Jesus greets them with these words 'Peace be with you' (Jn 20:20). Suddenly the atmosphere changes and fear seems to dissipate, the disciples are now 'filled with Joy at seeing the Lord' (Jn 20:20). They receive a mission from the Lord "As the Father sent me so I am sending you' (Jn 20 : 21) and to power this mission they are set apart to 'Receive the Holy Spirit' (Jn 20: 23). From behind closed doors also comes the familiar Gospel story of the encounter between the unfairly named doubting Thomas and the risen Jesus. Again we are reminded that 'the doors were closed but Jesus came in and stood among them' (Jn 20:26). Closed doors are no barrier to the risen One.

Emerging from behind closed doors is a theme that we as followers of Jesus can identify with easily...

When we move to Luke's Acts of the Apostles we now find that the Upper Room has become the meeting space where 'they had all met together' (Acts 2:1) where a new openness to the Spirit is the fruit of their prayer, new ideas are fermenting, green shoots of hope and enthusiasm are springing up. The Upper Room becomes not a centre of fear but a place of reflection, a place of contemplation, a place of preparation to welcome the anointing of the Holy Spirit essential for mission, a place of anticipation of a new dawn for this small community emerging from the impact of the tumultuous events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus. It is in emerging from behind closed doors that the Apostles and that seminal community of witnesses 'began to speak different languages as the Spirit gave them power to express themselves' (Acts 2:4)

Reflecting on the evidence of these New Testament accounts we could be forgiven for believing that the 'behind closed doors' chapter of the story was a very necessary and positive phase indeed. We could even say it was creative, renewing, preparing the seedbed for planting and growth. However, for too long and for some unknown reason we have identified the behind closed doors stage with 'fear of the Jews'. Yes various challenges may have been the initial catalyst for gathering behind closed doors for the disciples but it was short lived; accepting a state of fear was never to be the mission of the Church. Quickly fear and uncertainty was replaced by the Peace and Joy of the Lord, his voice resounding in their hearts inviting them to go out and embrace the mission of witnessing to God's Love in new ways, using new 'languages'.

Twenty centuries on and in these Covid times some of us lament being 'forced' behind closed doors allowed only to live

stream our faith celebrations to those outside. Once again 'from behind closed doors' seems to be interpreted by some as a completely negative experience leading them to wallow in a siege mentality when faced with the existential questions about our lives, our society, our planet, our future as the community of the resurrection. With this in mind it is important to remind ourselves that the task of proclaiming the Gospel tomorrow cannot be reserved to gathering in a Church once a week for a celebration of the Eucharist that at least occasionally doesn't ignite enthusiasm to live and share the transformative and radical Good News of Jesus Christ. If we are truly a people of the Cross, a People of the Resurrection, and a People of Pentecost, then surely we see the need every so often to go behind closed doors so we can ponder our vocation as Church to the World, reflect, share, prepare the soil, be rejuvenated, learn the new languages of technology and contemporary communication, while recommitting ourselves to being the means by which others personally encounter Christ. We need the 'behind closed doors' experience, it is part of who we are, part of our encounter with the risen Christ. We should not fear it. As the preacher to the papal household Fr Raniero Cantalamessa, remarked in his Good Friday homily earlier this year, 'Returning to the way things were is the "recession" of which we should have the most fear'. Spending time behind closed doors is an opportunity for the Church. There is no need to fear. From behind closed doors we can emerge as something new, with hope. Covid-19 has caused much suffering and death and much reflection on a global scale. However we are a people of the resurrection. We have died with Christ, emerged from the tomb with him and we will do so again and again.

Scripture texts from the New Jerusalem Bible.

Reflecting on the situation Bishop Dermot reminded those ...
how many Priests, parishes and people, had found innovative
ways to continue to minister and share God with people

St Kieran's College Priests' Reunion

2020

Dermot Ryan

Every year on the first Tuesday after the 15th August St Kieran's College hosts its reunion for those men ordained from the College and now serving around Ireland and, in fact, in parishes and various ministries throughout the world. This date is fixed to allow these Priests to make plans and advance arrangements to be at the College on that day. It is a wonderful tradition and always a most rewarding and enjoyable gathering for which some 50-60 men attend each year.

This past August, as we know too well, the usual was not possible, the normal now a new abnormal, and many proud traditions, even those as well established as the College Reunion impossible. These past pupils of the College could not be invited, or welcomed, back to the buildings they once called home.

Thankfully a phrase often incorrectly attributed to Charles Darwin but most likely to have emerged from a reading of Darwin by a Louisiana State University business professor, Leon C. Megginson, proved to be correct: it is not the most intellectual of the species that survives; it is not the strongest that survives; but the

one that survives is the one that is able to adapt to and to adjust to the changing environment in which it finds itself. The ability to adapt, then, is one of the most important characteristics we can possess and in a College that has seen the Great Famine come and go and the Spanish Flu and so many other tremendous moments in our history - the ability to adapt has surely been learned.

So on Tuesday 18th August - the first after the 15th - the College Reunion did take place and the College President Fr Dermot Ryan was able to welcome many past pupils home; albeit now just in a new way. Restrictions at that time allowed most priests of the Diocese of Ossory to gather safely, and socially distanced, for the celebration of the Reunion Mass in the College Chapel and technology allowed that this be streamed to the homes and parishes of so many past pupils scattered throughout the country and beyond. We felt that it was important that the tradition be continued and that those men who had intended to travel could be remembered in prayer in the College Chapel which lies at the heart of the College.



The Mass, celebrated by Bishop Dermot Farrell, was streamed on the College website and nearly 250 people joined in live - online - that evening.

Reflecting on the situation Bishop Dermot reminded those who attended, in person or via the medium of the internet, just how it was that the ministry of the church had continued during this pandemic and how many Priests, parishes and people, had found innovative ways to continue to minister and share God with people.

They like we who were gathered for this reunion had to adapt in order to continue.

Music for the celebration was provided not by the usual choirs of Danesfort and St Canice's but by a single cantor and pianist - and a wonderful, albeit, somewhat strange celebration was had; the names of Jubilarians read and, like many more traditional reunion - memories were shared!

We hope for a more traditional reunion next year when many familiar faces will return; but we know now, already, that no matter where we find ourselves and how things are, we will reunite; memories will be shared, stories will be told, and our prayers will continue.

Homily of Bishop Dermot Farrell



St Kieran's College Reunion 18 August 2020

I welcome you to St Kieran's College today for the annual reunion. I especially want to congratulate those priests who are celebrating diamond, golden, ruby and china jubilees of their ordination to the priesthood. The upheaval of the past few months has curtailed many of the celebrations. Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in mid-March we have moved from times of orientation to disorientation or dislocation and on to a new orientation, and last week disorder for our parishes in Laois and Offaly.

When we were ordained we had no crystal ball to reveal forty, fifty or sixty years to come. We could not have suspected that the seminary would be closed, the challenge posed by dearth of vocations for the Church's mission, the promise and threat of modernity, priests leave the priesthood by the dozen, the advances in digital technology, priests and religious prove guilty of abusing children physically, emotionally, sexually or through neglect, shifting the message from judgement and rules to welcome, accompaniment, and mercy, financial regulation of the charity sector, a multi-cultural, multi-racial society, GDPR and more recently a crisis period caused by COVID-19, a global pandemic that has unmasked "our vulnerability and leaves uncovered those false and superfluous certainties with which we have constructed our agendas, our projects, our habits and our priorities" (Pope Francis, Homily, 27th March 2020). Peter's question, "we have left everything and followed you. What are we to have, then?" maybe at times, it has been ours too. But after many years of following Jesus and living in his friendship, Peter no longer asked that question. He already knew the answer. At times, his following of Jesus certainly involved hardships. Those are always part of life. But can't we imagine that it also brought him great joy. Even if the present is arduous, we know in our hearts that there has been

real overflowing joy for the things that God brought about in us.

In the face of many pastoral challenges, our once-clear answers and pathetic certainties dissolved into unnerving questions. All of this reminds us today of a crucial element in discipleship. To follow Jesus is to encounter change, cope with change. Since the beginning, the entire history of salvation is an antidote to the tendency to give up trying. We live in a society of less deference, and there's more and more critical reporting of the Church. We make mistakes, we get anxious, and being responsible for other people's lives seems very wonderful, but it comes with a huge price.

We know there has been an enormous change in Irish culture that is having a significant impact on the role and understanding of the church in Irish society. This is reflected on the form that ministry itself will take in this evolving environment. The understandings, activities, and pastoral strategies of the past are all being refashioned in the cauldron of the contemporary situation. We had to constantly adapt to new realities and to refine pastoral methods to serve the Church in the twenty-first century. As men who are 'in' the world yet not 'of' the world (cf. Jn 17,15f.), we are called in our present cultural and spiritual situation to be a sign of contradiction and of hope. For the Church to ignore the society in which it lives seriously impairs its mission. As priests we are more believable when we understand both the graced joy of faith in daily life, and the need for hope in a world at once graced and tragic.

In recent months, the first global pandemic in our lifetime propelled us to find the courage for a new imagination of the possible. "Without vision the people perish" (Proverbs 29:18). The coronavirus crisis is a turning point: it

could either weaken us or make us respond effectively to new challenges. Moreover, the COVID-19 crisis presents us with personal, existential and religious challenges.

We are accustomed to the probable, to what we think should happen. But with the realism of the Gospel we transcended our fixed and failing patterns, modes and structures and were able to imagine a different world. You comforted your parishioners from Seir Kieran to Mulinavat, from Aghaboe to Piltown—with Masses celebrated in the parish church. With the aid of digital technology there has been a proclamation of the Gospel in the silence of our homes, blessing with the Eucharist, mourning of suffering and death. Consolation, comfort and prayer entered the homes of so many people.

In the words of Pope Francis you were shepherds, with the 'smell of the sheep.' As priests you contemplated both the word and your people. Over these last few months, we have been reminded all too clearly of who are the least in our society: the hungry, the sick, the elderly, refugees, those experiencing discrimination because of race, and those who are forgotten and ignored.

A new feature of Irish culture is the growing diversity that is evident at every level of society. Over the last twenty years it has been remarkable to observe Ireland becoming a multi-religious, multi-racial, and multi-cultural society. This is changing, significantly, the cultural setting of ministry, where the background now includes a series of options as regards religious affiliation.

The position of the priest, in Irish society, is changing, together with the understanding of his role in the community. He has gone from being a dominant figure at the very centre of an all-encompassing parish life to being one voice among others in community leadership. His role as a leader is still particularly important, but the manner in which it is exercised is changing in harmony with the demands of the ambient culture.

The world is looking for credible proclaimers of the word. However, its postmodern culture can manifest itself in a suspicion of institutions and great projects which, in turn, results in a hesitation to

embrace unchanging, eternal truths. Proclaiming the word in such a culture, is a call to humble service (see Mark 10:43–45). Ultimately, every priest responds to that call, and is inspired by that vision: in serving others priests are serving Christ our Lord, who is himself the embodiment of the God we cannot see. As a priest I need to be constantly reminded that I am a pastor in the Church, for the Church and of the Church.

In humility and simplicity, the Church offers a gift to the world. That gift is a treasure the Church has itself received: the good news of God's love proclaimed in the Gospel that the apostles were charged to preach to the world. This precious treasure, however, is carried in the fragile, so easily breakable, vessels of the proclaimers' humanity. Here is a mystery that St Paul captured so wonderfully in his Second Letter to the Corinthians: "We are only the earthenware vessels that hold this treasure to make it clear that such an overwhelming power comes from God and not from us" (2 Cor 4:7). In common with all believers, priests carry the knowledge of Jesus Christ within the earthenware vessels of their own fragile humanity. It is not different for the gift of their priestly identity and mission: this too is embodied in lives that are human and fragile. All of us celebrating this evening are men who have offered their lives in the service of Our Lord and the Church to carry the 'treasure' they have been given the immense privilege of carrying in the 'earthenware vessels' of their humanity and communicating to the world, their knowledge of Jesus Christ and the good news of God's love and the hope that this brings into the world.

A concluding thought: In recent decades some have been concerned about the number of candidates coming forward to offer themselves for priesthood, and to serve the sacramental and pastoral needs of our Church. Our call is not to lose heart, but to hold on to the Lord's promise that he "will be with us until the end of the age" (see Matthew 28:20). Beloved disciples, we are held close to the Lord (see John 13:23), always in his providential embrace. He is the one who guides our feet on the way of discipleship and peace (see Luke 1:79). And so, although we may be concerned, we lose neither hope nor trust in his loving care for us and his Church.



PARISH PROGRAMME OF PREPARATION

Join with **ICH THUS** as you navigate the **Programme of Preparation for the Sacraments of Communion & Confirmation**



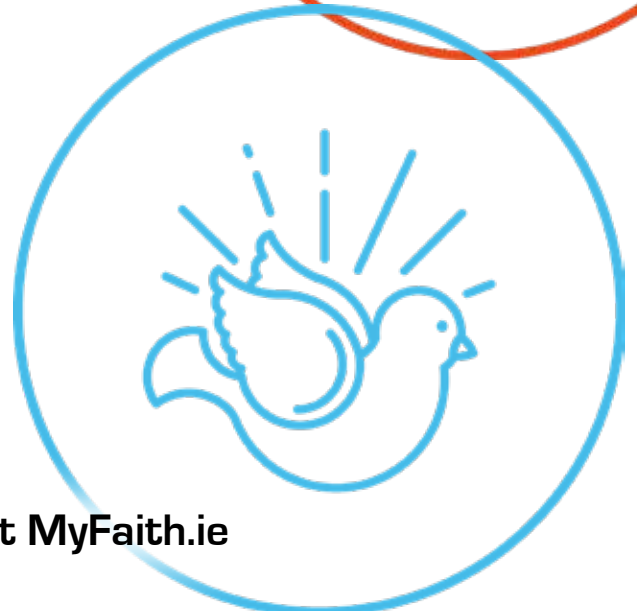
Reconciliation

First Holy Communion

Confirmation

This parish-based programme will offer **module-by-module preparation** on the journey towards the celebration of the Sacraments

- Teacher-led online interactive classes with Ich Thus, your animated companion for learning
- Build module-by-module online – a new module every 2 weeks on the journey to being fully prepared in the company of your family
- Age appropriate online interactive games/challenges/quizzes for each module to reinforce learning
- Moments of Prayer on each module
- Log out/Log in and pick up from where you left off
- Downloadable worksheets
- Certificate of completion at the end of the Course



Register your Parish online at [MyFaith.ie](https://myfaith.ie)

... this online and interactive programme 'walks' children through the steps necessary to understand, appreciate, celebrate effectively, and then live the Sacraments.

MyFaith.ie

Bishop Dermot Farrell, launched recently a new national parish-based programme of preparation for the celebration of the Sacraments of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation. With all the uncertainty around Sacraments at this time, this announcement was a welcome reassurance that the Sacraments can, and will, be celebrated in parishes later this year. Every step available is being taken by the Church to ensure that this is possible.

Preparing for these celebrations is key and in launching this programme Bishop Farrell is ensuring that children can continue to ready themselves for the Sacraments and deepen their understanding of their faith. Underlining the need for effective preparation Bishop Farrell noted that "much has changed in our parishes and church life and yet much remains the same. One of the key elements of a really fruitful and joyful celebration of the Sacraments is an effective programme of preparation. I am delighted, then, to support a programme of preparation, developed here in Diocese of Ossory, as a means to ensure that children can be well prepared to celebrate these Sacraments in our parishes later in this school year".

Under the leadership of Reverend Dr Dermot Ryan, the team that wrote the programme sought to develop an innovative parish-based preparation programme that would permit children and their families to journey together towards the celebration of the Sacraments in the context of their parish communities.

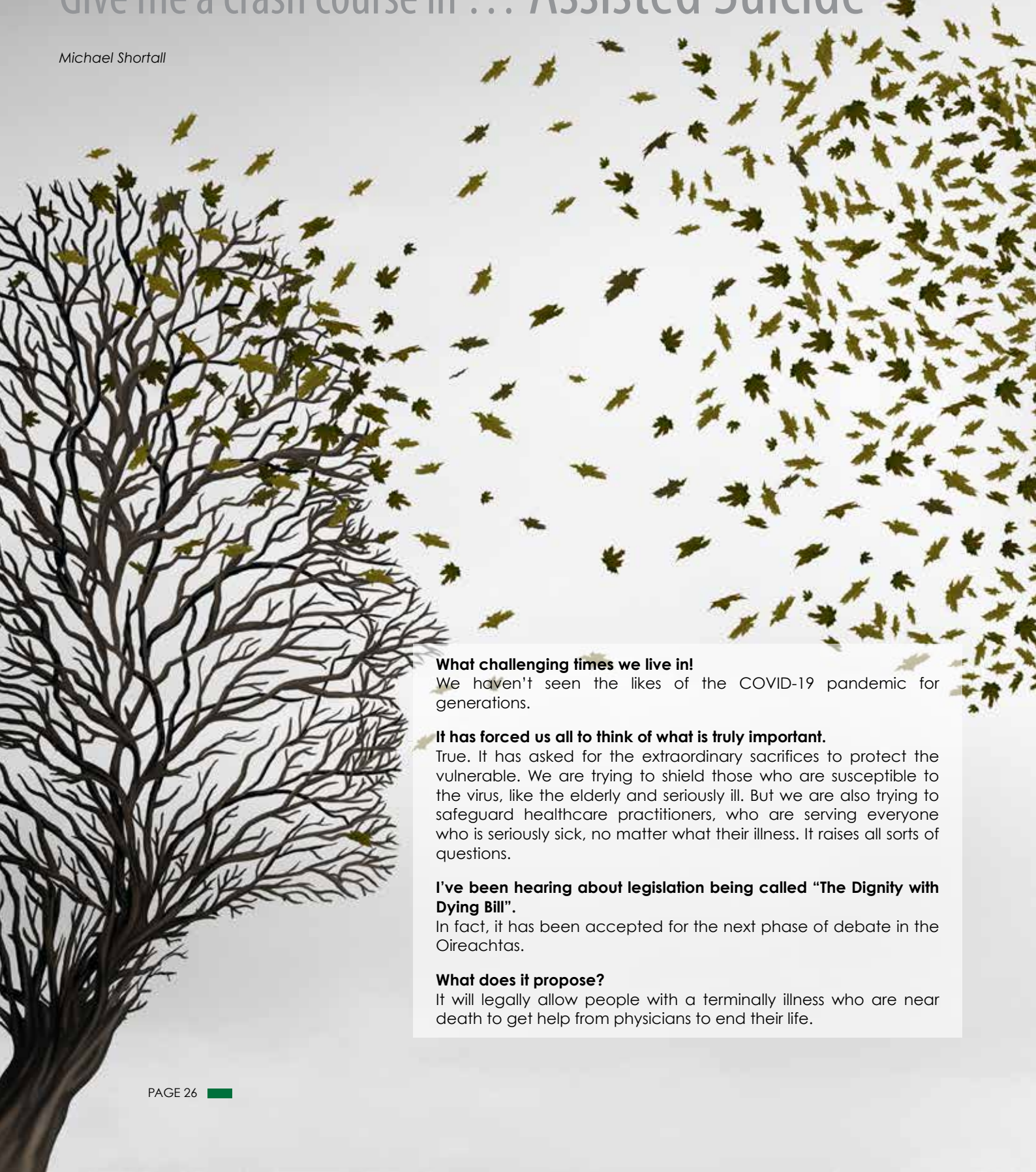
Commenting on the programme, Fr Ryan noted that "this online and interactive programme 'walks' children through the steps necessary to understand, appreciate, celebrate effectively, and then live the Sacraments. We introduce them to Ich Thus, a most important fish, who will guide those preparing for Communion and Confirmation, in different ways, to the same result. Online video modules, online interactive games/challenges and quizzes to reinforce learning, downloadable resources; moments of prayer; an appreciation of the journey towards celebrating the Sacraments are the key elements of what we hope will be a significant support to parishes in their efforts to help children on their faith journey".

The programme of preparation contains short taught classes helping the children understand key points of each module; there are then games, quizzes and challenges to reinforce learnings along with a short video in each module for parents to help them understand the key points of every step of the journey. This programme is in effect a real journey with each step being necessary to unlock the next part module of the journey. Parish leaders, with the aid of this preparation programme, can lead children through modules which are released as the year progresses. Mirroring life itself, the life-long journey towards a nourishing and fruitful engagement with Sacraments starts now. The programme is already available to parishes at MyFaith.ie



MORALITY MATTERS

Give me a crash course in ... Assisted Suicide

Michael Shortall**What challenging times we live in!**

We haven't seen the likes of the COVID-19 pandemic for generations.

It has forced us all to think of what is truly important.

True. It has asked for the extraordinary sacrifices to protect the vulnerable. We are trying to shield those who are susceptible to the virus, like the elderly and seriously ill. But we are also trying to safeguard healthcare practitioners, who are serving everyone who is seriously sick, no matter what their illness. It raises all sorts of questions.

I've been hearing about legislation being called "The Dignity with Dying Bill".

In fact, it has been accepted for the next phase of debate in the Oireachtas.

What does it propose?

It will legally allow people with a terminally illness who are near death to get help from physicians to end their life.

Is that Euthanasia?

Not exactly. Euthanasia refers to the intentional ending of the life of a person with a terminal illness (or with a gravely serious condition) by someone like a doctor. The Bill is better described as 'assisted suicide'. In this case, the patient will be taking the lethal doses themselves to end their own lives. The drugs and the oversight are provided by a physician or someone close to them. Simply put, in euthanasia the doctor undertakes the action of taking life; in the assisted suicide it is the patient who does the act of taking their own life.

Either way, it's still taking life, is it not?

Yes. In our society, we still consider intentionally taking life as murder. While taking one's own life is not illegal, our society still considers it a tragedy, in which a person could have been supported through their pain or despair.

According to the Catholic tradition, while the circumstances may change (in this case, the person is terminally ill), the action remains the same (intentionally taking life). In the words of the Catechism to do so is "gravely contrary to the dignity of the human person and to the respect due to the living God, his Creator (no 2277)."

Some people go through horrendous experiences due to an illness that is irreversible and incurable.

Illness makes the patient very vulnerable. The right and good response is to be moved by compassion for her or him. The greater the need, the more our compassion needs to be real, constant and supported. Recent church teaching presents care as a reflection of the actions of the Good Samaritan.¹ While serious illness can rob a person of their self-worth, real care will see always see a person's deeper dignity and will act accordingly. True compassion is about faithful care, even to the point of sacrifice – which we have seen as a society over the past several months. In a phrase: "in-cure-able does not mean un-care-able".

What of palliative care?

Palliative care is a type of medicine and nursing. In the words of the WHO (World Health Organisation) – about which we have heard these past months – it improves the quality of life of patients and their families facing the problem associated with life-threatening illness. Many of the fears of those who consider assisted suicide concern their quality of life. They are understandably worried about losing physical or mental abilities. Yet palliative care has become adept at meeting a patient's needs in a dignified way near the end of life.

In palliative care, don't doctors use medication that can hasten death?

Another concern is pain or discomfort. Doctors rightly do all that they can to ease suffering. Sometimes, the medication – such as morphine – can bring about death quicker than might be the case. The medication is measured to sustain comfort, not overly prescribed to bring about death. No one is choosing directly to bring about death; rather there is acceptance of the immanence of death, and renewed commitment to support the patient and family through it.

So, does the bill say anything else?

It lays out the criteria. For example, it would only apply to people over 18 who have an 'incurable' illness, verified by two doctors. The patient must have the capacity to request it, which is also assessed by the doctors, and be able to state their intention clearly to a further witness. It is for the doctors to ensure that everyone is following the procedure.

It seems like a lot rests on the doctors?

You're right. And many doctors are very concerned that it places them in a contradictory position. Apart from the basic moral code of not taking life, one of the most basic ethical principles of physicians: "do no harm". They are about saving life, not taking life.

That reminds me. It also seems contradictory to rightly sacrifice so much to look after the seriously sick as we are doing right now, and the same time, pass a law that would empower the taking of life.

Yes, it seems to me that the bill will further undermine healthcare's commitment to everyone to the very end. It will, I believe, be yet another example of what Pope Francis describes as our "throwaway culture". In this connection, Pope Francis has spoken of a "throw-away culture" where the victims are the weakest human beings, who are likely to be "discarded" ... every personal life should instead be understood to possess a unique and unrepeatable value with a promise of and openness to the transcendent. In this culture of waste and death, euthanasia and assisted suicide emerge as erroneous solutions to the challenge of the care of terminal patients.²

1. Search online and read Samaritanus bonus: On the care of persons in the critical and terminal phases of life (22.09.2020).

2. See Samaritanus bonus (2020), Part IV.

One way we can acknowledge that generosity
is by prudent use of those resources

Ossory Diocesan Finance Council

Geoff Meagher

What is the background to the Finance Council?

The Ossory Diocesan Finance Committee provides support and advice to the Bishop on finance issues and ensures good governance, and transparent and prudent management of our resources. The Diocesan Finance Committee is primarily advisory in its nature, though there it has a deliberative role in some matters. It is at the very heart of the governance of the Diocese.

Canon Law required that the diocesan finance council consist of at least three people, though in practise it is usually larger. They are appointed by the bishop and need to be expert in financial and civil law. The members of the finance council are appointed for a five-year, renewable term. The financial administrator of the diocese may not be a member of the finance council, though he/she attends meetings. The Bishop or his delegate preside over finance council meetings. Even when a diocese is vacant the financial administrator, as a mandated person, and the diocesan finance council continues their work.

The role of the diocesan finance council centres on assisting, advising and giving (or withholding) consent from the bishop:

1. It assists the Bishop in administering the diocese. Examples include:
 - prepare the annual income and expenditure budget for the diocese in accordance with the direction of the bishop;
 - account at the end of each year for income and expenditure.
2. It advises the Bishop. There are occasions when the bishop is required to seek the finance council's advice but is not obliged to follow it. Examples include:

- the appointment of the diocesan financial administrator;
- acts of financial administration of major importance.

3. In matters of financial matters of extraordinary importance the Bishop needs the consent of the finance council. If the bishop carried out these actions without the consent of the council, he acts invalidly. The most significant example is:

- give or withhold consent regarding acts of extraordinary administration. The Episcopal conference of each country determines that constitutes 'extraordinary administration'. The Irish Bishops have decided that the any alienation of property valued in excess of €348,460 on the part of any Church body subject to the bishop (diocese, parish etc) requires the permission of the bishop and the consent of the finance council. If the transaction exceeds €3,484,595 require the additional permission of the Holy See.

Why have such a Council?

The law of the Church makes Diocesan finance councils mandatory. In November 2018 the Charities Regulator published a very helpful Governance Code which explains the minimum standards that a charity should meet to manage effectively and control its financial affairs. With the advent of this Code - 2019 was a year of learning and preparation, 2020 is the first year that registered charities are required to comply with the Code and 2021 will be the first year that charities will be required to report on their compliance with this Code.

Is the Charities Act relevant to the Diocesan Finance Council and Office only?

No! Under the Charities Act every charity must have a unique Charity number. The diocese of Ossory has one charity number

which includes all parishes. Under the Act the audited financial statements of the Diocese are published annually. These include all financial activities of the Parishes. Therefore, the Trustees of the Diocese, who sign the annual financial statements, need reasonable assurance that financial procedures are being adhered to in all material respects throughout the Diocese. Parishes have been very supportive in meeting the new requirements and ongoing improvements are continually being made.

What then does the Diocesan Finance Council do?

- The key areas that the Council review and advise include –
- Review of annual financial statements of the Diocese in terms of compliance with the Charities Act and all relevant legislation including understanding the key trends arising from the accounts and any recommendations considered appropriate to the Bishop regarding the finances of the Diocese and the presentation of the annual accounts.
- Review the financial controls and procedures at all levels within the Diocese and where weaknesses arise advise in terms of corrective actions.
- Review and comment on the Risk Registers, at both Diocesan and Parish level, and advise as to whether the Registers appear to cover all the key risks and whether the proposed actions in response to any weaknesses arising are appropriate.
- Examine any large - scale capital expenditure being proposed and any large-scale asset disposals.
- Review overall income and expenditure of the Diocese and advise Bishop on any trends beginning to emerge and then suggest corrective actions that might be considered.
- Review assets held by Diocese and ensure that the appropriate systems in place for their control, also ensure ownership and title to assets is clear and links in with values as presented in Diocesan financial statements.
- Review of annual Budget of Diocesan Office

How often does it meet?

As a group we meet three to four times per year, but we do meet more often if a particular event or transaction requires review.

Who are the current members of the Council here in Ossory?

Current members are Bishop Farrell (Chair), Fr Dan Cavanagh VF – Parish Priest Rosbercon, Fr Frank Purcell – Parish Priest Instioge, Siobhan Collier – Partner PWC, Anne Marie Duncan – Accountant in public practice, Michael Murphy – Accountant in public practice, Elizabeth Wall – Frank Wall Mans Shop, James Walsh – Walsh's Toyota Garage and Geoff Meagher – Secretary to the Committee – retired Group Finance Director Glanbia PLC and currently Non Executive Director of a number of Companies including Chair of Bord Na Mona PLC.

The Council is supported in their work by Tom Keating, Diocesan Financial Administrator (volunteer role), Michael Dundon, part time Diocesan Accountant and Sheila Walshe based in the Diocesan Office.

How does work of the Diocesan Finance Council compare with that of Parish Finance Council?

They very much complement each other. A Parish Finance Council provides the same support and guidance to a Parish Priest as the Diocesan Finance Council does for the Bishop. Having a Parish Finance Council has long since been mandatory in Church Law and in the Charity regulation requirements. It is important that Chair of Parish Finance Council is familiar with the key Charity Act requirements and can be the person to liaise with the Diocesan office where help or advice is needed, thus supporting the Parish Priest in his work.

Is all of this not red tape gone mad?!

No!! The public are generous donors to their Church in many different ways, including financially, we can never take that for granted. One way we can acknowledge that generosity is by prudent use of those resources to help us ensure that the Gospel is brought to life in the most helpful ways in our Parishes and Diocese. We also honour this generosity by being fully transparent in all transactions, and by complying fully with Church law and the Charity Act requirements in this area. Knowing that this is the case – we, the people of the Diocese, can then be fully assured that all our procedures are operating within best practice and guidelines and for the most advantageous promotion of the Gospel here in Ossory.



Life in Lockdown

Jim Murphy

1. Quiet and Peaceful

Did you notice how quiet and peaceful it was? We could hear the birds singing. Will you ever forget the wonderful weather and the glorious sunrise in May?

Down the Bishops Meadows Walk, I watched the sunrise over the Weir at 6.10am on May 31st. One of my friends Willie McTiernan came every morning to swim and he exultantly praised the pleasant water temperature. I was tempted but declined the offer.

I found it very important to have a daily schedule for prayer, liturgy, reading and physical exercise. The dogs brought me down the fields for an hour, some days by the river, and some days in the Millennium Woods. The wise expression “mens sana in corpore sano” – a healthy mind is a healthy body- is worth remembering.

2. Gratitude

I am so grateful to my neighbours who

did the shopping, brought fresh loaves of bread, scones, eggs, jam and gifts of meat and vegetables. There was also an odd bottle to lift my spirits. Thank you to all who looked out for your priest.

I have experienced love and care from dear and faithful parishioners.

3. Technology

It has been wonderful to have been able to celebrate Mass every day during the lockdown. My friend Jed Parle rigged up a small transmitter on the organ loft of the Church and I had the microphone in the front room. When I switched on the mic, the system came alive and I was heard on the web and the Parish radio. My neighbours across the street in The Spires must have been wondering at the priest vested and celebrating Mass all alone.

We pay the IMRO bill every year so I could play the music online and on radio. We had a piece of classical music to start with and also for conclusion. It was great

to get the reaction of the listeners.

Somebody shared with me the merits of an Epsom Salts foot bath. I tried it and it was unbelievably good. Of course I shared this news one day in the broadcast and there was a sell-out of Salts in the local pharmacy! One dear lady told me she was bathing her feet at Mass time. It must have been a little bit of Heaven!

4. Eucharist

It was a very intimate celebration of the Eucharist. I found it awesome and deeply spiritually enriching. Every day we had a reflection the day's Scripture Readings.

May I recommend Fr. Martin Hogan's book of reflections on the weekday readings. It was a wonderful support and help to our daily prayer. His reflections for next year 2020-2021 is entitled "You have the Words of Eternal Life" – (Messenger Publications www.messenger.ie) It is a great resource for parishioners and priests who like to base their daily prayer on the

weekday readings of the liturgy. Having the Magnificat (www.magnificat.com) at hand was very useful too. It contains the readings and prayers for the Mass each day of the month. This has been a quiet time when I had an opportunity to read and reflect.

My prayer for you is to enjoy the presence of the Lord in the silence. Listen to His Word.; Appreciate how near he is to us. Look forward in hope to a time when we will be able to breathe freely and safely.

Look out for one another, Wash your hands, keep a safe distance, and try not to be afraid.

*"The trees are in their autumn beauty,
The woodland paths are dry,
Under the October twilight, the water
mirrors a still sky;
Upon the brimming water among the
stones
Are nine and fifty swans
(The Wild Swans at Coole) W.B. Yeats.*

Together we pray...



Mass available online

- **St Mary's Cathedral** www.stmaryscathedral.ie
- **St Canice's Parish** www.stcanicesparish.ie
- **St John's Parish** www.stjohnskilkenny.com
- **Castlecomer** www.castlecomerparish.ie
- **Mooncoin** www.mooncoinparish.ie
- **Templeorum** www.templeorumparish.com
- **Urlingford** www.ossory.ie/urlingford



Each Sunday morning, at 9.30am, a live Mass is celebrated on KCLR96fm broadcast to the people of Kilkenny and Carlow;

and on Community Radio Kilkenny City at 10.00am





Ray Cleere

As the Holy Year of 1950 approached, Radio Éireann (as it was then) officials considered ways in which the station could mark the occasion. During the late 1940s the then Secretary of the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, Leon Ó Broin, had discussed the idea of a daily spoken broadcast Angelus with Dr. John Charles McQuaid, the then Archbishop of Dublin. Charles Kelly, then the Director of Radio Éireann was also consulted but he was not in favour of that proposal. After further discussion they concluded that “the introduction of speech would be a mistake and they should experiment further simply with a bell”.

Initially, they considered using a gramophone recording of an Angelus bell; that would be easier to manage

and there would be no wind-noise, birdsong, and mechanical noises. There was also the issue of the punctuality of a human bell-ringer. However, despite those setbacks the decision was made to go ahead and to broadcast a “live” bell.

The task began to find a suitable bell-tower where a microphone could be safely installed. In 1950, only one church in Dublin had an electrically operated bell, the Franciscan Church in Merchant's Quay. The church was inspected by Mr. J.M. Ferguson, the then Radio Éireann Engineer but it was quickly made clear that Dr. McQuaid wanted the Pro-Cathedral bell to be used.

Leon Ó Broin told Charles Kelly that the Archbishop “is inclined to insist on



the relays being taken from the Pro-Cathedral; so we may take our cue from that". Diplomatically, Charles Kelly had also listened to the Pro-Cathedral bell and found it had a "nice quality and pitch. The matter has reached the stage where the principle of doing the thing is agreed and how it can be done is one for engineering minds".

Dr. McQuaid, who had an interest in horology (the art of making clocks and watches), had also asked that the first stroke of the bell should be at 6p.m. precisely. That meant automation and a foolproof clock system. The engineers, led by Mr. J.M. Ferguson set to work and a ringing mechanism was discussed and designed by him. As to the number of strokes of the bell, Archbishop McQuaid

had directed that the sequence 3-3-3-9 was the correct format allowing for the recitation of the prayers.

In August 1949 the "Irish Press" newspaper reported that "about next December the sound of the Angelus bell will follow the 6p.m. time signal from Radio Éireann". On Wednesday, May 23rd, 1950, the Minister announced that arrangements were being made to have the Angelus rung over the air each evening at 6p.m.

Equipment was installed in the Pro-Cathedral for the operation of the bell automatically. It was controlled by a master clock in the GPO. While the mechanism rang the bell twice daily, only evening peals were broadcast in the beginning. But it is now rung at noon and at 6p.m.

Delays in delivery of the special mechanism meant the January 1950 deadline was not met. It was then decided that the next most appropriate date was the Marion Feast of the Assumption on August 15th. The blessing was attended by the entire management of Radio Éireann.

The Angelus was first broadcast 70 years ago on Tuesday, August 15th, 1950. It has been broadcast almost everyday in the 70 years since then. When television began on January 1st, 1962, the "Angelus Bell" was played from a tape and was accompanied by old master paintings of the Annunciation.

Periodically, the broadcast Angelus becomes the focus of public controversy but it can claim its place along with the News and the Weather Forecast as the longest running fixture on R.T.E.

On St Patrick's Day, March 17th, 2013, Pope Francis addressed a large crowd in St Peter's Square, in Rome, after he delivered his first Angelus prayer four days after he was named the 266th Pope of the Catholic Church, and the first Pope from the Americas.

Working together, bringing the community together and watching the children eagerly participate brought the essence of a “parish community” to life

First Communion in Covid-19 times

Siobhan Treacy

Little did we guess when a group of St Canices's parish parents met with Fr Jim this time last year, that our children's First Holy Communion would be cancelled due to a worldwide pandemic! In September 2019 we formed our parents committee in order to prepare our children for their special day.

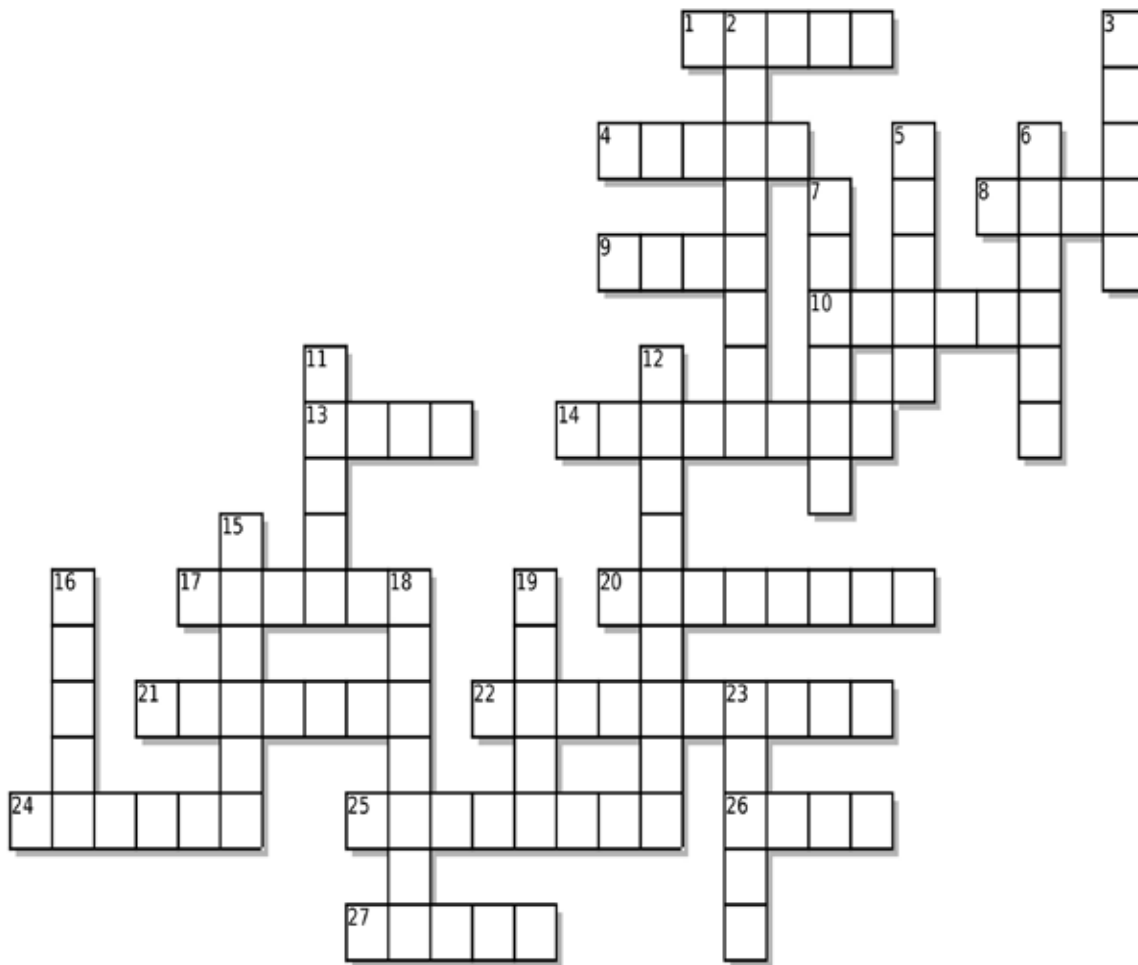
Being a primary school teacher, I was familiar with preparing a class for the Sacrament of Holy Communion. It was great to be involved in the preparation as a parent and get a different perspective. There were 75 children preparing for the Sacrament. The committee followed “do this in memory of me” and together with Fr Jim and the teachers helped to prepare the children for their monthly mass. It was a nice way to meet other parents. Working together, bringing the community together and watching the children eagerly participate brought the essence of a “parish community” to life.

We were really in our stride regarding preparing the children and the Masses by March 2020. I can still remember the nervous excitement that my little boy had as he held my hand walking to the Parish church for his Sacrament of Penance. We all gathered in the Church on the 3rd of March blissfully unaware of what was on the horizon. This was the last time that he was in the Church until he made his First Holy Communion on the 20th of September 2020.

Fr Jim and the school principal continued to prepare the children remotely by having online Mass when we were permitted to do so. Lockdown was a lesson for the children. From my own point of view my children learned the importance of community. We all looked out for our family, neighbours and friends. “Love one another as I have loved you.” John 13:34. Life became simpler and less materialistic. The importance of the family and community was amplified.

When the Communion was postponed it wasn't met with huge remorse but with determination that they would eventually make their Communion if we kept working together. When the day finally arrived in September it was a pared back ceremony. We kept everything simple and this lack of fuss made the important elements stand out. When my child received his First Holy Communion I was focused on him and not distracted by the events after the communion like the food, the bouncy castle arriving on time, the details and excesses that existed in pre Covid times. We missed having siblings, Granny and Grandad at the ceremony. The singing was also something that was greatly missed. However, it was still a very special day for our little boy. The Communion children of 2020 will be remembered forever.

ADVENT CROSSWORD 2020



ACROSS

- 1 Seal of the Covenant in Exodus
- 4 Given by God
- 8 Ancient Roman day
- 9 One of God's promises to Abraham
- 10 ___ fideles
- 13 Image for Christ in Revelation
- 14 Quality of those who will inherit the earth
- 17 Hometown of Paul
- 20 Pope's summer home
- 21 Paul sent these
- 22 Asking for forgiveness
- 24 Saint
- 25 St Monte Casino
- 26 Forward to the resurrection of the dead
- 27 First day of Lent

DOWN

- 2 Sadly a new reality
- 3 In my father's
- 5 One of the seven deadly
- 6 A time of waiting
- 7 Saint for throat
- 11 Making the sign of the cross
- 12 making the invisible - visible
- 15 of Dublin
- 16 Island Acts 27/28
- 18 Little of the poor
- 19 Jesus said to put it away
- 23 Caesar for one

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 10th December 2020, first
correct entry from the hat wins!

Prize for age 5-8

**Colouring
Competition**

€20 Voucher
Gift Voucher
for Toy Shop

Prize for age 8-13

**Wordsearch
Competition**

€30 Voucher
Gift Voucher
for Toy Shop

**Prize for Adult
Crossword
Competition**

€50 Voucher
Gift Voucher
**for Chapter House
Bookshop**

**Congrats to the winners
from the Ossory Times
Issue 23 competitions:**

Adult Crossword:

Elizabeth Hanrahan

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

Emma Malone

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

Paddy O'Neill

Colouring Competition



For ages 5-8



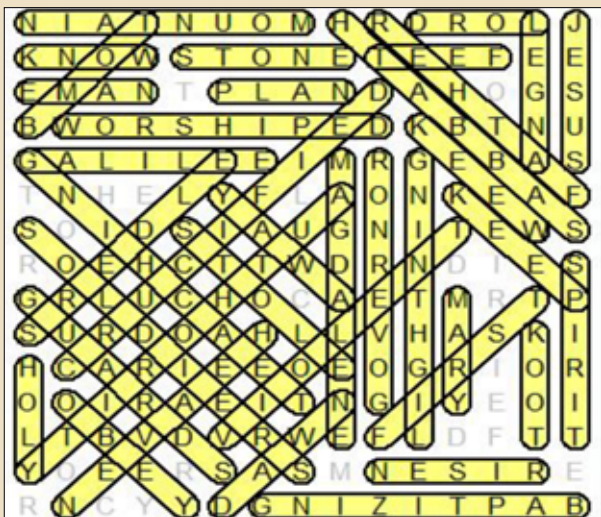
Wordsearch Competition



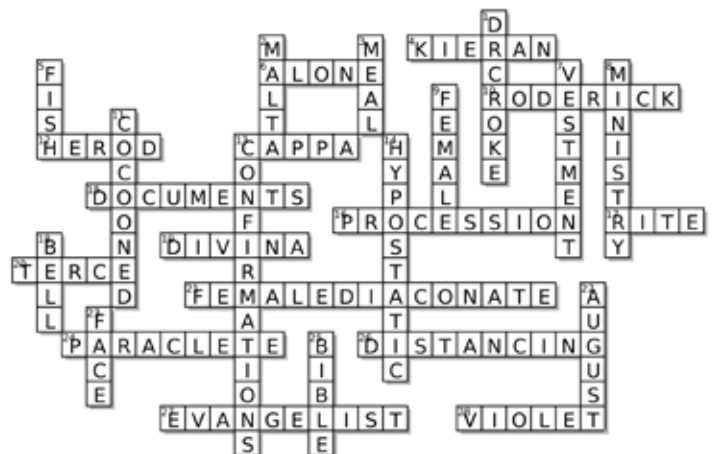
For ages 8-13

B J P E G R I D E P L A Y E D
 M E R J R D A E H A N E M O W
 O S O O E G N I L L I W P L E
 D U P H A J I L E A D B N T S
 G S H N T R E P D W A E H T W
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 D D P M E S C D E S S E R D N

AHEAD	FORCEFUL	REPORT
BAPTIST	FLUTE	RECEIVE
CROWD	GREATER	RISEN
BLESSED	JESUS	REPLIED
CURED	HEAVEN	SIGHT
CALLING	JOHN	SWAYED
DANCE	KINGDOM	SPEAK
CHILDREN	MOURN	WILLING
DESERT	PALACES	TRUTH
CLOTHES	PLAYED	WOMEN
DIRGE	PREPARE	WRITTEN
DRESSED	RAISED	
ELIJAH	PROPHET	



Answers to Ossory Times Issue 23



DIOCESE OF OSSORY
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL
RESTORATION FUND DRAW
2020/2021

12 MONTHLY DRAWS

March 2020 to February 2021

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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