



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

Coming together is an essential aspect of our faith. We learn of God from others in the first instance and then, throughout our lives, it is with others that we live that faith. Community and gathering is at the heart of our Christianity. The pandemic we are living through has made that more difficult but proof of the importance of our being together is found in the many, creative, ways that parishes have made that still possible - even when we were asked to stay apart: radio; facebook live; webcams; recoded messages; tweets; texts and so much more. Being together is not only sustaining us, it is essential.

At their winter meeting 2020, the Irish Episcopal Conference asked the Irish Church to walk a Synodal journey together. Pope Francis, in launching the Universal Synodal Pathway in Rome recently, recognised that similar pathways had started in some countries - among them Ireland. But what does Synod mean? Literally it means walking together, and as we have already recognised this is at the heart of our Christianity. What it means in practice is that, over the years ahead, we will, in a concerted way, listen to each other - to everyone - those who practice and those who have ceased practice - to try discern the promptings of the Holy Spirit for our Church today - to answer the question - how does God want us to be Church in today's world? It is then a radically exciting time to be part of our Church.

As always this edition of the *Ossory Times* shows the life of faith here in our Diocese and parishes. It is a wonderful account of just some of the many acts of faith - where we as the people of Ossory come together to live our faith, prompted by that same Spirit. Over the summer months there has been great activity in our Pastoral Areas with many inviting Bishop Denis, as Apostolic Administrator, to join them for moments of prayer and reflection: Confirmation for all of the City in UPMC Nowlan Park; Prayer in the Abbey in Gowran; gathering in Ballyragget and so many other wonderful moments spent together. The day to day life of the Diocese continues too and that is, as always, also captured in this publication.

Welcome then to the latest edition of the *Ossory Times*. 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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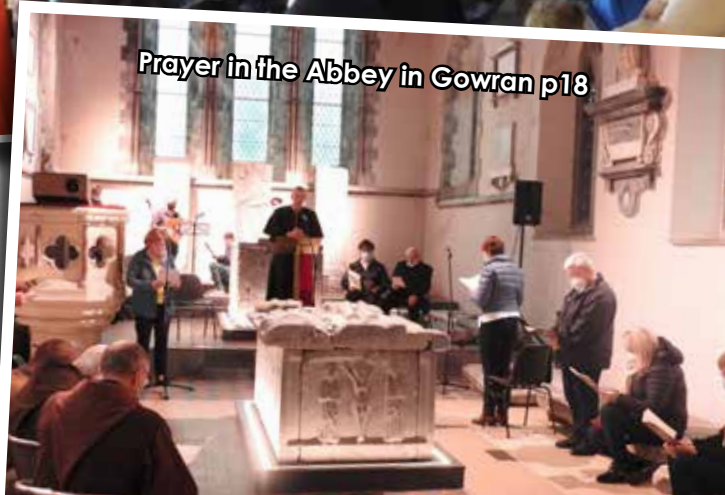
in this issue

Editorial	1
Launch of the Universal Synodal Pathway	2
Synodal Pathway	4
Confirmation 2021 in UPMC Nowlan Park	6
Pastoral Letter September 2021	12
Season of Creation	13
Funerals and Covid	14
Forming Liturgy Groups	16
Celebrating Liturgy in St Canice's Parish	17
Evening Prayer in Gowran	18
Preparing our future together	21
Our Pastoral Areas - alive in faith	22
Presentation of Benemerenti Medals	27
Aspal	28
Disciples of the Day after Tomorrow	30
St Kieran's College Priests' Reunion 2021	32
MyFaith.ie	34
Sacraments in a Pandemic Time	36
Remembering and Living	38
Parishes demonstrate readiness to return	40
The South Transept, St Mary's Cathedral	42
Quiz Pages	47

Confirmation 2021 in Ossory p6



Prayer in the Abbey in Gowran p18





Homily of Bishop Denis Nulty
Apostolic Administrator of Ossory



Launch of the Universal Synodal Pathway

St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny, 5.30pm Sunday 17th October 2021

In other years when October 17th doesn't fall on a Sunday, we celebrate St Ignatius of Antioch. Commentators suggest that St Ignatius was the little child taken up by Jesus into His arms, whom we hear about in the previous chapter of Mark's gospel^[1]. The child held so tenderly and placed centre-stage by Jesus is offered as a template for all who wish to welcome and receive Jesus. It's a beautiful feastday to launch the diocesan aspect of this universal synod. So what exactly is a Synod?

It comes from the two Greek words: *syn* and *hodos* meaning "to journey together". I mentioned earlier the comments often said about my pace of normal walking! A Synodal process goes at a pace of its own. I and all of us need to modify our step. A son told me at a recent funeral, what his dad said when their mam died: "that's the end of a wonderful 62 year journey". They had been married for sixty-two years. A Synod brings all of us on a journey.

For the Church in Ireland, this universal Synod with the title: *For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission*, coincides with our own Synodal pathway towards a national Synodal assembly in the next five years. Synod invites us then to travel on a journey, a journey together, but a journey where

we are uncertain of its destination or end point. The synodal pathway is not a journey to some conclusion, final paper or document, the results of which we can implement. The journey, the pathway itself brings change, it's a whole new way of being church.

The key question at the heart of our synodal pathway this evening is: *What does God want from the Church in Ireland, the Church in Ossory, the Church of St Mary's Cathedral parish at this time?* Not what do I want, you want, we want that neatly accommodates our agenda; not what does that group want that ticks the boxes of various red button issues; not what does the polar opposite group who are more interested in maintaining a system and structure that was built for a different era. *What does God want from the Church in Ireland at this time?* is the question being asked of all people, both within the Church and in society at large, to share their insights into the Catholic Church in Ireland – past, present and future – so that we can prepare for a National Synodal Assembly in the coming years.

In Ossory, as we begin this process of walking together as a Diocese, we are not starting from scratch. So much has happened in this Diocese going back many years. I think of the Ossory



Diocesan Forum. I think of the many assemblies, gatherings and focus groups. I think of the life that is very much part of the Deanery structure – Northern, Middle and Southern. I think of the thirteen Pastoral Areas where collaboration and cooperation with one another is essential to the mission.

The period of *sede vacante* is not a fallow period where nothing happens, or nothing can be done. It is a time when seeds are sown that will be harvested by those who come after us. Over these past months I have established the Ossory Planning Group with representatives from every facet of Diocesan life. They have been tasked with digging deeper into the pastoral life of the Diocese with the intention of offering the next Bishop of Ossory, and those who will work with him in leading this Diocese, a blueprint to work out of, resting on the shoulders of all the good that has gone before.

There is always the danger that today's Gospel from St Mark might not be heeded and we might become more entrapped in our silos of power and control, of parish and boundary, of ditch and bridge – the antithesis of service. There can be a temptation among people of faith to get sucked into the vortex of polarisation and fragmentation. "I am for Paul, I am for Apollos"^[2]. It's too easy to forget we are all for Christ. He travels with us on our synodal journey. We must allow space for His dream to root in our hearts and in our conversations. Last Sunday Pope Francis appealed to us: "Let us not soundproof our hearts; let us not remain barricaded in our certainties. So often our certainties can make us closed. Let us listen to one another"^[3]. Let that listening begin as I launch the Universal Synod here in the heart of Ossory, the mother church of the Diocese.

[1] Mk.9:36-37

[2] 1Cor.3:4

[3] Pope Francis, Homily in St Peter's: 10 October 2021

Prayer for the Universal Synodal Pathway

We stand before You, Holy Spirit,

as we gather together in Your name.

With You alone to guide us,

make Yourself at home in our hearts;

Teach us the way we must go

and how we are to pursue it.

We are weak and sinful;

do not let us promote disorder.

Do not let ignorance lead us down the wrong path

nor partiality influence our actions.

Let us find in You our unity

so that we may journey together to eternal life

and not stray from the way of truth

and what is right.

All this we ask of You,

who are at work in every place and time,

in the communion of the Father and the Son,

forever and ever.

Amen.

Put simply it is an opportunity for listening and dialogue - it has at its heart a process of humbly learning together,

Dermot Ryan

Synodal Pathway

For a synodal Church:
communion, participation
and mission.

Recently the Papal Biographer Austin Ivereigh noted that this Synodal Pathway upon which Pope Francis has taken us, could be "potentially the most transformative moment in Catholicism since the Second Vatican Council".^[1] With such strong words, to surely focus our minds, we must ask the question, what is this Synodal Pathway about which he speaks?

Put simply it is an opportunity for listening and dialogue - it has at its heart a process of humbly learning together, and from each other - how it is that God is calling us to be as the Church in the third millennium.

It is then, both liberating and frightening: it is liberating in that none of us is expected to know the answer but in equal measure it is frightening in that all of us together are expected to discern that truth. Deep down we know, as the preparatory Document for the Synod reminds us, this Holy Spirit like the wind "blows where it will; you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes" (Jn 3:8). So in asking the question - we cannot predict the outcomes.

What, then, is it that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us today? What are we hearing? Or, more curiously, what are we not hearing? Our movement towards each other and our act of asking that question is, in itself, a clear declaration that we have not yet heard it all; or fully understood that which we have already heard. The Synod, then, is an honest admission that we still have much to learn about our faith and our being Church at this time.

The *Vademecum*, for this synodal understanding of Church, reminds us that "synodality is not so much an event or a slogan, as a style and a way of being by which the Church lives out her mission in the world. The mission of the Church requires the entire People of God to be on a journey together, with each member playing his or her crucial role, united with each other"^[2]. This journey then is one we cannot go alone, not as individuals nor, I think, as a Church community - some small nucleus of faithful followers on some introspective examination. This Synodal journey onto which we are called is an invitation to a radical inclusiveness - one that, by its very nature, embraces all in dialogue.



And to where is this journey intended? Curiously, the guiding document is clear on this fact that “the objective of this Synodal Process is not to provide a temporary or one-time experience of synodality, but rather to provide an opportunity for the entire People of God to discern together how to move forward on the path towards being a more synodal Church in the long-term”^[3] - this synod, then, is not destination driven - it is intended to transform us; and more significantly our understanding of church.

Maybe not transform - if to remind us is sufficient. The Church, after all, by its own understanding is intended to be synodal: we function from a belief that all people matter, and that every voice counts. Our Christianity is most alive when it is attentive to the other. Understanding a synodal mindset demands that we truly begin to recognise Baptism as the Sacrament to unlock not just mere membership but also a mandate for action. Ours is a Church in which all are called to lead its mission; all are called to speak its truth; ours is a Church in which all are called... This pathway then is not a journey to some conclusion; a final paper or document, the results of which we can then implement. This pathway will itself bring change - it is a journey to a new location; a new way of understanding ourselves and a new way of living. It is better understood, then, as a culture change, a metanoia, as a return to how it was begun, and how it should be intended.

But what then in real terms does this mean? It means that all will have a voice: those who attend frequently, even daily; those who attend sporadically or merely occasionally; those who have left from a simple fall off of practice; those who have left hurt, angered, betrayed; those for whom there feels no welcome; those who were Baptised but for whom Church life has never been a cause of concern; those we have not thought of, have forgotten or have ignored, the young, the old - in fact all! In the ceremony to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod of Bishops in October 2015, Pope Francis made clear this wide consultative nature of the Synodal Pathway when he issued a direct invitation to all the People of God noting that: “every

one of the Baptised should feel involved in the ecclesial and social change that we so greatly need”. This net cast by a fisherman has been thrown radically wide. It is a net that has been thrown again anew into often old waters. On Sunday 10 October he reminded us of the radical nature of the listening required, “The Spirit asks us to listen to the questions, concerns and hopes of every Church, people and nation. And to listen to the world, to the challenges and changes that it sets before us. Let us not soundproof our hearts; let us not remain barricaded in our certainties. So often our certainties can make us closed. Let us listen to one another”^[4].

The Irish Bishops at their Winter General Meeting in 2020 decided to proceed upon this, all important, Synodal Pathway for the Irish Church to run in tandem with the exploration of the very same path for the universal Church. It is clear then, the first phase of this Synodal process must be, as a response to its intended message, a listening in our local churches to the voices of all remembering, as we earlier reflected, that this Holy Spirit for whom we listen like the wind “blows where it will; you can hear the sound it makes, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes” (Jn 3:8).

As we begin this process it serves us well to remember that the purpose of the Synod, is not to produce documents, but, as Pope Francis reminds us “to plant dreams, draw forth prophecies and visions, allow hope to flourish, inspire trust, bind up wounds, weave together relationships, awaken a dawn of hope, learn from one another and create a bright resourcefulness that will enlighten minds, warm hearts, give strength to our hands”^[5].

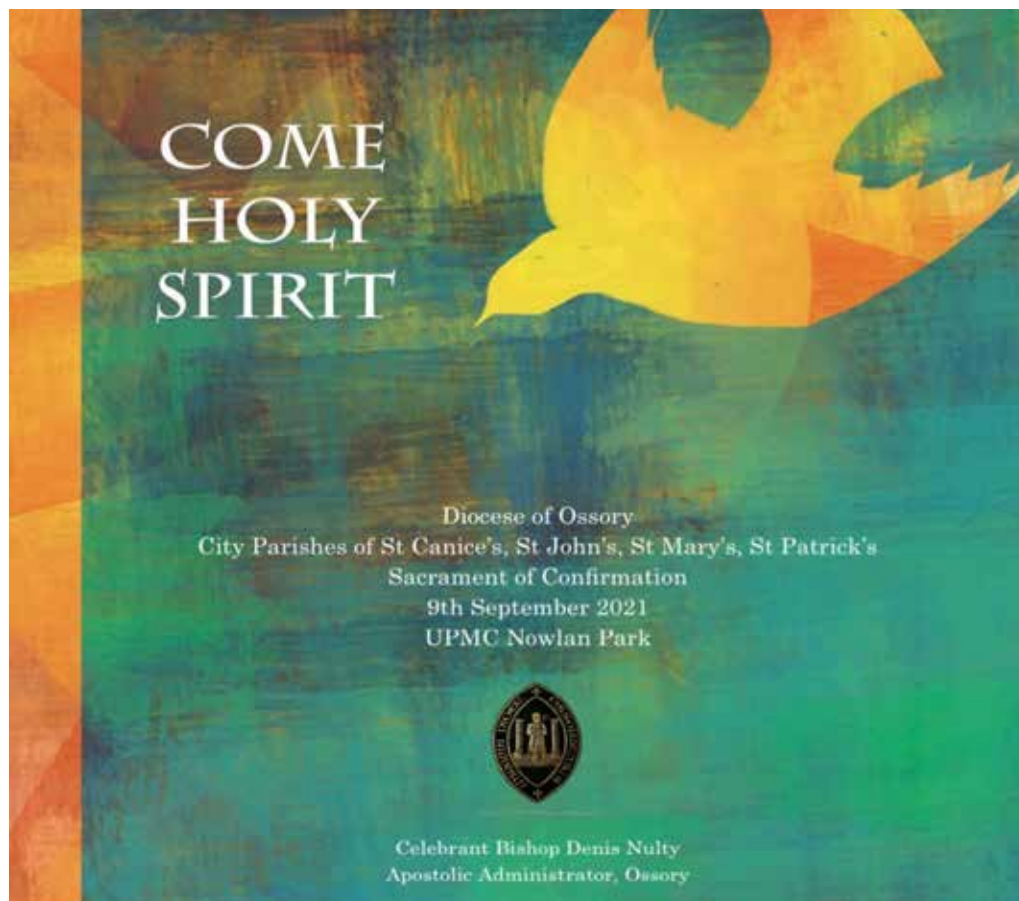
1 Ivereigh A., The Spirit in the Assembly: Preparing for the synod on synodality, Commonwheel Magazine, September 16th 2021.

2 For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission, The *Vademecum*: For the Synod on Synodality, 1.3, Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops, September 2021

3 For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, and Mission, 1.3

4 Pope Francis, Homily at the Opening Mass of the Synodal Path, (10 October 2021).

5 Pope Francis, Address at the Opening of the Synod of Bishops on Young People, (3 October 2018).



Confirmation 2021 in UPMC Nowlan Park

St Patrick's de la Salle BNS

Laura Brennan, Acting Principal

Last June, we were informed that the students in the Kilkenny city parishes would be receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation in Nowlan Park on 9th September at 6.30pm. Initially, I was unsure how this would work. Over 400 students would be receiving the Sacrament on the same night and I was concerned that it would not be manageable. I was also a little disappointed that our students in 6th class in St Patrick's De La Salle would not be receiving this Sacrament in a church as they usually would. However, we have

all learned so much since March 2020 in every aspect of our lives, both personal and professional and we realised that we need to adapt and change. The most important part of this was receiving the Sacrament itself and not the location.

I attend the ceremony on the 9th September along with the two 6th class teachers who taught our students last year, Niall O'Flaherty and Jack Byrne. Immediately, we were very impressed with the level of organisation that greeted us. The gardaí were on hand to manage the traffic and once we entered the grounds, stewards were available to show you where to go. Each parish had different sections to sit in. We are part of

St Patrick's Parish and we were guided to our area/section. Beautiful mass booklets were also available to all and we were all asked to sit socially distanced. Everything was compliant with health and safety guidelines for Covid 19.

The hour-long ceremony was beautiful and very special as it was in UPMC Nowlan Park, the home of Kilkenny hurling. It was obvious that the Apostolic Administrator Denis Nulty, Rev. Fr Dermot Ryan, the Kilkenny city parish priests and GAA officials had been working hard on the logistics and organisation of holding this *en masse* Confirmation for several months. There was great excitement and not only was it a great occasion for the students to celebrate receiving the Sacrament, they also had the chance to reconnect with friends who had gone

onto different secondary schools. During the ceremony, Bishop Nulty explained how important the ceremony would be in their future lives and how the students would look back and remember that they were confirmed in UPMC Nowlan Park during a pandemic. The feedback I received from the students and parents that night was excellent. Everyone enjoyed the evening and thought it was extremely special and memorable.

CBS Primary School

Niall Bergin, Principal

The 9th of September will be remembered as an unusual but particularly special occasion for the CBS school community and St Mary's Parish. The opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation



in such uncertain times was one which our students and parents were most grateful for. Moreover, to have such a well organised, spiritual and safe event celebrating such an important occasion in the children's lives was one that will be marked in our minds for years to come.

392 pupils from the four parishes in Kilkenny City gathered with their families to celebrate the long-awaited sacrament which they had spent the previous year preparing for with their class teachers, Ms Minogue, Ms Ní Bheacháin, Ms Cantwell and Mr Cuniffe. The CBS boys were more than ready for their Confirmation thanks to wonderful preparation by Sr Maria Comerford and Fr Scriven including a zoom meeting with Fr Liam Bergin, all the way from Boston. The boys also celebrated the Ceremony of Light with their classmates in St Mary's Cathedral leading up to the Confirmation Ceremony. It was lovely to see all of the boys reunited for this significant event.

On arriving at UPMC Nowlan Park there was an atmosphere of excitement and expectation. While the buzz around the stands was clear, there was a calmness about the whole event from the parking to ushering to the correct section to the ceremony itself. Apostolic Administrator Denis Nulty had ensured that all eventualities (including unpredictable weather) were considered and the ceremony went off smoothly. As Bishop Nulty commented, these would not be the first prayers ever said at UPMC Nowlan Park!

The various parish schools were ushered to separate sections in the stands and social distancing ensured that everyone was seated in a safe manner. Thanks to Rita Neary and Ger Cody for registering the pupils of St Mary's Parish on arrival. The procession of Bishop Nulty and the priests into the stadium was a fantastic sight to see and the 2,500 crowd of pupils, parents and sponsors were brought to a hush by the beautiful opening hymn sung by the amazing Orla Phelan accompanied by

James Rice. The order of proceedings flowed seamlessly and Bishop Nulty spoke to the congregation, involving the pupils in the Sacrament from start to finish. He spoke about persistence and never giving up and the Ceremony itself was a testament to the positive and proactive attitude he models for the pupils.

The Sacrament was carried out on the pitch itself and almost 400 pupils with their sponsors made their way down the steps of the stand to Bishop Nulty and Fr Scriven where they were anointed with chrism and sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit. The 6th class of 2021 in *Scoil Iognáid de Rís* will cherish the memory of their extraordinary Confirmation Day in extraordinary times.

A unique occasion where, for once, all participants left UPMC Nowlan Park as winners!

St John's Parish

Frank Bradley

In late 2019 before most of us had heard the words COVID or Coronavirus, thoughts in our house were turning towards our daughter Emily's Confirmation which would be happening in the next 12-18 months. For Emily's birthday I had bought her the book *Stories of the Saints*, as I wanted her to start thinking about what saint name she would choose. Toward the end of 2020, in the middle of another lockdown, we had little expectation that the Confirmation would be happening in the early months of 2021.

Throughout 2021 we were waiting to hear what the arrangements would be. When we finally heard in late summer that the Confirmations would be happening in UPMC Nowlan Park, our initial reaction was a mixture of thankfulness that it was happening, but also surprise that it wasn't happening in our parish church. Our other daughter Lucy had made her First Communion 12 months earlier and we were expecting something similar,



with multiple services catering for smaller groups.

Since May, we had been working our way through the online MyFaith programme that Fr Dan had sent us. We were grateful to have some content to help Emily focus on, in the months ahead.

The Monday before the Confirmation, I took Emily to the Ceremony of Light at St John's Church. It was a beautiful service and it was great for Emily to see some of her primary school friends again and of course her teachers.

The next day, we got unfortunate news that Emily's younger sister had been deemed a COVID case close contact and our plans for the Confirmation had been thrown into disarray. My wife and I were planning to go to the service in UPMC Nowlan Park, along with my sister, who was coming down from Derry to be Emily's sponsor. While waiting for COVID test result, we couldn't have anyone in our house to mind the other children, so we decided that my wife would attend the ceremony and I would stay at home with my other daughters and watch the livestream.

Emily and her mother had a lovely evening. They commented that everything was very well organised and that we had been blessed with fine weather. There was a real sense of community spirit and after a long 18 months it was great to see so many people together in one place. Watching at home I felt mixed emotions. Sad that I couldn't be there, but happy for Emily and the other children for being able to celebrate this important Sacrament.

I think this is something that should be considered again, even if God willing, the pandemic passes. Perhaps in these times when the Irish Church is struggling to connect with most people, there is a lot to be said about bringing celebrations like this out into the community.

Presentation Primary School

Sr Maria Comerford. RSM. Sacramental Coordinator in St Mary's Parish

Our preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation for 2020 began in the usual way. The Enrolment Ceremony was followed by two meetings in January 2020 in the Chapter House at the Cathedral. Neighbouring priests helped with the Sacrament of Reconciliation in the schools. February 18th: At the Ceremony of Light parents brought the Baptismal Candle and after it was lit from the Paschal Candle they formally handed on the light to their daughters and sons. Saturday February 29th - Leap Year in 2020 - Bishop Farrell celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation; boys and girls all ready, confirmation names printed, pledges taken. Confirmation ceremonies all over for 2019/2020. And as usual, we then turned our attention to First Communion. First Penance on Tuesday 24th and First Communion set for May. Or so we thought!

And then all changed. COVID 19 and lockdown. Home schooling. Zoom meetings. Isolation. 'Stay apart to stay well'. First Penance was cancelled and First Communion rescheduled to the Autumn. October brought more cancellations and our final First Communion ceremony eventually took place in December, five sleeps before Christmas!

And then we began to think about Confirmation 2021. Very soon it became clear that the ceremony would not take place in the usual manner. The schedule of 2019/2020 would not be possible. It was difficult to visit classrooms and so we relied completely on our teachers to follow the sixth class programme in Grow in Love. We hoped to build on this work nearer to the celebration. But, that was the big question. How could we celebrate. It very soon became clear that whatever would happen it would be different. And so the proposal to celebrate the Sacrament in UPMC Nowlan Park was presented. The

schools were positive - a different year - a different way of doing things.

And so we made contact with parents with the date and time, September 9th at 6.30pm in UPMC Nowlan Park. Sponsors and parents were invited to attend and a few extra were invited at the last minute.

We scheduled a zoom meeting for parents and children on Wednesday, September 1st, at 7.30pm. This worked well. The zoom link was sent out and parents, who were now experts on connecting into zoom calls, joined the meeting.

We were delighted that Mgr Liam Bergin joined us from Boston College. Mgr Liam talked about the connection between Baptism and Confirmation. Confirmation continued what was done at Baptism. On that occasion parents were charged with the duty to pass on the faith to their child. And so Confirmation completes what we did around the Font.

I spoke about the importance of the Confirmation name, the witness of good people like Blessed Ignatius Rice, Nano Nagle, Saint Francis, and countless others who lived lives of faith and made a difference. Also, the significance of name changes in both the Old and New Testaments and how a change of name usually indicated a new commitment.

Fr Scriven talked about the Oil of Chrism and the Ceremony Of Anointing.

Ms Deasy and Mr Bergin said hello to all, wishing everyone well and saying how they looked forward to meeting in Nowlan Park. Bishop Nulty joined us remotely and wished all well as we looked forward to gathering on Thursday night.

Monday 6th and we gathered in St Mary's Cathedral for the Ceremony of Light. It was great to meet everyone in person. A little bit of normality after all the restrictions. Everyone got a bottle of holy water that was used by the parent to bless their child and the child to bless their parent with the sign of the cross on

the forehead. The Baptismal Candle was lit and the Light passed on. Fr Scriven spoke about the arrangements for Thursday night in 'the Park'. Dress was informal - Fr Scriven even said they could wear a jersey - though for some reason he didn't want any Liverpool jerseys! He's a Sunderland supporter.

Thursday 9th and the Parish Secretary and myself welcomed everyone to Section B of the stand and checked details: names and Confirmation names would need to be correct for the Confirmation Register in the Parish Office. The teachers helped to give everyone a booklet for the night. Fr Scriven told us the B in Section B meant Best.

Bishop Nulty led the ceremony. Readings, prayers and a sermon before each candidate approached Fr Scriven and Bishop Nulty for the anointing with oil - a sacred moment that lost nothing in the venue that was a long way from the usual sanctity of the Cathedral.' Be sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit' - a formula that is centuries old followed by the greeting of peace. Fr Scriven reminded those from the CBS not to forget Edmund Rice and his care for the poor and less well off. The girls from Presentation were reminded to keep the lantern lighting- a reference to Nano Nagle and the lantern that she carried on her journeys to seek out the poor of Cork.

A lovely night ended with photos and congratulations to all involved. A different year, a different way of celebrating the Sacrament but the same Gifts of the Holy Spirit. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide our young people. In years to come when they perhaps come looking for a Confirmation Certificate when they are getting married they will remember this strange year when we managed to do everything a little different in UPMC Nowlan Park on a lovely September evening.

In September Bishop Denis, as Apostolic Administrator of Ossory, posted a Pastoral Letter to the all the children of our diocesan primary schools. Teachers enjoyed discussing its contents with the children as the school year began.

Pastoral Letter September 2021



Bishop Denis Nulty
Apostolic Administrator of Ossory

Imagine what Jesus was doing at your age? He was a normal boy growing up just like you are. He had to learn things. He had to make friends. I am sure he played sport too. Try to imagine what hobbies and interests he had? What are the things that you like - might he have liked them too? Try to imagine what his school days were like.

The Bible tells us that Jesus “grew in wisdom and stature” (Luke 2:52).



A young Jesus at play - artist Aisling Smith

Your school days are so important. You learn lots: maths, history, spellings, your times tables if you are old enough. But, in our schools, you learn a lot more too.

You learn how to share, how to be kind, how to include others. I think the most important thing you learn is how to make friends. Some of my best friends are those that I made when I was your age. In primary school, playing on teams together. Imagine what type of friends Jesus would have had in school? What were they like do you think? Would your friends be among them?

Last year and again this year our schools are a little bit strange. We are not able to do a lot of usual things. We are washing our hands a lot - but that is ok. We are doing all this for each other - to keep each other

safe. Aren't we always being reminded at home to wash our hands!

Use your imagination again. God wants you to use it - that is why he gave it to you. What do you want to be when you grow up? Can I tell you something really important; something that Jesus teaches us; something that I now know - with God's help we can become anything, with his help we can do anything. So dream big and start today - you have lots of people to help you get there.

Don't forget to say thank you to your friends, to your teacher, to your family, to God. They are all there to help you, like Jesus did, to grow in wisdom and stature.

+Denis Nulty
Apostolic Administrator of Ossory

Season of Creation

'Restoring our Common Home'



The theme for the Season of Creation 2021 was 'Restoring Our Common Home'. During this month we were asked to join together to celebrate creation and protect our common home through prayer, reflection and action.

Indigenous bulbs were planted in the wild garden at Mother of Fair Love School in Kilkenny to mark the end of the season of Creation, on the Feast of St Francis of Assisi.

Bishop Denis Nulty, as Apostolic Administrator, attended and gave a helping hand. He said he was delighted to visit the school 'on the last day of the season of Creation to plant a few spring bulbs with students Leah and Joshua'.



Enda Malone, Mary Cody, Marian O' Driscoll (Principal Mother of Fair Love School), Joshua Hawe, Leah Nolan, Bishop Denis Nulty and Pat Boyd (Keep Kilkenny Beautiful (KKB))

In God, the connection between the griever and the grieved is never broken, and will be restored in eternal life.



Funerals and Covid

Michael Shortall

Funerals have been an integral part of Irish culture. But will we say the same about the future? Will the severe restrictions on funerals during the Pandemic have a lasting impact? Perhaps you can help us find out?

A poll in The Irish Times in 1999 named Mid-term Break by Seamus Heaney as the third most popular poem in Ireland. It recounts the funeral of his young brother Christopher. Heaney is called home from boarding school.

When I came in, and I was
embarrassed

By old men standing up to shake my
hand

And tell me they were "sorry for my
trouble,"

Whispers informed strangers I was the
eldest,

Away at school, as my mother held
my hand

In hers and coughed out angry
tearless sighs.

He experiences the practices and rituals of a funeral for the first time: community gathering, public mourning, presenting the body, stock phrases and gestures of respect and comfort, flowers and candles.

One important function of funerals is to help us mourn. The most well-known

model outlining the process of grief is that of Elizabeth Kubler-Ross (*On Death and Dying*, McMillan, 1969). She identified five stages: denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance.

Dr David Kessler was a young doctor when he collaborated with Kubler-Ross. Recently he returned to the five models (*Finding Meaning: The Sixth Stage of Grief*, Scribner, 2019). Reflecting on his own professional in palliative care and the personal experience of the death of his twenty seven year old son, he recognised a sixth stage. He calls it 'meaning'. Grieving is unique to each person. At the same time, common to everyone is the desire to make sense, in some way, of life without a loved one.

Key to this process is what he terms 'witnessing'. It is the need for a space and a way to speak to the experience to someone else who is fully present to the magnitude of their loss. The griever, in such moments, is able to express in word and emotion their relationship to the person who has died. By doing so, the connection is remade in a new way, allowing the griever to move on with their own life – or at least 'muddle on through.'

The term 'witness' has religious overtones. It is not a term often used in the Irish Catholic tradition. Yet, the funeral and rituals that are commonly practiced in Ireland during grief do provide a space and opportunity for witnessing to the stark reality of death. At a traditional wake, the loss is made is made very real, while neighbours and family gathers to tell stories. The funeral prayers and Mass help place the experience within a wider Christian meaning of hope. In God, the connection between the griever and the grieved is never broken, and will be restored in eternal life.

From March 2020 onwards, public health measures were imposed to minimise the risk of virus transmission. Immediately these measures impacted mourning families, and those that supported them

such as funeral undertakers, clergy, neighbours and so on. You will recall that during periods of lockdown, only 10 mourners were allowed to gather for Funeral Masses; in periods of trying to live with COVID, the number was 25.

Attendance at wakes in private homes and at funeral homes was for family only. Public reposals and gatherings were not permitted and actively discouraged. For instance, the bereaved were advised that they could 'still place a death notice [on local radio or on RIP.ie], but no times or venues of the funeral [should be] published online, by radio or in print.' Instead they had to 'let those who are to attend know privately.'

As a result, many of traditional funeral practices had to be abandoned, or transformed and, in some cases, new practices constructed. Will this have a long lasting impact?

On behalf of myself and Dr Aoife McGrath, we would like to invite you to participate in our research on this area. The main purpose is to explore the experiences of funeral directors, ordained, lay, and religious ministers, and other people in local faith communities, and learn how the pandemic impacted Catholic funeral from participants' perspectives.

You can take a survey at www.maynoothcollege.ie. If you would like to share your experience of a funeral during the pandemic, you can also contact us through the website.

One reason I believe why Midterm Break was so popular is because of the familiarity of funeral within the Irish culture. The poem finishes:

Wearing a poppy bruise on his left temple,

He lay in the four foot box as in his cot.

No gaudy scars, the bumper knocked him clear.

A four foot box, a foot for every year.

From the beginning, let the group develop and grow in an understanding of the liturgy and its 2,000 year tradition.

Forming Liturgy Groups

Sr Moira Bergin

When the world-wide pandemic, Covid-19 hit our shores, our county, and, in particular, our parish, we experienced great restrictions as we came to Church, even at times, a lockdown on our Church activities. Now that we are returning to a 'new normal' we take the opportunity to begin afresh, in many ways, including in our worship together.

We need good liturgy that brings us closer to God and to one another. Good liturgy happens when a parish takes serious responsibility for it. Having a liturgy group in place is one very definite way of ensuring this responsibility. A liturgy group or commission will provide a structure to enable this. From the beginning, let that purpose be clear and understood, not just by the group, but also by the parish. It is by taking part in the liturgy that the group and parish grow in their understanding of our duty to worship God in the celebration of the saving events of the life, death and resurrection of Christ.

Let the first task of the group be to observe and to know what is happening in the parish, on Sundays and weekdays, on feasts and times of fasting, on ordinary occasions and special events. Discovering what is happening, the reality of parish life and liturgy, can be the first task of the group as it takes note of all who have a special ministry such

as readers, music ministry, ministers of Holy Communion, baptism and funeral ministry, sacristans, ministry of stewarding and welcome, clergy... (A parish may not have all these ministries but it is a goal to aim for). In this sort of audit, the group will discover strengths and weaknesses. They can build on the strengths and set about addressing the weaknesses.

From the beginning, let the group develop and grow in an understanding of the liturgy and its 2,000 year tradition. An understanding of all the various ministries and how they function together is a crucial and important element. Liturgy groups are ultimately, servants of the entire faith community, therefore know who you are serving by keeping an eye on the various groups in the parish, the traditions of the parish and how people are participating week-to-week, Sunday to Sunday. These principles enable honest assessment of a parish's needs and help to set long term goals for the liturgical life of the parish. All this demands quite a lot of energy, commitment and time for the task of serving one's faith community. Let us not forget that a sense of humour, patience and a strong prayer life are essential elements for the beginning and continued success of the group.

Getting started may or may not be easy as we make big claims as we move

forward into the 'new normal' by taking on this worthwhile, important and exciting work that of serving our community to experience our liturgy in its fullest form. Vatican II put it very simply: liturgy is 'the summit towards which the activity of the Church is directed; the fount from which all her power flows' (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy 10).

Let the parish select five to nine people for this group not just to represent their

various ministries but who will work together as a team. Look out too for that someone who has a special interest in the Church's worship

The task now is for a parish to form a group that will have people who know the importance of liturgy, will have the time, patience and good humour that will allow the Spirit to bring them on a path of faith, expressed in worship, worthy of God and of God's people.

Celebrating Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist in St Canice's Parish

Peggy Slattery



A few years back, Fr Jim Murphy trained a small group of parishioners to conduct a Liturgy of the Word and Eucharist should a priest not be available at some point in the future to offer the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Moving forward a few years, Fr Jim had to spend some time in hospital and a number of weeks recuperating. Tom Norris could not be expected to be available every morning for Holy Mass. No worries! The team was ready and available. A schedule was drawn up for the months of July and August for Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. The Liturgy of

the Word and Eucharist was conducted by two rotating teams of three - a leader, a reader of the Word and a Eucharistic Minister. Of course, a most important part of any Liturgy is the presence of the congregation. The numbers did not fall off. People appreciated having the Liturgy of the Word and being able to receive Holy Communion each morning.

A sincere thank you to the members of the two teams, from the parishioners of St Canice's. The booklet used for the service was prepared by Fr Kieran O'Shea.

...the gathering holds memories, not resting in stone but in prayer, memories that bring joy, memories that celebrate new life, memories that rise like incense into the heart of God...

Evening Prayer in St Mary's Abbey, Gowran

Diarmuid Healy



For the first time since the Reformation, Evening Prayer took place in St Mary's Abbey, Gowran where on a wet September evening over 100 people gathered for the historic ceremony.

This was the initiative of the three parish cluster of Clara, Gowran, and Tullaherin. Bishop Denis Nulty, the Apostolic

Administrator, led the prayer with readings and music provided by parishioners of the cluster parishes.

In his homily, Bishop Nulty explained that this initiative was one of a series that he had encouraged in recent months across the thirteen pastoral areas that make up the 42 parishes of Ossory.



He added that each pastoral area is encouraged to create a reason, a liturgy, a moment to come together.

"What Pope Francis has referred to as discovering *"new forms of accompaniment and closeness"*. This evening it is the moment for the cluster parishes of Clara, Gowran and Tullaherin", he added

This was the first gathering of a series of celebrations being planned for the cluster area. Fr Willie Purcell and Fr Pat Dalton joined the Bishop for the evening prayer.

Explaining the history of the Abbey, Bishop Nulty said that worship and prayer stretches back in these parts 2,000 years.

"The Christianised Ogham stone in the Abbey Chancel or Sanctuary is a reminder to us of ancestors who stood here before us in this sacred place", he added.

"We give thanks to the Butler's of Ormond and the many other philanthropists of

their day for tending to and decorating this abbey. While Church of Ireland worship ceased here in the 1970's, both the OPW and Gowran Development Association are to be thanked for their care and upkeep of what was once known as the Church of St Mary, the Virgin of Ballygowran. And thanks to them for the permission to use the Abbey for our prayer this evening".

Introducing the evening, Fr Willie Purcell said the gathering holds memories, not resting in stone but in prayer, memories that bring joy, memories that celebrate new life, memories that rise like incense into the heart of God, memories of loved ones carried in love to rest at the foot of the altar of love.

He added that it also holds memories of fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, neighbours, friends, parishioners, memories of those whom we have never known and whose stories are known only to God, our gathering this evening holds these memories in our hearts and this place will continue to hold the memories



of who we are when others gather to pray and remember us.

Reminding the gathering that this particular day was World Day for Migrants and Refugees, Bishop Nulty said that trauma was a huge part of a migrants and refugees story.

"Pope Francis asks us to stop using terms like *'them'* and *'those'* and start talking in terms of *'we'*", he added. "It's a huge challenge. It's a complete rethink, an entire recalibration of our value system. We have watched the scenes unfold at Kabul airport as the American withdrawal timeline advanced".

Bishop Nulty explained that Pope Francis's appeal is two-fold. To ask the Church to become more *"catholic"*. We must widen out tent to embrace everyone. The migrants offer us *"a new frontier for mission"*. And to the world to be more inclusive.

"We must build bridges that foster a culture of encounter", he continued. "As an Irish society, as parishes we have a huge record of charity and compassion. This shows what St Peter calls *"the*

genuineness of your faith". Now is the time once again to dig deep in our welcome, our inclusion towards the full participation of migrants and refugees in the life of all our parishes.

"This evening's Entrance Hymn for Evening Prayer is based on the prayer called *'St Patrick's Breastplate'*. Patrick was a migrant and refugee who was himself trafficked into Ireland. His experience on that first visit despite numerous challenges left him open to returning again, this time as missionary and evangelist. Patrick came here to Gowran in 455AD establishing churches in the area. His visit Christianised this sacred place.

"Let us welcome those who come 1,600 years later to Gowran, Clara and Tullaherin, let us welcome those who come to our shores. Let us allow them to contribute to our society, our parishes, our communities. Many of them are contributing already and that is how it should be. I reiterate my call to encourage all in authority to ensure that everything is done to improve the lives of those coming into our country for refuge and for work."

Preparing our future together

Gemma Mulligan

Some months back Bishop Denis Nulty established a group made up of those who were members of the Council of Priests, the Ossory Diocesan Pastoral Council and others to reflect on the current pastoral reality in the Diocese of Ossory and with a view to where we will be in five years' time and to explore proposals as to how the pastoral needs of the diocese can continue to be met in the coming years. This group took the simple title, the Ossory Planning Group.

Our group has met on a great number of occasions throughout the summer and again in these Autumnal months. The method the group is using to carry out its work is termed 'See – Judge – Act' – a method regularly used by Pope Francis and familiar to many through Young Christian Students. The first step is to examine the current reality (See) then discern and choose the best path (Judge) and finally plan the necessary action (Act).

Over our meetings much lively discussion has taken place and the reality of the diocese as it is now, and is likely to be in the future has been explored. Sometimes the seeing phase is the hardest as that which is obvious is on occasion hard to name. These meetings recognise the many good structures that are already in place and the much work that has already been undertaken but to face the future new avenues had to be grasped.

Fr Eamonn helped the group to remain focused and in our not drifting from the task we have come now to a stage of exploring the Act element of the process. In this phase the areas identified in earlier meetings are now explored with a view to highlighting some concrete proposals. Our discussions have been widespread but the areas we are currently exploring in order to find these proposals are:

Renewing Structures/Renewing Faith

Renewing faith in the community needs

to be a priority, after all, what else are our structures for? The structures that served so well in the past of building faith in the community are no longer working – in any case, they are simply no longer sustainable.

Role of the Priest/Role of the Laity

The diminishing number of priests has created a sense of urgency around what is essentially a much deeper problem. Any talk of vocations needs to now include lay vocations – ministry needs to include lay and ordained ministry.

Faith/Life

We need to somehow bridge the gap between life and faith. Is weekly practice our only measure of faith? Many people are seeking and searching but somehow don't feel that the Church has anything to offer them.

Education

The school system has been a structure that has been part of faith development over the years but this now needs to be revisited.

Liturgy

Good liturgy – well celebrated – can be a means of renewal. Unfortunately, poor liturgy achieves the opposite.

Covid

Covid has changed so much – we will now have a post-Covid church; already there are signs that people may have fallen away and a cohort of people may have been lost; evangelization will be key.

We have identified proposals emerging from two of these areas - liturgy and education; but they have yet to be finally agreed. No doubt when this work is done - at least the identifying aspect of the work - a full account will be shared with all. It is only then that the real work will begin!!

Our Pastoral Areas - alive in faith

Ossory Pastoral Areas - Lay Co- Coordinators

Aidan Brennan

During the past year, at the encouragement of Bishop Denis, the priest coordinators of the thirteen pastoral areas of Ossory have asked for a lay co-coordinator in each Pastoral area. Each of these groupings of parishes have come together to share resources and ideas and to collaborate on various initiatives that bring life to our parishes and faith life. The priest coordinators had been meeting regularly for some time now but the addition of lay co-coordinators has been a product of this past year.

The meetings are chaired by Bishop Nulty and all meetings so far have been via Zoom. While it has been the subject of much debate (both for and against) the Zoom meetings have been most engaging. Unlike previous such meetings, there is no travelling, changes of clothes, organising childminders or such like. It is just a case of switching on the computer, and having a large mug of tea at the ready and that's it.

The primary purpose of these meetings is to continue the dialogue and planning for the ever-changing nature of our church. It is a stark reality that the number of priests in the diocese are dwindling and with few ordinations on the horizon, it is evident that the laity will have a greater role in the life of the catholic church in the future. Already there have been changes where parishes now share a priest. However, in all probability, changes of this nature will continue. Discussions are lively and

most interesting and there is very active participation by all.

One of the great fruits of this first year of the co-coordinators working with our priests has been that, by now, most pastoral areas have held some event/occasion over these past month for which they have had the opportunity to invite Bishop Denis to attend. Most notable in the city parishes was the collaboration for the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation which took place in UPMC Nowlan park for the children of all the city schools.

Working together - sharing our talents is surely the future.

A visit to "An Tríonóid" the Pastoral Area of Ballyragget, Conahy and Lisdowney

Paula Stapleton

For a long number of years the Priests of Ballyragget, Conahy and Lisdowney have worked together supporting each other whilst maintaining the individuality of each parish. It was natural then that these three Parishes would blend to form a working Pastoral Area. "An Tríonóid" is the name given to the Parish Pastoral Area of Ballyragget, Conahy and Lisdowney also known as ParishesBCL.

Representatives from the three Parish Pastoral Councils have come together under the guidance of our Pastoral Area Administrator and Parish Priest Fr Eamonn O'Gorman, to pool ideas for sharing resources. Our mission statement states

that we as a Pastoral Area “strive to be rooted in the Mission of Jesus built on Christian values. As a Community, we endeavour to live and share our Faith in Joy and Love for one another”.

There are seven Churches in the Pastoral Area namely, Ballyragget, Ballyousskill, Conahy, Jenkinstown, Lisdowney, Clontubrid and Gathabawn. Each have a unique identity associated with their own communities.

One of our first tasks was to form a Pastoral Area Committee. The committee was made up of the Priests and representatives from each Parish Pastoral Council. Our meetings took place by Zoom during the restrictions of Covid 19.

Our next task was to establish a user-friendly website and this was given the name ParishesBCL.ie. The website gained popularity throughout the restrictions of Covid 19 as many were drawn to the weekend liturgies, daily reflections, meditations and information resources. Rosary was recited by a parishioner from each of the seven Churches throughout

the month of May and recorded for the website. The website is a useful link to parishioners with family members now living abroad or indeed living in other parts of the country. It is fresh and inviting, supporting viewers on their spiritual journey with prayer and reflection and liturgical services from each of the parishes. One of our committee members is a talented photographer and gives generously of his time in video recording and photography from the seven churches.

An invitation was extended by the Pastoral Area and the Ladywell Shrine Committee to our Apostolic Administrator, Bishop Denis Nulty to join with us in celebrating Mass at the Shrine of Ladywell on 15th August - the feast of the Assumption. This feast day has always been an important annual event in the Pastoral Area with hundreds visiting the Shrine and Holy Well to pray throughout the day and late into the night. It was a joyous occasion for all three parishes coming together with the Ladywell Committee to prepare the liturgy. The Mass was prerecorded (due to the current Covid 19 restrictions) and streamed at 3pm for all to view.





The focus of the Pastoral Area during the lock down and restrictions has been to find ways to draw people to their faith. Sacred spaces were created around various themes to bring vibrancy to our churches and to encourage reflection and time of personal prayer. Inspirational posters were produced and wallet size prayer cards with a short reflection were provided to instil calmness and peace.

These proved to be greatly appreciated by all who visited the churches. As a result of the initiatives people are taking

ownership of their Churches again by making quiet time for themselves outside of public worship.

The Pastoral Area Committee continue to work, plan and pool ideas together to provide support for individual Parishes and liturgy resources for future months. Gemma Mulligan, our Diocesan Pastoral Coordinator was invited to our meeting to provide us with some training and guidelines for Parishes working together as a Pastoral Area to ensure all members understood their role. We learned

that members are responsible for prayerfully discerning the needs of the Pastoral Area whilst maintaining the individuality of each parish, for discerning the gifts and resources available within the Area and ready to listen to the promptings of the Holy Spirit and to each other.

A Pastoral Area Office has been set up which will be a shared resource for the three Parishes once fully functioning. Fr Eamonn is leading the way by exploring renewable energy for our church buildings ensuring they are sustainable for future years. Some projects have already commenced. We are all reminded of our responsibility in caring for our Mother Earth, our common home, in our personal daily choices by looking at all of creation with wonder and awe and responding with love and compassion rather than a feeling of guilt which is in the main, unproductive.

Some of An Tríonóid current projects are

- Season of Creation - Confirmation classes had their preparation ceremony in each of the Parishes on the Feast of St Francis and their theme is Care for the Earth. The classes have been prompted to write to Kilkenny Co Co for funding to plant trees as an initiative to a greener earth. The Parishes will support the confirmation classes in their sacramental preparation encouraging them to take part as proclaimers of the Word at Sunday Mass during the season of Advent (this will encourage their families to attend the weekend Masses and encourage readers for the future). Among the initiatives pupils displayed their environmental projects in the sacred spaces in the churches.



Ballyragget - Caring for the Common Earth



Clontubrid at Easter



Conahy - Caring for the Common Earth

- Bulbs are planted in the Church grounds creating a remembrance garden which will come to bloom in Spring for those who have lost loved ones during Covid 19 lock down. Some Churches in the Parish have planted a tree.
- Plans are underway for an Ecumenical Service and harvest thanksgiving in Ballyouskill drawing a wide community from various denominations together in prayer across north Kilkenny and south Laois.
- November will be a time to bring together all those who have been bereaved and remember all who have died over the past 18–20 months. Special services of remembrance will be held in the Parishes in that month and sacred spaces will be recreated.
- Advance planning for all liturgy is essential. Liturgy preparation within the Pastoral Area is ongoing from now until Christmas. Each Parish create their own ideas and edit the shared liturgy format to suit their own community.

An Tríonóid Pastoral Area is blessed with three very good Priests. Fr Eamonn O'Gorman provides strong leadership and offers great encouragement to all who assist in any ministry of the parishes working collaboratively with Parish Pastoral Councils and Pastoral Area Councils alike. Fr Pat O'Farrell continues to support the Parish of Lisdowney in his semi retirement and Fr Willie Hennessy has now joined the community in Conahy Parish. We welcome him to our Pastoral Area.

There are huge challenges for our Church today with much work to be done. We must be gentle and patient and lead people back with an open welcome and a sense of belonging to our faith community mindful that this is God's work and "He will give success to the work of our hands" (Psalm 89).

The Parish Pastoral Area of Borris-in-Ossory, Camross, Castletown - the view of a lay co-coordinator

Catherine Scott

Fr Jackie as parish priest of Borris-in-Ossory nominated myself from Camross Parish to join him as the lay co-coordinator in the Pastoral area of Borris-in-Ossory, Camross, Castletown and Seir Kieran in this past year. A new move for our pastoral areas undertaken with the support of Bishop Denis. Until now the priests coordinators of the pastoral areas met regularly to plan activities and share ideas and resources. I am already on the Parish Pastoral Council and Area Council and have been involved also with the NDPC (Northern Deanery Pastoral Council) so I was happy to undertake this new role.

As there is a shortage of priests in the area and my own parish experienced that very early on just before Covid struck when our parish priest Fr Lalor died I would be very conscious of the need for joined up thinking among the parishes to share resources so that the people are best served.

Since being on the Pastoral coordinators meetings I can see the effort being made by the Diocese to improve the structure of the Church and to bring it to a more sustainable Church for the future. In our area we organised a prayer service in Seir Kieran which is where the diocese sprung from with the theme "Walking in Faith and Hope" and which Bishop Nulty attended. It was a lovely occasion and we hope to have more of the same.

I look forward to see how the Church Synod will effect the future of the Church and in all these groups that the lay people will actively participate and benefit from the future Church.

The *Benemerenti* Medal is one of the highest Papal honours that can be bestowed on a member of the lay community.

Mass to celebrate the presentation of *Benemerenti* Medals

Mgr Dan Cavanagh



Kitty Cummins



Ann Doherty



Rita Dooley



Mass was celebrated by Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of Ossory, in St David's Church, Listerlin, in the Parish of Rosbercon, to present the *Benemerenti* Medals to Kitty Cummins, Tullogher; Ann Doherty, Listerlin; and Rita Dooley, Rosbercon, on 6th August 2021.

The *Benemerenti* Medal is one of the highest Papal honours that can be bestowed on a member of the lay community. The *Benemerenti* (meaning well deserved) Medal was originally established 250 years ago when it was given as a military honour to soldiers in the Papal army. However, for the past 100 years, it has been awarded to priests

and lay people who have exhibited long and exceptional service to the Catholic Church.

The current version of the medal was designed by Pope Paul VI. It is a gold Greek Cross depicting Christ with his hand raised in blessing. On the left arm of the cross is the tiara and crossed keys symbol of the Papacy. On the right arm is the coat of arms of the current Pope, Pope Francis. The medal is suspended from a yellow and white ribbon, which are the colours of the Vatican City State.

Heartfelt congratulations to Kitty, Ann and Rita on receiving this honour from the Holy Father, Pope Francis.

...something we believe can serve the Irish Church providing excellent catechetical material for faith formation to any parish in Ireland...



The Ossory Adult Faith Development Group



The Feast of Saints Peter and Paul saw the graduation of participants of a very new Pathways for Ministry course in the Diocese of Ossory. As the Universal Church celebrated the first ardent and committed followers of Jesus, men who worked to bring others to faith so too, on this occasion were new followers commissioned to undertake the same task. Bishop Denis Nulty, as Apostolic Administrator of Ossory, was happy

to commission men and women from parishes in the south of the Diocese of Ossory to become leaders in their faith communities calling others to believe.

This was the tentative first steps of the brainchild of Rev Dr Dermot Ryan and the Ossory Adult Faith Development Group who in seeing it now started said, "This is but the first step in our journey, a local launch of something we believe can serve the Irish Church providing excellent

catechetical material for faith formation to any parish in Ireland at a time and in a place that suits the participants - thereby encouraging a much greater take up of faith development".

Aspal, the Irish for Apostle, is so called to remind all those who participate that they are, by virtue of their Baptism, called to be sent - sent to share with others their faith. Even in these early stages of a collaboration with St Patrick's College Maynooth much has been learned and the immense possibilities for a really high quality means of engaging with people of faith in every corner of the country has been clearly seen.

The team behind developing the Aspal App were keen to make, by means of the most modern of technologies, our ability to understand God and to call each other to mission something that is truly ready to hand. Months of work of planning and preparation has gone in to bring the new theology to life. New technology that is helping to develop old ways.

Aspal is intended to be a point of education for people of faith. Supporting and training those who work in parishes: readers; baptismal teams; parish councils; parish administrators and secretaries; extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist;

choirs and so much more. Supporting them in their ministries; preparing them to take their place in the church community and simply helping them to better understand a God who calls them.

In "graduating" the first of its students Bishop Denis Nulty welcomed that in "preparing you for ministry in your parish communities we are but restoring old practices - albeit by using very modern technology - whereby people lead each other in prayer. In these rural communities, where we gather tonight, were not animals and crops blessed by men and women who for years carried their Easter water home, were not prayers said as neighbours died, and God spoken about in our domestic churches. Yours then is a future built on our strong past, yours is a baptism finding new life".

The summer months will see much done to ready this newly developed App Aspal to truly engage with Dioceses and parishes, throughout Ireland as St Patrick's College Maynooth and the team in Ossory Adult Faith Development continue to collaborate to bring a deeper knowledge of God into our grasp. Aspal is available now on the App Store and Android Google Play store for more see Aspal.ie.



We don't need signposts to the past or prophets of doom and gloom who can't experience or transmit the joy of faith in this moment never mind the day after tomorrow.

Disciples of the Day after Tomorrow

Kieran O'Shea



The German Jesuit theologian Karl Rahner was once described by his close collaborator Karl Lehman as 'a man of the day after tomorrow'. What Lehman meant by this is not entirely clear. It may be that he simply understood Rahner to be a man before his time given the nature of his thinking and theological reflection.

In a broader sense all of us are called to be women and men of the day after

tomorrow, to be members of the Body of Christ who's living and faith in Christ point to the Day of the Lord, a day beyond the uncertainty of the future, a day of Resurrection and the victory of life over suffering and death, a day when there will be a new Heaven and a new Earth, when all will be made new in Christ (Rev. 21). In other words, to be people of the day after tomorrow is to be a people of Hope, who witness each day to the transforming

Love of God which continually draws us towards that day when God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28).

Hope filled Disciples of Jesus, Baptised women and men who point to the day after tomorrow are essential to the mission of the Church now and in the years ahead. The Church needs people who are inflamed with the gifts of the Spirit received at Baptism and Confirmation to recognise as did the Apostles gathered for the Ascension of Jesus (Acts 1:6-11), that the mission of proclaiming the Gospel cannot be accomplished by gazing into the sky to find answers to the complexities of today, but by accepting that Christ has entered that space that is our beautiful and yet damaged earth, our homes, hospitals, nursing homes, schools, funeral homes, work places, refugee camps, streets, housing estates, prisons, sports clubs, churches, and above all that space that is the heart of each human being.

What's more Disciples of the day after tomorrow will walk the path together with their sisters and brothers, wherever they are and in what state they are, walking what we now describe as the Synodal path, knowing that Christ has gone before us into each place and each heart, leaving his footprints for us to follow and carrying the light guiding us towards that hope that does not disappoint (Romans 5:5).

Women and men of the day after tomorrow can no longer be optional extras for the church. All of us the Baptised people of God need to be reminded that we have a mission - a mission to bring the Hope who is Jesus Christ to the world around us. It is not about looking to a utopian future but to see the hope of the Day of the Lord among us in the here and now. The enormity of this task cannot be underestimated. Many of us struggle with faith, with the failings of the church, with the challenges of life. However it is way beyond time for us, particularly as a local Church to launch a new mission to

the Baptised that rekindles Christian faith, Hope and Love and a new enthusiasm for Discipleship. As Pope Francis often indicates this will not come about by changing structures or more committees or meetings. It will only come about through opportunities being presented for catechesis, for praying with the Word of God, for uplifting and meaningful faith celebrations that nourish us and which affirm that no area of our life is exempt from the presence of God.

Faith, and particularly Hope, can only be rekindled in others by those who are on fire with these gifts themselves. This is why it is so important that those who respond to the call to serve and lead in the Church as lay or ordained ministers should themselves have travelled the road of discipleship and be truly women and men of the day after tomorrow. Those who embrace the call to ministry today will only attract others to Christ if they are signposts to a new day, beacons of hope in the midst of the community. We don't need signposts to the past or prophets of doom and gloom who can't experience or transmit the joy of faith in this moment never mind the day after tomorrow. We bemoan the deficit in vocations to ordained priesthood today, but how can we expect young people who are on fire with energy and enthusiasm for life to hear the Lord's voice in the lives of believers and ministers who are not on fire with the Gospel and who give little reason for Hope.

In these days when themes like communion, participation and mission are set before us let us seriously contemplate how you and I can become protagonists of these ways of being church so that we become truly women and men Disciples of the day after tomorrow, leading others to Hope through journeying with them on the pilgrimage of encountering Christ, listening to them so that they experience belonging, and giving them space to discern their part in the mission towards restoring Hope.

Mission, then, is at the heart of what we
celebrate when we gather.

St Kieran's College Priests' Reunion 2021 hearing the restored College Organ



This year the College is 239 years old; you cannot get to that age without establishing traditions!

One of its most prized traditions is the annual reunion of men ordained from St Kieran's College to serve throughout the world. As is tradition, then, on the first Tuesday after the 15th August, we gathered but once again we did so virtually. The priests of Ossory were joined by Fr Andy Dolan, Derry (Golden Jubilee) and Fr Benny O'Shea, England who was home on holidays for the celebration of

the Reunion Mass – led by Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of Ossory.

Bishop Denis reflected on the importance of reunion but also, significantly, on the big project, we face post pandemic in placing the Eucharist once again at the heart of the week for our parishioners, for our families, for our friends. We were gathered, he noted, not merely for reunion but to be sent out! Mission, then, is at the heart of what we celebrate when we gather.



A very fitting aspect of this year's gathering was that it marked the first occasion that the newly restored College Organ was heard. Following months of dedicated and careful work by Derek Verso of the Fine Tuning Company the College Organ from 1850 was once again making beautiful music. As part of the restoration many of the original pipes were managed to be retrained and so these wooden pipes from the 1850s once again played their mellowed tones. In undertaking the work Derek researched with colleagues in the UK and found photos of two extremely similar instruments both dated and signed by the builder in 1850. Therefore it is possible to confirm that the College organ was built by Bevington & Sons, London during the 1850s. Bevington was one of the most notable organ builders of 19th century and, interestingly, built many organs in the Kilkenny/Ossory Diocese (including both Cathedrals in Kilkenny, St Canice's Parish, Castlecomer Parish in 1854 and St Patrick's Cathedral Dublin in 1862. The College Organ then is in fine company and this was a most worthwhile project to have it restored.

The Mass was live streamed with over 200 logging in to view it live. Those gathered did so safely and in a very enjoyable manner. We hope and pray that when we do so next year, we will again welcome, all who want to travel, back to a College that was once their home.



MyFaith.ie



MyFaith.ie is an innovative parish-based programme of preparation which is designed to support children and their families as they prepare to celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. MyFaith.ie was launched in this past year and its immediate success saw parishes from all over Ireland sign up with children from Donegal to Limerick and Kilkenny to Armagh and many spots in between busily preparing for the celebration of Sacraments from their own homes, in the company of their parents using the MyFaith.ie parish-based programme.

This innovative programme was not designed for, but certainly was suitable, in these covid times in that it allowed children to continue to prepare remotely for the celebration of the Sacraments which are in many cases still to be celebrated. Schools and parishes are using the MyFaith.ie programme of preparation to offer lots of very rich faith content and through it helping to lead their children on a journey of a deeper understanding of their faith.

The team behind the MyFaith.ie programme consists of web developers,

animators, qualified teachers, and a support staff all of whom work to develop the programme and then support parishes, parents and priests as they journeyed with the children who were preparing. This team have created a highly interactive programme for the children to engage with. Taught content - for parents and children - is reinforced in each module through many games and interactive challenges.

But are the children enjoying it? All indications point to the fact that they are. Children are spending an average of 30-40 mins on each module with hundreds of children logging in from the various parishes each day. New modules are released every few weeks encouraging the children to continue their learning in a gradual, and as such, manageable way.

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 animated fish, who will guide those preparing for First Holy Communion and Confirmation -



often getting things wrong, but that is all part of the experience.

The MyFaith.ie programme of preparation is really simple and easy to follow. Once parishes register each child is given their unique username and password to allow them to log in and undertake the journey of preparation. Short taught modules of carefully chosen topics lead, in the first instance the children, but also with a lesson in each module for the parents, they too, are part of this journey of discovery of their faith. These taught lessons, given by Muinteoir Shannon and Muinteoir Cormac, are fun and informative and they are often interrupted by Ich Thus who is always very keen to share some of his knowledge. Once the key elements of the module are learned those learnings are then reinforced through a series of games, challenges and prayers providing the children, in an age-appropriate fashion for each Sacrament, a fun way to learn.

A Weekly Mass booklet invites the children to attend at weekend with their families and to actively participate in the celebration of the Masses by inviting them to listen carefully and reflect upon the theme of the Sunday Eucharist. Faith is learned by living it and the challenge laid down by the MyFaith.ie programme

is for the children to do exactly that - live their faith in a fun way and in so doing to learn so many of the rich truths of our Catholic faith.

Parish leaders can track the progress of the children in their group and in monthly meetings they too can reinforce learning with the help of their meeting sheets. There is the opportunity to invite the children together for these monthly meetings - a means of encouraging each other on the journey that they have undertaken together, in their parish, as they prepare for the celebrations to come.

Parents, children and the parishes that have undertaken this programme have all welcomed it as a most modern means of engaging this young generation with their faith. Seeds sown of a deep love for, and an understanding of, a God who is for them too!

It is true that a lot has changed in our parishes and Church life but the imperative for good sacramental preparation remains the same; it is when we prepare well for the Sacraments that we not only celebrate them well but also have the greater chance of living them too. The programme is now available to parishes at MyFaith.ie.

A simple gathering, receiving together. As simple as it sounds, that is what Holy Communion is all about.

Sacraments in a Pandemic Time

Ken Maher

"So how did the Communion go?"
"Great. The weather was good. All the family were down for it, although it was only us allowed into the church with him which was nice in a way". "Yeah - we were the same. It was much better. They should keep it that way from now on".

This is typical of conversations I have been having during these past few weeks with parents on the sidelines of various hurling and soccer pitches. Presumably, post-communion analysis type conversations such as this one have been taking place across our diocese in recent days and weeks since churches have been allowed to open up again for Communions and Confirmations.

My eldest son, who is now in Third Class, finally got to make his Communion on Saturday 25th September and so many things should have felt wrong about it. For instance, we are still living through a pandemic. September is not the time of year for Communion celebrations. (Plus it was 20 degrees outside!) Surely Third Class students should have already had their Communion made by now? After all, we made ours in First Class! The children didn't get any time to practice receiving their First Communion due to Covid restrictions on access to churches. My son's First Confession was made on a zoom meeting. Due to school closures, his Second Class teacher had started

teaching about making his First Holy Communion, while his Third Class teacher had to finish his instruction. He had to sign up to an online Communion course provided by Myfaith.ie. Grandparents, aunts, uncles and cousins were not allowed to come to the church. There was going to be so much wrong about making Communion for this particular group of pupils. Surely the odds were stacked against the celebration of Communion for this year at least? It all felt so wrong.

And yet despite all of the above, so much about my son's Communion felt so right. His preparation was fantastic. Not only had he one teacher, but he was in the lucky position to have had two teachers from his school over two years helping him to prepare to receive the sacrament. Supplementing this, particularly during school closures, he would log in to his Myfaith.ie account to check his progress through each of the 20 lessons about our faith while enriching his. He enjoyed the animated stories from the Gospel. He heard new stories about Jesus, learned about the Last Supper and grew to understand the parts of the mass and the meaning of Communion. Perhaps the most enjoyable part of his preparation was that we, as parents, were very much a part of the programme. We received notifications from the school about his First Confession and were given guidelines to

follow in helping to prepare him for the online Confession ceremony. Each lesson in his "Myfaith" journey contained a lesson "For the Grown Ups". He would ask us to sit beside him at the kitchen table, full of pride whilst demonstrating his ability to answer the questions or complete the puzzles, thereby completing another part of the course.

When at last, the restrictions were eased and Confirmations and Communions were announced, people were delighted to be finally able to once again celebrate the sacrament. Yet this little victory over Covid was bitter sweet as many were disappointed that Auntie Joan or Uncle Jim wouldn't be able to join us in the church. Even, Granny and Grandad couldn't come to it. They'd have to watch it at home whilst minding our other children who also couldn't go... This all felt so wrong!

And yet, when the big day came on Saturday 25th September, our son was full of joy. He was delighted to put on the suit and see we were all dressing up for this important occasion. His bothers and sisters were excited for him and busily setting up the laptop to watch him through the church webcam from home. We were allocated a time for our son's class group. 24 First Communicants with their parents only. We were assigned a seat for the three of us. Over the years of going to birthday parties, we've grown to know the parents and pupils in our children's classes. Therefore, we knew everyone gathered. We knew the communicants, their parents, the teachers and our parish priest. There was a very real sense of community. A class, their parents and teachers celebrating the receiving of our Childrens' First Holy Communion. Each child was asked to stand as the Principal of the school called out all of their names. We walked up with him to receive together. It was such a simple, yet wonderful moment in our child's journey of faith. A truly moving and powerful ceremony that all

gathered commented on when taking photos afterwards outside the church. Conversations about the new format of Communion were already taking place. "It was great that the church wasn't so packed, wasn't it?"

Of course afterwards, we all went our separate ways to our respective families on that unusually balmy September afternoon. Granny and Grandad would get their photo with him later and the cousins would join in the fun when the bouncy castle was inflated. Over the past few weeks, I've come to the conclusion that something truly special happened in the church that day. Something different from the way we have become accustomed to celebrating Communion. This was different. This was special. Our son had made his First Holy Communion, surrounded by his friends and their parents. It wasn't about the aunts and uncles. It wasn't about the bouncy castle with the cousins. It wasn't about the dinner or the Communion Cake. It was about the simplicity of those 24 girls and boys receiving the Sacrament of the Body of Christ for the first time with their parents, friends, teachers and the priest. It encapsulated all that it means to be a community, celebrating the sacred gift of Holy Communion together. Jesus broke bread and shared a cup of wine with twelve of his closest friends in the Upper Room in Jerusalem. This is how he asked that He be remembered. A simple gathering, receiving together. As simple as it sounds, that is what Holy Communion is all about.

From the many conversations I've had about that day since, I've learned that people really enjoyed the Communion in its new format, without the packed church. The simplicity of the new format was the attraction. People seemed to prefer it. Some would argue that siblings and immediate family should be allowed and maybe they're right. Either way, let's hope that they, and we, can keep it simple.

In the chapel of the Irish Martyrs in the Irish College in Rome there is a beautiful crucifix by the Cork artist Ken Thompson. It is modelled on the Irish penal cross, but the wounds of Christ are not visible.



Albert McDonnell

Remembering and Living

Where I live in Kildysart is separated from Shannon by the estuary. Irish Coast Guard Rescue 115 is based at the airport and frequently flies over my house. Each time that I see or hear the helicopter, I wonder what it's mission might be. Maybe it is simply a training exercise or perhaps they are responding to an emergency call-out. Sometimes on the news that night, I see a report of a rescue mission carried out by Rescue 115. Perhaps it was bringing a sick crew member on a fishing boat to hospital or saving someone lost at sea. Each of these reports is a reason to be grateful that we have this service available to us and particularly that we have men and women willing to risk their lives so that others might live.

Niamh Fitzpatrick is well known as a psychologist through her radio slots and her work with teams such as the 1996 Wexford All-Ireland winning hurlers and the 2017 Mayo football All-Ireland finalists. She is perhaps best known as the sister of Dara who lost her life in the Rescue 116 helicopter crash in Blacksod Bay, Co Mayo on 14 March 2017. Niamh has shared her experience of bereavement in 'Tell Me the Truth about Loss' which is fittingly described on the cover as a 'beautiful book for when life isn't what you expect it to be'.

Sudden death and bereavement certainly make our lives different to what we expected. Often, there is almost a sense of completion when an elderly person, who has enjoyed a long life lived well, dies. The circle of life is completed. We miss them, we weep for them, we pray for them, we would give anything to have them in our lives for a little longer. Yet, we knew that the day when they would leave us would eventually come. The sudden, unexpected death of a young person is even harder to come to terms with. In her book Niamh provides a moving description of going into Dara's bedroom having just heard that her helicopter had gone down. She tells us that the bed was as Dara had left it when she had received the call-out the night before. The pillow still had the indent of where her head had been as she slept. The book she had been reading was there. A life cut off in mid-stream.

So many people experience that same pain. Parents standing at the grave of their child, a husband or wife mourning the spouse with whom they had hoped to grow old, a sister, a brother, a friend taken without warning. Niamh speaks of bereavement being marked by 'firsts' and 'lasts'. Our minds continually take us back to the last time we were with the person we have lost, the last conversation, telephone call or outing. As the weeks and months go by we experience the 'firsts'. The first Christmas

without our loved one, the first birthday, the first holiday. Our world has shrunk. It is all strange and we want our old life back.

Niamh Fitzpatrick speaks of balancing remembering with living as we navigate grief. Someone once told me that he thought of his deceased loved one first thing when he awoke up each morning. He knew that the day would eventually come when this wouldn't happen anymore. On one level he looked forward to that day, but he also dreaded it. It would mean that life without his loved one had become normalised. There is truth in that, but maybe it is not the full reality. We never fully get used to the loss. Bereavement changes us. Our world is now different and there is no going back to our old life. In the beginning, we live in the shadow of our loss. The wounds become scars as we gradually move to carrying the loss of the person we have loved while living our new life without him/her.

In the chapel of the Irish Martyrs in the Irish College in Rome there is a beautiful crucifix by the Cork artist Ken Thompson. It is modelled on the Irish penal cross, but the wounds of Christ are not visible. Shortly before he carved the cross Ken and his wife Rachel had lost their little daughter. Ken wanted to represent all human suffering including the invisible pain of bereavement as taken up and made holy in the suffering and victory of Christ. Thompson's crucifix depicts Christ on the cross as the risen Lord in glory. Our prayer accompanies our beloved dead to where one day we too hope to be.

*Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord,
and let Your perpetual light shine upon
them.*

*May their souls and the souls of all the
faithful departed
rest in peace.
Amen.*

For children and young people to be involved, parishes must commit to activities being provided in a safe and relaxed environment

Parishes demonstrate readiness for children and young people to return

Kathleen Sherry, Diocesan Director of Safeguarding



During the pandemic we really missed all of the ceremonies' baptisms, communions, confirmations, weddings and funerals. We particularly missed our altar servers, our choirs, and other parish activities. The involvement of lay people and volunteers in parish life cannot be overstated. Parish life reflects intergenerational activity, and for many is where our rites of passage begin and end. Participating as a young person in parish activities presents the opportunity to develop self-confidence and being part of a team, and there may even be a cash bonus for serving mass for a special occasion or a youth choir trip away to

say thank you for your contribution to the parish. The participation of young people in parish life is vital for the continuity of parish life and their presence helps to create and maintain a sense of meaning for everyone who comes to pray.

For children and young people to be involved, parishes must commit to activities being provided in a safe and relaxed environment which protects participants and encourages participation and parishes need volunteers. The Diocese of Ossory is fully committed to Safeguarding and earlier this year joined with the Diocese of Kildare and Leighlin to employ a Director of

Safeguarding. This role also incorporates the role of Designated Liaison Person to respond to any safeguarding concerns that may arise. The Director is there to work alongside parishes and meet with priests and parish safeguarding personnel to support them in creating and maintaining safe environments for children and vulnerable adults. When thinking of safeguarding, people tend to think firstly of children however, in recent years safeguarding of vulnerable adults has gained momentum nationally and internationally.

For those unfamiliar with how parishes promote safeguarding, be assured that in 2021, there is much work that goes on behind the scenes in our parishes to promote safe practices and to create safe environments for children and vulnerable adults and those who work or volunteer with them. In each parish, there is a team of Safeguarding Representatives led by the local parish priest who follow the guidelines set down in the National Safeguarding Standards that were put in place by the National Board for Safeguarding Children in the Catholic Church of Ireland to create awareness of safeguarding and develop safe practices in parishes. For example, if you are a parent of a child who wants to be an altar server don't be surprised if you are asked if you will help with supervision in the sacristy and if you say yes, don't be surprised if you are asked to complete garda vetting. Having at least two adults present when a child is participating in any activity is a requirement and these adults must be Garda vetted, regardless of how well known they are locally. Parents will also be asked to sign a consent form.

The Diocese of Ossory also has a dedicated Safeguarding Committee made up of priests, religious and lay people who are committed to overseeing the implementation of the National Safeguarding Standards across the Diocese and they work to promote safeguarding awareness through

activities such as safeguarding Sunday which is marked in November each year. Some goals for the next year include rolling out safeguarding training to new personnel and providing refresher training to existing personnel and continuing our preparations for an anticipated review by the National Board for Safeguarding.

In preparation for this review, the Committee did an internal review of seven parishes across the Diocese. The parishes visited were, Conahy, Castlecomer, Ferrybank, Gowran, Piltown, St Patrick's and Rathdowney, these were chosen to give a cross section of the Diocese. Much credit is due to each parish team of safeguarding representatives, sacristans, and priests for the preparation they undertook in advance of these visits and for the level of compliance with the requirements of the safeguarding standards and for the warm welcome committee members received. Credit is also due to the many altar servers and their parents who came and participated with these visits. Based on the knowledge of and dedication shown to safeguarding by those met during these visits we can be confident of the strong commitment to safeguarding across the Diocese and the work done to create safe spaces for our young people and vulnerable adults.

Covid-19 impacted significantly on the involvement of children and vulnerable adults in parish life. Altar servers, choirs, youth groups, bringing the eucharist to the house bound plus much more. With these restrictions easing we have an opportunity to welcome back those that were involved and to invite new people to get involved and we can look forward again to the enrichment of our liturgies and parish activities that youth and adult participation brings.

A word of thanks

A warm word of thanks and appreciation to all who make safeguarding happen in all our parishes.



The South Transept – The Sacred Heart of Jesus – St Mary's Cathedral and the Pearse Connection

Richard Scriven

The Cathedral was consecrated on the October 4, 1857, by Bishop Edward Walsh. Gradually over the next 50 years the cathedral was adorned with altars, stations of the cross, side chapels, mosaics and windows. Catholic families such as Cullen and Potter, Fennessy and Bryan gave generously to the work undertaken by Bishops Moran and Brownrigg. The South Transept as we know it today is significantly different to the day of consecration in 1857.

Altar of St Victoria

The altar of St Victoria was originally placed in the chapel which is now that of St Joseph – at the sacristy door. The shrine of St Victoria was installed in the cathedral in 1867 – the 10th anniversary of the consecration. In the work of Bishop Brownrigg in the 1890s it was moved to its present location in the south transept.

Painting of St Margaret Alacoque

The developing popular devotion to the Sacred Heart promoted by St Margaret Mary Alacoque in the latter decades of the 1800s had found its way to Ireland and in the 1880s and 1890s the South Transept was renovated influenced by this popular devotion.

Above the altar of St Victoria was placed a large painting of the revelation of the Sacred Heart to St Margaret Mary. The frame of this picture was the design of William Hague and the work of Messrs Brooke, Thomas and Co., Dublin. This painting originally hung on the apposite wall where the Altar of the Sacred Heart now is.

Window of the Sacred Heart

The window in the south transept also has an interesting story. The original window was destroyed by a storm in 1886. The new window is the work of the German stained glass window designer and producer, Mayer of Munich at a cost £300. The central panel has a depiction of St Margaret Mary Alacoque and the



Sacred Heart. In the upper side panels is a depiction of Our Lady, Mary Magdalen kneels her long hair flowing and the vial of oil at her feet; on the right hand is St Joseph with a lily in his hand, Peter with the Keys and Paul with a sword. In the lower side panels Francis in the Franciscan habit and St Catherine of Alexandria standing beside a wheel can be seen.

Altar of the Sacred Heart

Most interesting in the South Transept is the Altar of the Sacred Heart. This is the work of James Pearse the father of Patrick and William Pearse of the 1916 Rising.

James Pearse was born in London in 1839. The family moved to Birmingham in the 1840s where James had a limited education and eventually he found his niche as a sculptor's apprentice. In the 1860s he settled in Dublin with his English wife, Emily Suzanna Fox. Both converted to Catholicism – probably for business reasons. He was brought to Dublin by Charles William Harrison to be foreman of his monumental sculpture workshop based at 178 Great Brunswick Street.

In the early 1870s Pearse formed a partnership with Patrick J O'Neill and a subsequent partnership with his foreman Edmund Sharp in 1878. This second partnership was dissolved in 1888, after which Pearse worked on his own.

James married his second wife Margaret Brady (1857-1932), a shop assistant, at the Church of St Agatha, North William Street in 1877; they had two daughters and two sons. Padraig Pearse in his autobiography describes his parents and their influence upon him:

'For the present I have said enough to indicate that when my father and mother married there came together two very widely remote traditions—English and Puritan and mechanic on the one hand, Gaelic and Catholic and peasant on the other: freedom loving both, and neither without its strain of poetry and

its experience of spiritual and other adventure. And these two traditions worked in me and fused together by a certain fire proper to myself . . . made me the strange thing I am.'

However much Pearse may have loved and admired his father, it appears that the young Pearse was also uncomfortable at times with his mixed heritage. He saw it as responsible for making him 'the strange thing I am'.

James Pearse died suddenly in Birmingham in 1900 leaving an estate valued at £1,470-17s-6d. By the time of his death, his firm was employing the largest staff of stone carvers, cutters, polishers and rubbers in Ireland. Willie and Patrick Pearse took over the running of the business. Willie was nineteen and studying at the Metropolitan School of Art and would later travel to London and Paris for further training. Patrick was at this stage using the title 'Patrick H. Pearse, Sculptor' and the company's name had become 'Pearse and Sons.'

In its first few years under their stewardship, the company continued to prosper and to win major orders. However, despite Patrick's attention to the business, his workload for Conradh na Gaeilge, combined with Willie's studies and a depression in the building trade, saw the business go into decline. By 1910 Pearse and Sons was no more, being worth only £500 on dissolution. The capital realised was used by Padraig Pearse to fund the new premises of St Enda's School in Rathfarnham. Pearse's books formed the nucleus of the library of the new school and his engravings and sculptures became part of the school's art collection.

On his death The Irish Independent (8 September 1900) praised James Pearse's work, which it said, was to be found in almost every important church in Ireland. From Skibbereen to Letterkenny, Ennis to Clarendon Street Pearse's hand can be seen in the wonderful mastery of altars

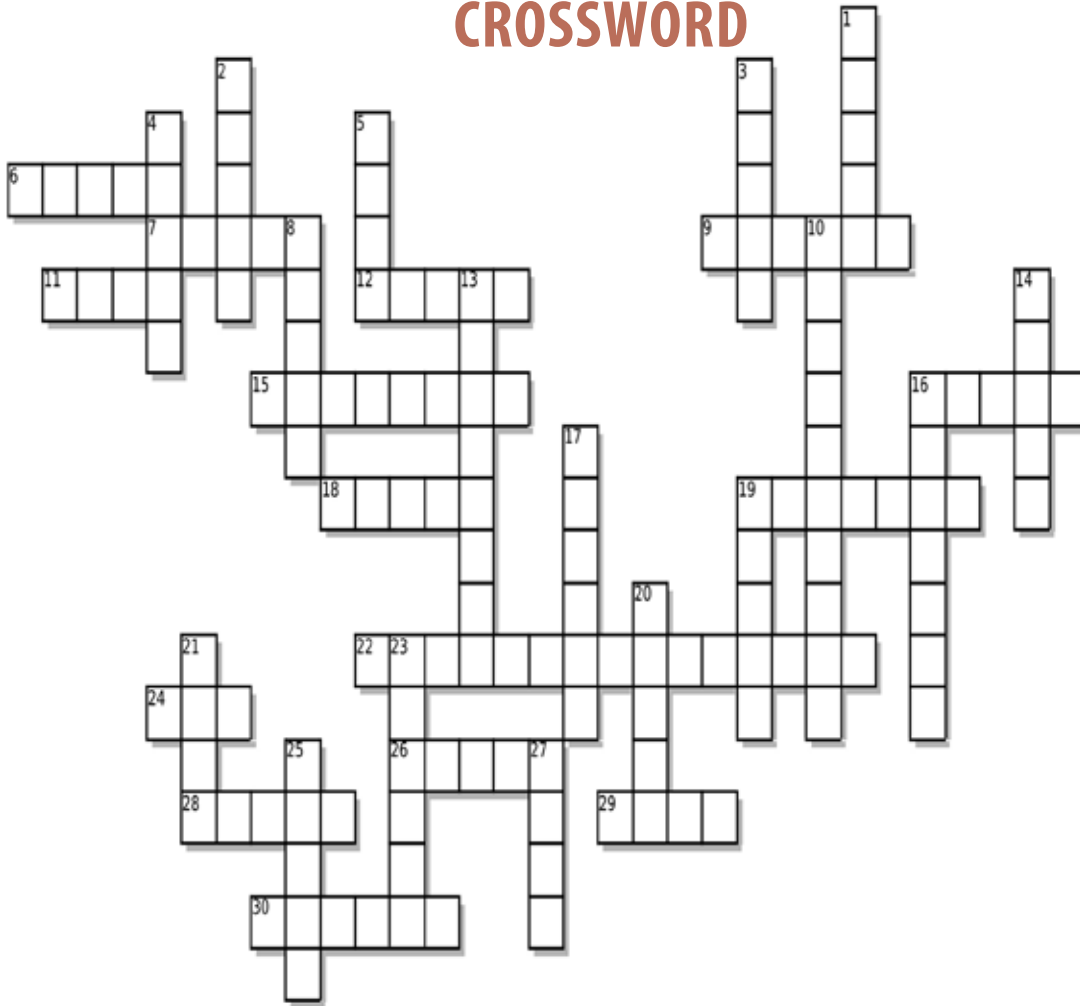


and statues, altar rails and screens. The cathedral is proud to have a significant work of Pearse. As Margaret Phelan comments in her Notes on the Foundation of St Mary's Cathedral: *It is a matter of great pride for us in Kilkenny that the father of Padraig and Willie Pearse had a telling part in the furnishing of our cathedral. We dwell with the pleasure on the thought that sometimes he may have brought his sons with him and had their childish help in the erection of this fine altar.*

The Shrine of the Sacred Heart is the design of Mr Robinson. There is no tabernacle; instead, a pillar supports a life size statue of the Sacred Heart. This statue is more than likely an Italian import. Beneath the base of the altar is a carved representation in marble of Our Lord's Apparition to Blessed Margaret Mary Alacoque. The altar was erected the expense of the members of the Confraternity of the Sacred Heart and Blessed Sacrament attached to the Cathedral. The mosaics are of a similar style to those in the High Altar also placed there in the work of Brownrigg in the 1890s.



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 6 Most important teaching
- 7 Before Philemon
- 9 Il Osservatore
- 11 Edith Sitwell
- 12 Joseph was sold to slavery here
- 15 Kildare and...
- 16 Paul was to travel here after Rome
- 18 St Frances of Rome is the patron saint of all who do this
- 19 Catholic actor to silence lambs
- 22 Not seen in John's Gospel
- 24 The Prodigal one
- 26 Colour of Death's horse in Revelation
- 28 Abraham, in the beginning
- 29 The three kings
- 30 Type of sin

DOWN

- 1 They brought spices to anoint Jesus
- 2 Apostolic Administrator
- 3 --- of Vipers Lk 3:7
- 4 Holy...
- 5 Sotto...
- 8 Feed my Jn 21:17
- 10 August 15th Feast
- 13 Paul asked to stay in his guest room
- 14 Liturgical colour of celebration
- 16 A pathway we are on
- 17 Country with the largest Catholic population
- 19 Communion wafers
- 20 Mea...
- 21 Catholic College in New Rochelle, New York
- 23 Salve...
- 25 Biblical transport
- 27 Members of a religious order

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 8th December 2021 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 26 competitions:*

Adult Crossword:
Mary Margaret Power

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

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

Colouring Competition



For ages 5-8



Wordsearch Competition



For ages 8-13

P P E N T E C O S T N J O A T E Z F S I
S V I C U N D W S L U X M N D C B A Q H
D Z F E A M F U C H S R B Q H A C C S S
O V I Z F A Y G T J C P V T U R V G Z F
X D Y E M A N T N I A S Q P A G V U V R
K V T K N Q D I H I T O C M T W C N I J
L E K N P D X R J F D R E X K Q Q N J C
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ANOINTING

BISHOP

CHRISM

CHRISTIAN SOLDIER

CONFIRMATION

COUNSEL

FEAR OF THE LORD

FORTITUDE

GRACE

HOLY SPIRIT

INITIATION

KNOWLEDGE

PENTECOST

PIETY

SACRAMENT

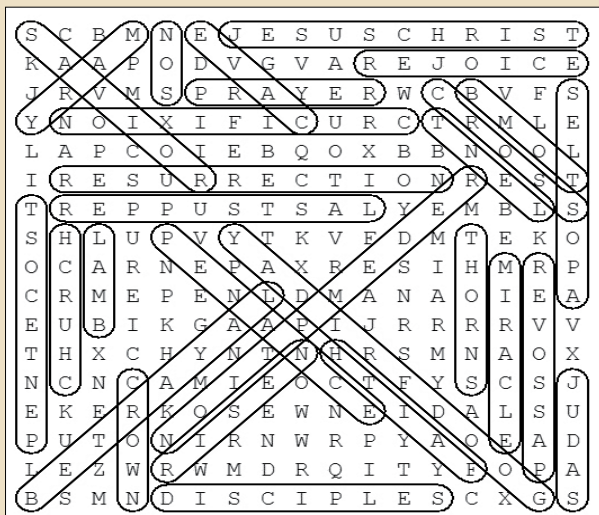
SAINT NAME

SPONSOR

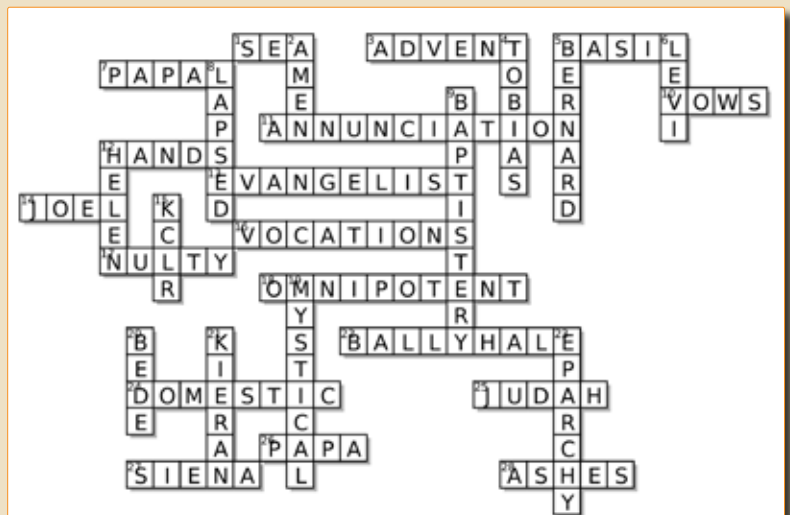
UNDERSTANDING

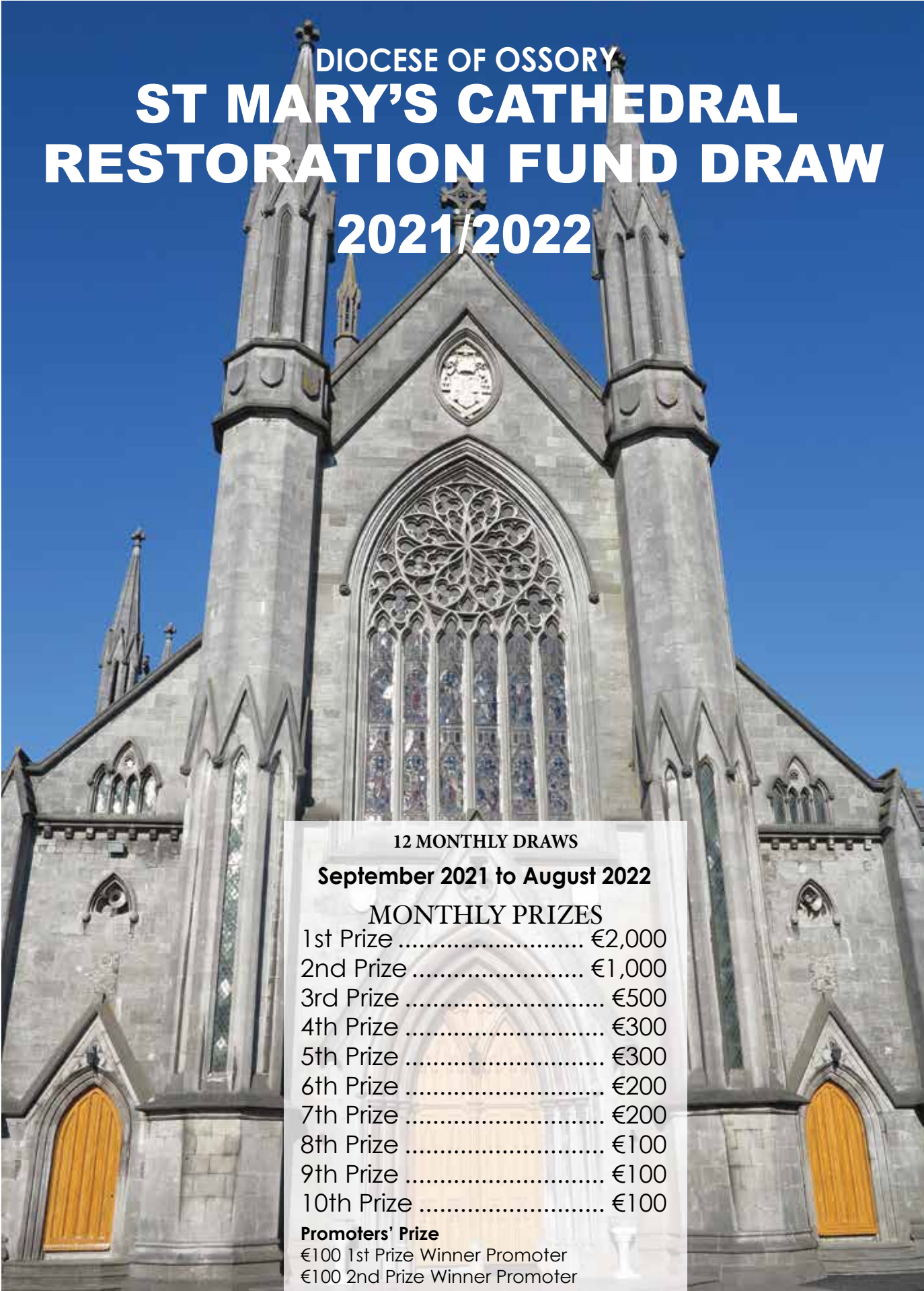
WISDOM

Answers to Ossory Times Issue 26



Answers to Ossory Times Issue 26





DIOCESE OF OSSORY ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL RESTORATION FUND DRAW 2021/2022

12 MONTHLY DRAWS

September 2021 to August 2022

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!



PARISH PROGRAMME OF PREPARATION
Reconciliation **First Holy Communion** **Confirmation**

MyFaith.ie

- Join with **ICHTHUS** and teacher-led online interactive classes for both children and parents.
- Build module-by-module on the journey to being fully prepared in the company of your family.
- Come together in your parish to continue the learning.
- Age appropriate online interactive games/challenges/quizzes/moments of prayer for each module to reinforce learning.
- Log out/Log in and pick up from where you left off.
- Supports for Group Leaders and encourage weekly children's Mass attendance.



Encourage weekly attendance and active participation at Mass with resources for every Sunday



Supporting Leaders for group meetings with notes, questions and tasks for each module



Explore the Church Seasons. Reinforce the learning with Advent and Lenten Workbooks

Register your Parish online at MyFaith.ie