



OSSORY ADULT FAITH DEVELOPMENT

April 2022– Issue 29

OSSORY TIMES

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Editorial

"Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?" - "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Mark 15:34, Matt. 27:46). We listen to these evocative words on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. They are stark. They are the cry of Jesus who is dying - alone, presumably afraid. In the midst of the great turmoil of his arrest, trial and now crucifixion he cries out - voicing how, at that moment, he felt alone.

Ukraine, the Covid Pandemic, spiralling costs of living, supply shortages in many sectors and so many other new obstacles. We too could cry out *Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani* - where is our God? Why has this all happened?

Yes our world has its struggles and we watch in horror the events unfolding to such innocent Ukrainians. But, in the midst of this, it is comforting to see how it is that our world also embraces people who need it. Parishes have opened their doors - literally and figuratively - to those seeking refuge from the war. As these pages show much has been done to welcome those fleeing this terrible conflict. Parish properties and the homes of our parishioners have been made available to people. Our schools have welcomed children. We have walked, sang, flew the flag and undertaken many innovative ways to collect much needed supplies and monies to aid the Ukrainian people here and, importantly, in the Ukraine or its neighbouring countries acting as, they are, a safe refuge. These actions are our faith being lived. This is us, a believing community, seeing God in others and not being found wanting:

"Lord, when did we see you hungry and give you something to eat, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you as a stranger and welcome you, or see you naked and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison, and visit you?" (Matthew 25:37-39). It is, then, in caring that our faith best comes to life, it is giving that we answer the call which ends all our Eucharistic celebrations "Go in peace to love and serve the Lord". These actions put flesh on our faith.

As always this edition of the *Ossory Times* shows the life of faith here in our Diocese and parishes - it is heartening then to see that the people of Ukraine are at its centre. We know where God is - he is in the hand of welcome, the arm of solace or the tear wiped.

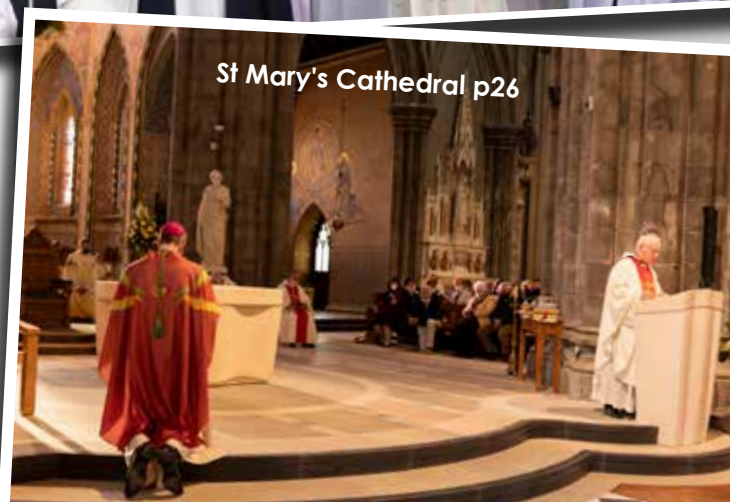
Welcome then to the latest edition of the *Ossory Times*. As always I hope you enjoy this publication. Comments, suggestions and contributions are most welcome for future editions. Articles or advertisements for upcoming events or of recent events, can be sent to:

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Homily of Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of Ossory

Celebration of the Mass of Chrism

St Mary's Cathedral, 13th April 2022

CHRISM, C for Catechumen, C for Chrism. It's the night we bless oils. Oils that represent the sacramental life of every parish. I think of the Chrism oil that I lavishly poured on the *combe brune* altar on the Consecration evening on March 27th. Oils for baptism celebrations. The joy I had baptizing my grandniece Fiadh Veronica on Sunday last. Oils for ceremonies of anointing the sick. I think of Fr Pat Comerford who joins us this evening by webcam from Drakelands Nursing Home and some of our other Ossory priests and people who get great comfort from the Sacrament of the Sick. Oils for confirmation liturgies. I think of the eleven I confirmed last Thursday in St Fiacre's from the School of the Holy Spirit here in the city. Oils for moments of ordination – priest and bishop. In this *sede vacante* period we all look forward to the ordination of a Bishop in this sanctuary who will lead the diocese with vision for the future, understanding for the present and compassion for the past. We must do everything we can to encourage young men to contemplate a life of service and ministry as a priest.

CH, H for Holy Week – this is the holiest week of the year. A week that speaks to every emotion. A week of words, gestures, movement, symbols, and much more. And this week calls us as we walk with Christ, bruised and broken for us, to have a sense of holiness – priests, people, all of us. We tend to shy away from the thought of being considered holy. And yet this is the essence of our relationship with Christ.

It is from this space comes our response to the poor, the refugee, the captives, the blind, the downtrodden. While the prophet

Isaiah wrote eight centuries before Christ, his words have a raw resonance on the streets of Bucha or the platform at the train station at Kramatorsk in Ukraine in recent days. Maybe in our brokenness we are at our holiest? Erik Varden writes: "to be worthy is not to be blameless: the Eucharist is not a prize for good behaviour. To be worthy is to assent to the realization of Christ's example in my life ... the Lord does not seek instant perfection. But he requires coherence in the way we live". We achieve this coherence in our interiorizing of holiness.

CHR, R for Renewal, the renewal of priestly promises. The Chrism Mass is the moment we return to our Ordination Day and remember what was said then and heard by those who were with us, many now gone to their eternal reward. I congratulate our jubilarians this year: Jim Murphy and Dan Bollard, both Golden Jubilarians; Lorcan Moran forty years ordained; Paddy Carey thirty years ordained and our Silver Jubilarians Liam Taylor and Ray Dempsey. Indeed on this very day Tom Norris was ordained fifty-three years ago. I recall fondly too those who celebrated Jubilees this past year and many I got to celebrate with: Peter Hoyne and Lar Dunphy both sixty years - Eamon Foley, Larry Wallace, Seamus Freeman all Golden Jubilarians and Eamonn O'Gorman, Tom O'Toole and Willie Purcell who marked forty years of priesthood.

I want all the priests to know they and their ministry are deeply treasured and appreciated. The renewal of ordination vows happens in this Chrism gathering

in the presence of the key people who support us in the diocese and in our parishes. A renewal in our commitment to the service of God, the Church and its people once more.

Priests are collaborators. No man is an island. At ODPC Meetings, Council of Priests Meetings and Pastoral Area Coordinators Meetings, I clearly hear the need to work much closer together with one another and with our lay sisters and brothers. Lay people are our co-workers. Women and men are the backbone of every parish. On this night I applaud your commitment and dedication to parish, a dedication that is rooted in understanding and living your baptismal calling.

CHRI, I for Intentional. This is the evening where we are all called to be intentional disciples in the Lord's vineyard. Pope Francis recently on his trip to Malta invited us to return to the nascent Church that we find beneath the cross in the persons of Mary and John. He said "going back to the origins means ... recovering the spirit of the first Christian community, returning to the heart and rediscovering the core of our faith". We may lament the slow return of the faithful in the aftermath of pandemic, and yet under the Cross there were just two and from those two the Church emerged.

It is often said 'by their works you will know them'. If we live our lives authentically giving witness to the Lord who bandages the broken and embraces the wounded, people will be moved to more deeply reflect on their faith. If we are intentionally people of faith, others will in time be moved by our witness to gospel values. Nothing inspires young people more than this intentional witness. In the recent national audit on safeguarding in the Diocese great compliments were paid to parishes who have today an intentional involvement of young people, an involvement that is safe and properly structured. Without our young people engaged in faith the parish is nowhere near full potential.

CHRIS, S for Synod and the Synodal conversations that have been happening throughout Ossory over Lent. Many thanks for engaging with these discussions in parishes and online. The next step now is to honour all these submissions by a deep listening on all that has been said as we strive to compile our diocesan submission during the Easter season. Tonight is not a night for any in-depth analysis, the time will come for that in May.

Pope Francis notes that some leaders talk about "making a few adjustments here and there, but they are basically advocating for the same system as before. When they talk of "recovery" they mean putting a bit of varnish on the future, touching up the paintwork here and there, but all to make sure that nothing changes". Be reassured every submission will be read. These submissions are not the end of the discourse on these critical topics but rather an impetus for further discussion. Discernment, listening to the stillness of the spirit is very much part of our synodal journey. It's not just about an isolated moment or encounter but it's a new way of being Church. The Church doesn't do 'Citizens Assembly' – it prays, it reflects, it invites us out of its own brokenness and shortcomings to something much greater, God's love and acceptance of each one of us.

CHRISM, M for Memory. We remember those gone before us. Too many in the depths of COVID. I still remember the Masses I celebrated here in the Cathedral and in Mullinavat for loved ones we lost to death during the pandemic. I always think of that Irish phrase: "Ní imithe uainn atá, ach imithe romhainn" (they are not gone from us, but gone before us). Since last we gathered for Chrism four of our priests entered their eternal reward. I think tonight of Michael Norton, John Duggan, John Condon and John Delaney. May they rest in peace. We move now to bless the oils – a central aspect of our Chrism celebration.



Homily of Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of Ossory

Celebration of the 150th Anniversary of St John of God Sisters

St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy, 10th March 2022



The backdrop of a global pandemic and a war and its implications in all our lives seems strangely fitting as we mark the 150th celebration of the St John of God's as you are affectionately known. Founded in Wexford in 1871, the Sisters have always put themselves in dangerous and unknown circumstances to care for the sick and the injured. It's what you naturally and seamlessly do and now is no different than the world you were founded in by Mother Visitation Clancy, a native of Durrow. Your ministry, your presence, your witness is as necessary today as it was 150 years ago.

So many religious congregations have roots in the sacred fields of Ossory. I think of the gathering held for religious in St Kieran's College last November where I referenced Edmund Ignatius

Rice, a native of Westcourt, Callan, the founder of the Christian Brothers and the Presentation Brothers; Margaret Aylward, a native of Mullinavat, foundress of the Sisters of the Holy Faith and Bishop Daniel Delany, native of Paddock in Castletown, founder of the Brigidine Sisters and Patrician Brothers, with a huge presence in my own Kildare & Leighlin. All in addition to the already mentioned Sr Visitation Clancy the foundress of your Congregation coming from Ballyouskill in Ballyragget parish. It is so appropriate to honour the contribution of the St John of God's here to Ossory and indeed also to Kildare & Leighlin where you had a huge presence in Kildare, Naas and continue that presence in Edenderry.

Here in Ossory that presence centred very much in the city in the Aut Even hospital,

in St Kieran's College, in St John of God Primary School and at the frontline of Social Services outreaching across the diocese. Parish presences were strong in Owing, Rathdowney, Thomastown and Castlecomer and in many cases remain so. In Kildare & Leighlin the Sisters are very well remembered for their pioneering work in the hospitals and in parish ministry. Sr Senan Avenue in Edenderry is named after Sr Senan Hayes who spent over sixty years there.

The seed planted has indeed borne a great harvest. Matthews text of the parable of the sower gives us a super platform to understand and appreciate the contribution of the St John of God Sisters on this their sesquicentennial year. Bishop Furlong of Ferns saw the arrival of the mission of the congregation as caring for a people who were decimated materially and spiritually after the ravages of An Ghorta Mhór. Before ever a seed is sown, it must be carried into the field by the sower.

Just for a moment I want to reflect on that notion of 'carrying'. The arresting photograph of the wooden figure of the crucified Christ being carried from the Armenian Cathedral to a bunker in Lviv to keep it safe from bombardment has stayed with me. In the bunker Christ the suffering servant would be among his suffering people. The last time this fifteenth century sculpture which is part of the so-called 'Wooden Altar of Golgotha' was removed from the Cathedral was during World War II. It reminded me of a similarly arresting photograph of the first victim of 9/11, Fr Mychal Judge being carried by the fire fighters from the burning twin towers. And this morning's photograph, across many media platforms of the heavily pregnant mother being carried from the wreckage of the Maternity Hospital in Mariupol. Carrying is a sacred moment. Your ministry in the making of communion hosts touched every parish in Ossory. In pandemic times we receive on the hands and carry Jesus for a

moment before He carries us in receiving. As in life we must carry something, before we have the opportunity to lay it down. And often we are carried when we are unable to move ourselves.

The St John of God Sisters for 150 years have carried the people of Ossory in parish ministry, in healing ministry, in outreach ministry. And that carrying continues. When we carry someone we are in touch with them in their deepest pain. The power of touch. As nurses, as carers, as people of God we use the power of touch and this is something we have hugely missed throughout the pandemic. The mothers cold hand on the forehead of her sick child. The consoling nature of the hand holding. I remember my mother in her later years wanting me to hold her hand in some kind of reassuring gesture when we might be doing chores in the town. We all know the power of the elbow touch during Covid or the consoling squeeze of a shoulder after a match that should have been won is lost. Touch expresses much more than words.

You, the Sisters of St John of God, have been the ones who did the 'carrying' over the 150 years. You are the ones with whose origin goes back to the foot of the Cross and even to Golgotha. I was interested to see that the wooden figure of the crucified Christ consigned now to an obscure bunker in Lviv, is actually part of something much larger in the Armenian Cathedral in Lviv, something was still under restoration. Maybe our lives as priests and religious, as Bishop and people is always under restoration. We are never the finished article, there is always work to be done, people to be carried. The words of the song 'Lay your hands gently upon us' comes to mind.

*Lay your hands gently upon us,
Let their touch render your peace.
Let them bring your forgiveness and
healing,
Lay your hands gently, lay your lands.*



"Where would the church be without you?"
Where would Ireland be without them?

Ossory gives thanks for the Sisters of St John of God

Martin Delaney

Sadly many Irish Religious Congregations are "saying a lot of goodbyes" as they close houses in communities where they have played a key role for generations. Some congregations have made the difficult decision not to seek or accept new members and others find it difficult to keep new vocations because of the absence of a "critical mass" of young recruits. This could, I suppose, be more than a little depressing, particularly for those who have dedicated their lives to a charism and a way of life which they may have thought would go on forever. I recall a talk given by a Cistercian monk in Mount Mellary more than forty years ago. He spoke about how each Order was founded at a particular time in the Church's history to fulfil a particular need. I often think about that when I hear of another religious house closing or another ministry handed over.

I know that there are religious communities that are bucking the trend, but I can't get away from the feeling that we are witnessing the passing of something very precious which has been part of our lives at a national, local, and personal level. Will we have to wait until they are all gone before society properly acknowledges what a contribution they have made? A few years ago, Charlie Bird, a journalist not from the Catholic tradition, was quoted as saying:

"In the 30 years since, as a reporter in RTÉ, in many places where I went I met

remarkable missionary priests and nuns doing remarkable things, and they did it away from the glare of publicity, away from their families and their homes."

Thirty years ago, then Minister for Foreign Affairs, Brian Cowen, while campaigning for Ireland to have seat on the United Nations Security Council, acknowledged that so many countries in Africa and South America pledged their support because of the positive role Irish Religious Congregations had played in the development and education of their countries.

At home we have been much more reticent to properly appreciate the incredible part played by religious women and men in the development of our republic. The dark clouds of abuse in its different forms hang over the legacy of many of our religious congregations. For many years now we have been on a journey towards healing, and I can only hope that somewhere in all that there will be the maturity to acknowledge and indeed celebrate the enormously positive contribution of religious men and women. To paraphrase Pope Francis "Where would the church be without you?" Where would Ireland be without them?!!

On The Feast of The Presentation of Our Lord in 2021 our former bishop Dermot Farrell, celebrated his first Mass as Archbishop of Dublin in the Pro

Cathedral. The Feast of The Presentation is also the World Day for Consecrated Life. In a tribute to all Religious he made the following comment:

"The women and men who dedicate their lives to the call of the Gospel are at the heart of life of our Church. Without their service, without the presence of their communities, our Church would be a very different Church. They have been at the forefront of renewal in the Church, taking bold initiatives, and making significant sacrifices, putting flesh on the hope that was within them (see 1 Peter 3:15). This is not a mission that belongs to the past. In another age, they were at the forefront of addressing the educational, social, and health of those who risked being left behind. Today they continue their prophetic ministry in the service of those whom our society might prefer not to see"

In October 2021 the Sisters of St John of God celebrated the 150th anniversary of their foundation. The Sisters of St John of God have a unique bond with the Diocese of Ossory and with the priests of the Diocese in particular. The congregation was founded by Sr Visitation Clancy, a native of Ballyouskill in the parish of Ballyragget. The sisters went on to work in various parishes throughout the Diocese but also they have, for many years provided the Eucharistic Bread for the celebration of Mass in every parish. The sisters also worked in colleges and seminaries throughout Ireland including St Kieran's College and in the Irish College in Rome where many priests of the Diocese came to know them during their years of formation. The Ossory Council of Priests,

at a meeting last October, decided that we as a Diocese should honour the contribution of the Sisters of St John of God in Ossory over many years and the ministry which continues in a number areas today. Originally the celebration was planned for the 8th December 2021 but because of Covid restrictions it had to be postponed until Thursday March 10th. The new date was quite appropriate as it was close to both St Kieran's Day on March 5th and the Feast of St John of God on March 8th. It was decided that the celebration would also include the contribution of the Sisters of St John of God in Bishop Denis' Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin.

Bishop Denis was the main celebrant at the Mass of Thanksgiving in St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy, Kilkenny. St Fiacre's is part of St Patrick's parish where the Sisters have had a presence since their official foundation in Ossory in 1877. Many of the priests from the Diocese concelebrated, and upwards of four hundred people attended. Throughout the Mass, many co-workers of the Sisters from various parishes, schools and hospitals participated. The music was led by a group of musicians and singers from various parishes, under the direction of Noreen Cooney. Following the Mass there was a reception for everyone in the Parish Centre attached to the church.

The Mass began with a ritual of pouring and blessing water from each of the areas where the Sisters have ministered in the Diocese. The ritual incorporated something of the story of that ministry. What follows is the text of the commentary used during the opening ritual.



Sisters of St John of God: Rite of Sprinkling and Blessing Water

We are connected in creation by water which gives us life. For all of us whose roots are deeply embedded in the island of Ireland, water shapes who we are and how we see the world. This evening we gather to give thanks to God for the ministry of the Sisters of St John of God over more than 150 years and particularly how their ministry was and is lived out here in the Dioceses of Ossory and Kildare & Leighlin. Long before any of the Sisters answered the call to Consecrated Life theirs and all our first steps in Faith were taken when we shared the life of Jesus Christ in the waters of Baptism.

As part of the sprinkling rite at this evening's celebration we share the John of God story in Ossory and Kildare & Leighlin as we bring water from the various communities where the Sisters have ministered through the years.

The container for the water is fashioned and carved from some bog oak that is more than two thousand years old. While this tree was growing, the seeds of faith were being planted in every townland and parish across our dioceses as our ancestors faithfully responded in different ways to the invitation of Jesus to 'Come Follow Me'. Just as the tree takes on new shape and purpose today, so we too, through the grace of God, continue the life of faith handed on to us and embrace the future with confidence, hope and joy.

Even though the Sisters of St John of God first came into existence in the Diocese of Ferns it was an Ossory woman that Bishop Thomas Furlong approached to found a congregation of Sisters to care for the sick, the poor and the dying in his diocese. Mother Visitation Clancy from Ballyouskill in the parish of Ballyragget was a Bon Secour Sister and together with

a small group they took the courageous step to separate from their congregation and begin the Sisters of St John of God in October 1871. A member of Sr Visitation's family, Niamh Clancy, brings water from Ladywell close to Visitation's home in Ballyouskill

Within a short few years after the foundation in Wexford the Clerk of the Workhouse in Castlecomer, Thomas O'Mahony, asked Mother Visitation to send some Sisters to work in the infirmary of the Workhouse. The Sisters of St John of God remained working in Castlecomer after the Workhouse became the District Hospital. Water from the River Dean which flows through Castlecomer is poured by Kathleen Ryan who worked as a nurse alongside the Sisters in Castlecomer for many years.

In early 1886, three more sisters came from Wexford to work in the Fever Hospital in Kilkenny City. Later that same year, at the invitation of Bishop Abraham Brownrigg, the official foundation of the Sisters of St John of God in the Diocese of Ossory was established. Initially their work was in this City of Kilkenny, founding a Primary School, working with students and priests at St Kieran's College and also providing home nursing. The Sisters went to nurse in the County Infirmary in 1914 and much later in 1933 the St John of God congregation took over the running of Aut Even Hospital. In the early 1980s the Sisters took the brave step to build the magnificent new hospital which we have today. The Sisters of St John of God also established an Altar Bread Department at their convent on the College Road and it was through this ministry that the Sisters have touched the lives of people in every parish of our Diocese. Regina Harding, who for many years worked in the altar Bread Department, brings water from the River Nore on the banks of which this City is built.

The Sisters of St John of God had been founded to care for the poorest and the most vulnerable people in society



and this vision was further lived out in 1888 when three Sisters went to work at the Thomastown Union Workhouse. After 1921 a number of workhouses in County Kilkenny were amalgamated into the Thomastown facility. The Sisters of St John of God who had worked in the Kilkenny City, Castlecomer and Urlingford houses now took on a greater role of management and leadership in Thomastown. In 1957 the Workhouse evolved into St Columba's Hospital where the Sisters of St John of God continue their ministry of pastoral care and healing in the hospital today. Nora Cassin, who worked in St Columba's for many years, brings water from St Colmcille's Well in Thomastown to honour the Sisters' longest continuous ministry within the Diocese of Ossory.

In the early years of the 20th century Canon William Brennan was appointed as parish priest of Rathdowney. Strongly committed to education, he decided to invite the Sisters of St John of God to run the girls' school in the town. Thus began the only presence of the Sisters of St John of God in a County Laois parish and it is a ministry which continues today 118 years after their arrival in 1904. In the intervening years the ministry of the Sisters diversified into the local Secondary School, Social Services and parish pastoral ministry. Martin Bergin, from Rathdowney, brings water from the Erkina river which flows through the town.

Just a few years after the foundation in Rathdowney five Sisters of St John of God established a community in the parish of Templeorum and began teaching in Owing in January 1909. Home Nursing which later evolved in the establishment of Social Services was also part of the ministry in Owing and later still the Sisters supported the Sue Ryder Homes Foundation which opened in 1988. Helen Power, who worked closely with the Sisters in Owing over many years, brings water from the Holy Well at the monastery of Kilkeran

Our celebration this evening also honours the ministry of the Sisters of St John of God in our neighbouring Diocese of Kildare & Leighlin. The Sisters have worked at the hospitals in Kildare and Naas but their most enduring presence has been in the parish of Edenderry in County Offaly where they operated both a Primary and Post Primary school and continue their work today in Parish Pastoral Ministry. Rita Houlihan, a native of Edenderry, a past pupil of both St John of God schools in the town and later Principal of The St John of God Primary School here in Kilkenny, brings water from the Holy Well at Grange in the pParish of Edenderry

Through the water we have poured this evening the people of our communities enjoy the gift of life it symbolises. This evening we praise you Lord and raise our grateful hearts to you – we who live and serve among the waters.



A Spirituality for our Times

Sponsored by The Sisters of St. John of God



SPEAKER
Jane Mellett

Jane Mellett is co-author of "The Deep End" a publication reflecting on the Sunday Gospels. She is a yoga and meditation teacher and spiritual director. Jane is the Laudato Si' Officer with Trócaire



During this day Jane will explore various avenues to an integrated wholistic spirituality. There will be a mix of input and time for reflective practice.

**Venues: Ballyvaloo Retreat & Conference Centre
Blackwater
Co. Wexford**

or

**St. Patricks Parish Centre
Loughboy
Kilkenny**

Dates: 13th May 2022

14th May 2022

Times: 10.00 am to 4.30 pm

10.00 am to 4.00 pm

**Cost: €30 (includes lunch)
Pay on the door**

**€10 (bring your own lunch,
tea/coffee provided)
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Please book before 6th May by contacting:

Sara or Catherina @ 056 7722870 - 9.00 am - 5.00 pm or
email: regionaloffice@ssjg.ie

Booking Essential





The best is that now we can sleep peacefully but our hearts are still worried about our country and our people.

Before and after...

Ukrainian people in Castletown

by Polina

When the explosions rang out in the Boryspil airport at 5:00 in the morning, my dad came into my room with the words: "Wake up, the war started." At that moment I was filled with fear. The first thing that I thought, maybe it is the end. At that moment our life and life of millions Ukrainians turned upside down. Fear and pain settled in our hearts.

Cases in which rocket fragments hit residential buildings forced us to leave Kyiv. On the second day we went to our relatives in village, where events of the war we could only hear and not see with our own eyes. But situation was getting worse every day and especially with the coming of the night. After a week there, our men decided to take families to a safer place. My mother Viktoriia and I (Polina), my aunt Olga with her son Ivan, and Tatiana with three children (Nikita, Maria, Vira) went to Poland. In the first minutes of crossing the border we felt care and peace. We have been living there for 3 weeks.

Due to the Olga's old acquaintances in Ireland we had hope and then the



opportunity to come here in Castletown. From the first minutes of staying here, on the emerald island, we were amazed. So many kind and friendly people met us at the airport. Everybody asked if everything is okay or maybe we need some help. Olga's friend Elaine took us from the airport. After the road we were very tired but also very happy. When we arrived we got into a house that was prepared with great love. Beautiful and cozy rooms with all necessary things waited us. All rooms were very nice and tidy. We were so grateful, felt like at home. Every little thing and detail said about the big hearts of all the people who took part in it.

From the first day of being here in Castletown, so many people came to us with greetings and gifts. Everyday we are so happy for being here. Our kids started to go to school, they are so excited about it. Every time they tell us how great they spent that day with classmates and teachers. Such a lot of people helped us with all our difficulties that appeared here. Also we are so astonished by the beauty of nature and how every person protects it. The best is that now we can sleep peacefully but our hearts are still worried about our country and our people.

I want to express gratitude and appreciation to all people who met, helped, supported in a difficult situation us and for sincerity in your big hearts. And big thanks to Elaine, Catherine, David, Mary, Emma, Magda, Thelma, Niamh, Simone and etc.

Emergency aid from Mooncoin

Kathy Egan

One evening a little over three weeks ago, Pat Croke, of Croke International Haulage made contact with the parish office in Mooncoin to offer to supply a truck and trailer to the parish in order to send humanitarian aid to Ukraine.

Pat, like many of us, was moved to action and wanted to do what he could to help after watching the daily horror of the conflict in Ukraine unfold on the news over the preceding fortnight. Pat's offer was readily accepted and the task of filling his lorry to capacity with high quality emergency supplies of food, medical equipment, first aid, clothing and other essential items which were being urgently sought soon got underway.

Over the next few days, phone calls were made and local groups, organisations, businesses and schools were brought on board with the mission. A very well-attended meeting was held on Monday evening, March 7th and from there, the mission took on a life of its own and for the next seven days, ignited the parishioners in their efforts to fill every square inch of available space within the lorry with items that would help desperate families in some small way when Pat reached the Poland - Ukraine border.

Volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life worked tirelessly over the next few days as the contributions poured into the Parish Hall. The task of sorting, itemising, labelling, boxing and packing every item that was donated from the people of the parish was underway and the Parish Hall was alive with the spirit of kindness and love for one's fellow man. Fundraisers were held around the parish with all proceeds going to the worthy cause.

In sending off the lorry last Monday, everyone gathered agreed that in a short space of time, great results had been achieved.

It was an emotional send-off. Students from all three parish schools, Scoil Mhuire NS, Carrigeen NS and Coláiste Cois Siúire lined the sides of the huge truck adorned with the National flag of Ukraine, Ireland, Kilkenny and Mooncoin. The children sang The Rose of Mooncoin and a warm welcome was extended to the newly arrived family from Ukraine, the Basi family, whose daughter Julia joined the

Senior Infant class in Scoil Mhuire NS last week. Oksana, mum of Julia, was visibly moved by the outpouring of support for her beloved country and wept as the crowd fell silent for her country's National Anthem. The solemnity and gravity which was at the heart of this mission and in everyone's mind that day was offset by the generosity of spirit of the people of Mooncoin and by the genuine warmth and love that was palpable in the air that morning for Oksana and her young family.

Pat arrived at his final destination in Poland at the Ukrainian border after four days of driving and no time was wasted in unloading the vital supplies so that they could quickly be delivered to those who needed them most. While the gesture was enormous and the effort was tremendous, it is feared that the end of this conflict is not yet insight and many more such humanitarian convoys will be required to provide lifesaving aid for upwards of 3.6million people who have fled Ukraine with a further 6.48 million people having been displaced within the country who will also rely on charity to feed and clothe their families.

On Wednesday last, National Flag Day at school, little Julia wore shamrocks in her hair and waved the Irish flag during our school parade. Little over a month ago, she was sitting at her desk in her classroom in a small town outside Lviv with her friends, classmates and teacher; oblivious to the journey that lay ahead of her. Every morning now that she arrives at school, her smile is wide, her eyes are bright and she greets her teacher and her new friends with the English phrases she is quickly gathering. She is only six years old and has mercifully been shielded by her brave Mum Oksana from the horror that has befallen her homeland during their arduous journey across the border from Ukraine into Prague and on to Ireland.

Now, more than ever, we must epitomise our country's epithet, *The Land of a Hundred Thousand Welcomes*, the C  ad



Míle Fáilte, and open our hearts and indeed our homes to Ukrainians fleeing the invasion. As of today, March 24th, more than 21,880 people have pledged accommodation for Ukrainian refugees to the Irish Red Cross. The response has been described as a 'deluge' and 'unprecedented' by the voluntary society.

Ar scáth a chéile a mhaireann na daoine,
-We live in the shelter of one another.

Songs for Peace in Thomastown

Kate Hynes

On St Patrick's Eve, Thomastown Folk Choir hosted an evening of music and song called Songs For Peace in response to the war in Ukraine and in Solidarity with the people of Ukraine.

It is said that when you sing you pray twice so adding our prayer in song was as important to us as raising donations to help support those suffering. Fr Dan Bollard welcomed everyone and introduced the musicians who played a few lively tunes. The song choices on the night proved to be emotive, comforting

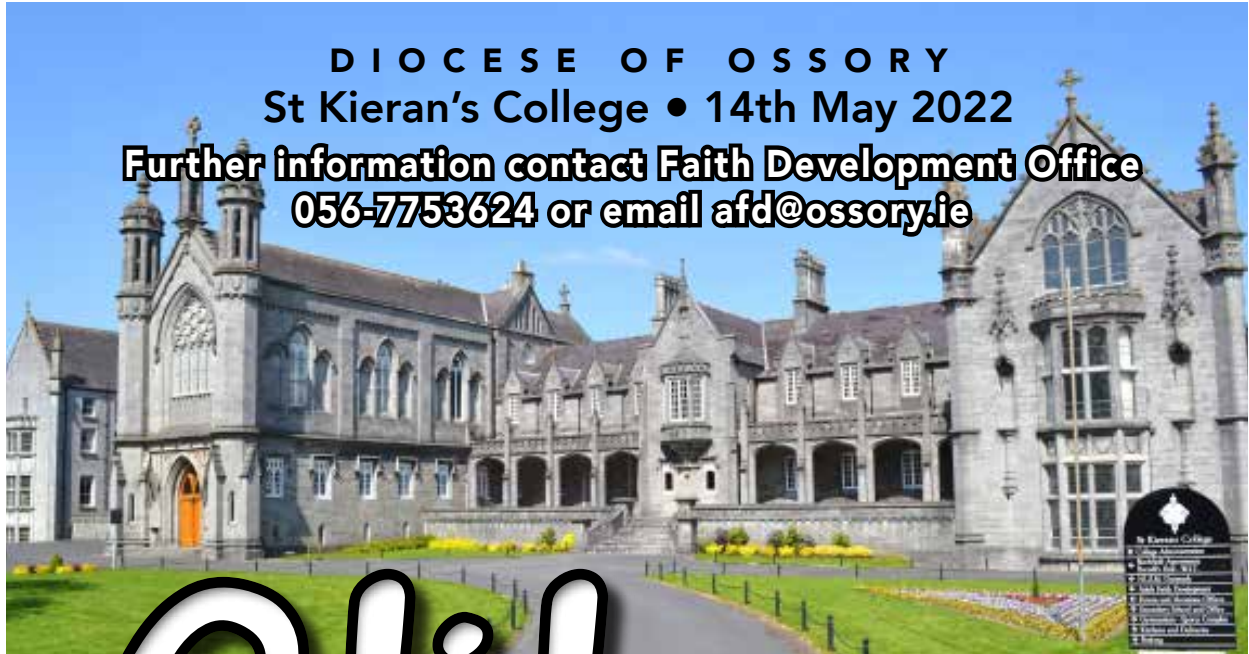
and uplifting. The event was attended by Alina Piskaryova and her family and friends who had recently fled Kyiv. Alina who has been resident in Thomastown for the last 6 years spoke about her beloved Ukraine and what life is like for her family still living there. This was followed by the Ukrainian national anthem.

On the night we raised €2,215.50 we are so grateful for the generosity of those in attendance and for their support. The concert was live streamed on Facebook and the Parish webcam if you missed it you can still catch it on our YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zPZF8nGMrZw>



DIOCESE OF OSSORY
St Kieran's College • 14th May 2022

Further information contact Faith Development Office
056-7753624 or email afd@ossory.ie



UNDER 9 HURLING & CAMOGIE

Blitz

Saturday, 14th May
2022

HURLING:

Northern Clubs: 10am-1pm

Southern Clubs: 2pm-5pm

CAMOGIE:

All Clubs: 10am-1pm

Entries by 27th April 2022



- GUEST REFS -
KILKENNY SENIOR HURLERS

Once more we are being reminded that each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher.



MORALITY MATTERS

Give me a crash course in... War in Ukraine and Christian Morality

Michael Shortall

Its two years since the world came to a sudden stop because of an unknown virus.

One of the most vivid memories I have of those early days is of a photograph coming from Italy showing a line of army trucks taking those who have died from the hospital to be buried. You might remember it too?

It was a fearful time. We have all been through so much since then. And as soon as the pandemic appears to be over, we see the convoys of army trucks and tanks again. Although some had warned of the possibility, not many really thought that Russians tanks would cross the borders of Ukraine.

Pope Francis, six months after the breakout of Covid in Europe, wrote a letter to the world called *Fratelli Tutti* (3rd October, 2020). He wrote:

For decades, it seemed that the world had learned a lesson from its many wars and disasters, and was slowly moving towards various forms of integration [...] (paragraph 10)

But then he immediately warns:

Our own days, however, seem to be showing signs of a certain regression. Ancient conflicts thought long buried are breaking out anew, while instances of a myopic, extremist, resentful and aggressive nationalism are on the rise. (paragraph 11)

I recognise the date. Is it the feast day of St Francis of Assisi?

Yes, it is. *Fratelli Tutti* takes its inspiration from St Francis of Assisi. It is a call for more human fraternity and solidarity, and a plea to reject war and violence.

St Francis is one of the most extraordinary saints. In fact, this year is the 840th anniversary of his birth. He lived and taught a commitment to Christ, based on poverty, simplicity of life, and joy.

And also to peace. St Francis was radical in his commitment to peace. All violence of any type was wrong. As Jesus taught on the Sermon on the Mount, we are to turn the other cheek (Lk 6:27–31; Mt 5:38–42). The earliest disciples and saints took this very seriously. Think of the Christian martyrs in the Colosseum or the early saints. For example, St Martin of Tours famously used his army sword to cut his cloak in two, to give half to a beggar. He rejected the army saying “I am the soldier of Christ: it is not lawful for me to fight.”

But that was in the past?

Recently, there has been a strong revival in the Christian commitment to pacifism. The most famous example would be Dr Martin Luther King. Or indeed the

Christian motivation of our own John Hume. Dorothy Day, who is on the path to sainthood, once bravely said at the outbreak of World War II:

We must make a start. We must renounce war as an instrument of policy ... Even as I speak to you I may be guilty of what some men call treason ... You young men should refuse to take up arms. Young women tear down the patriotic posters. And all of you — young and old — put away your flags.

But is pacifism very idealistic? Especially when everything is about to be destroyed, like your home, family, and nation – or yourself.

It is important that pacifism is not confused with passivity. Violence and its sources – such as power, discrimination, greed – must be fought, and done so in moral ways – civil disobedience, moral truth and continuous dialogue. King, Hume and Day dedicated their lives to peace, and we are fortunate to live with the fruits of their efforts.

But sometimes war is forced upon you? Is this not the case for the people of Ukraine?

The Christian tradition has admitted this. But morality cannot be left aside, even in war. In the awful context of conflict, how to we try to do the moral thing and not commit further moral failures? The ‘Just War Theory’ is an attempt to answer that question.

On what is the Just War Theory based?

Simply, the moral principle is self-defence by an individual. Many people accept as common sense that although violence is always wrong, it may be justified to protect oneself against another violent aggressor. The same can be said for a whole community, people or state. But the theory not meant to be permissive. It was intended to make the decision to go to war as difficult as possible and to restrict the activity of war.

How does it work?

In the past, the theory is broken down into phases – the rules for going to war (*jus ad bellum*) and the rules in war (*jus in bello*). We now understand the importance of another phase – the rules after war (*jus post bello*).

For example, in going to war there must be a just cause, mandated by a proper authority and with the right intention. But it must be a last resort, with a reasonable hope of success, and conflict ultimately required for peace.

And in war?

Once in war, distinction should always be made between combatants, such as soldiers, and non-combatants, such as civilians. Also the means of conflict, such as the type of weapons, should be proportionate.

And you mentioned about after a war?

After a war, all parties, especially the victor must continue to act morally. For example, the losing people should not humiliated to the point of vengeance, while justice by public trial brought to the leaders of the aggressors.

That is a lot to consider!

When reflecting on situation in the Middle East, including the war in Syria, Pope Francis in 2014 said:

One nation alone cannot judge how you stop this, how you stop an unjust aggressor. After World War II, the idea of the United Nations came about: It's there that you must discuss 'Is there an unjust aggression? It seems so. How should we stop it?' Just this. Nothing more.

He could say the very same about what is happening in Ukraine.

I think so too. The UN has come together in a way rarely seen before to identify the action by Russia as an unjust aggression.

All must be done to repel the advance – including military action. Yet, Just War Theory warns that any escalation of the conflict must be the very last resort – and warns against creating future hostility. So while military support is ongoing, we must not forget the wisdom of the Christian pacifists. There are always other means, such as real sanctions, concrete support of refugees, and a radical commitment to truth and morality.

Pope Francis finished the passages quoted above in *Fratelli Tutti* by saying:

Once more we are being reminded that each new generation must take up the struggles and attainments of past generations, while setting its sights even higher. This is the path. Goodness, together with love, justice and solidarity, are not achieved once and for all; they have to be realized each day. (paragraph 11)

These are indeed difficult times. And they will bring challenges to all of us.

It is important to remain hopeful. Hope is the central message of Easter because by his cross, death and resurrection, Jesus is the Lord of Peace. As he promised:

Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. (John 14:27)

Happy Easter!

Every good Easter blessing to all the readers of the *Ossory Times*, as we continue to pray for peace in Ukraine and other war-torn parts of our broken world. May we all live in ways that build true peace, based on fraternity and solidarity and not just the absence of war.

LIFE IN THE SPIRIT SEMINARS 2022



Sacred Heart Church Moneenroe Eircode R95 F6XK

Tuesday 26th April: Week 1 : God's Love - Eddie Stones
Clonfert

Thursday 5th May: Week 2 : Salvation - Bishop Alphonsus
Cullinan – Bishop of Waterford & Lismore

Tuesday 10th May: Week 3 :New Life - Fr Billy Swan Diocese of
Ferns

Tuesday 17th May: Week 4 :Receiving God's Gift- Fr John
Mockler. Diocese of Limerick

Tuesday 24th May: Week 5 :Baptism in the Spirit- Fr Gerry
Campbell . Archdiocese of Armagh

Tuesday 31st May :Week 6: Growth- Bishop Denis Nulty
Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin & Apostolic Administrator of
Diocese of Ossory.

Tuesday 7th June : Week 7: Transformation- Fr Brendan Walsh.
Pallotine Order

Holy Hour 6.30p.m. each night and Mass at 7.30 p.m.

All are welcome to this sacred time of music, prayer and song and joyful celebration of our Faith.



There are significant, though hardly insurmountable, differences between Catholic and Orthodox.

Spiritual leadership in a time of war

Albert McDonnell, Diocese of Killaloe

'Rivers of blood, rivers of tears' These striking words were used by Pope Francis on 6 March 2022 as he pleaded for peace in Ukraine. The leader of the Russian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Kirill has also called for peace. However, his appeals have been overshadowed by his emphasis on what he perceives as the urgent need to protect Russia from a degraded western culture. Those who hope for an unambiguous condemnation of the actions of the Russian military in Ukraine from the lips of the Patriarch remain disappointed.

Members of the Orthodox Churches suffered enormously during the twentieth century. Apart from Greece, most Orthodox majority countries became

subject to a form of Communist rule violently opposed to religion. While some collaborated, many Russian Christians suffered a great deal for the faith, even unto death. Nevertheless, Christianity survived in central and eastern Europe where Orthodoxy prevails. To the surprise of us who live in the EU, many Orthodox Christians regard Vladimir Putin as a friend, even a hero. Patriarch Kirill described his economic policies as 'a miracle of God'. The Orthodox Church feels valued by Putin's government and has regained a position of national prominence. Commentators opine that Putin's alliance with the Church serves to enhance his credibility among Russians.

The division between West and East,



Catholic and Orthodox dates back a millennium. Politics and theology combined to frustrate Christ's wish that all his followers be one. The theological differences are perhaps less significant than the cultural and historical divisions. The Orthodox world resembles a loose federation build around shifting alliances rather than a cohesive unity. The Patriarch of Constantinople is the titular head though he yields little real control. Moscow is the natural centre of gravity though not all feel attracted by it. The alliance between throne and altar, long abandoned in the West, it still significant in the East. The Orthodox Churches see themselves as the automatic spiritual home for the people of their countries. The long, cold winter of communist rule prevented anything resembling a Vatican II type renewal occurring in the Orthodox world. Many Orthodox believe that the Catholic Church has sold out to modern, progressive ideas. Some people from the Catholic and reformed traditions admire Orthodox resistance to the prevailing liberalism.

There are significant, though hardly insurmountable, differences between Catholic and Orthodox. Eastern liturgy tends to focus on mystery rather than active participation. The two traditions differ on how the date of Easter is determined. The Orthodox Churches ordain married men to the priesthood, though not to the episcopacy. Issues such as the role of women in Church life which are that the subject of much discussion in Catholic circles rarely even make it onto 'any other business' on the Orthodox agenda. Patriarch Kirill recently spoke of the conflict in Ukraine in the context of the perceived need to confront gay culture.

There are about 260 million Orthodox Christians in the world of whom 100 million live in Russia. Some Orthodox faithful beyond Russia see the Patriarch of Moscow as their spiritual leader. Ukraine has approximately 30 million Orthodox

Christians who are split between those who look towards Moscow and those who look elsewhere. Russians view Kyiv as the cradle of their faith, an argument used by some to justify the invasion. However, Patriarch Kirill's refusal to condemn the war has alienated many Ukrainians from his spiritual leadership. Speculation that the Patriarch once served in the KGB and his liking for expensive consumer goods have also tarnished his image. The leader of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church which heretofore was in communion with Moscow, citing the biblical story of Cain and Abel, has accused Russia of fratricide towards his country

Pope Francis has focused on the periphery rather than the historic centre for much of his papacy. The Russian invasion of Ukraine has compelled him to concentrate once again on Europe. His approach towards the war in Ukraine has been unambiguous. In an unprecedented gesture, Pope Francis personally went to the Russian Embassy to the Holy See in Rome to appeal for a truce as the war began. Since then, his public appeals for peace have become ever stronger reflecting the public utterances of Pope Benedict XV and Pius XI as each sought to prevent world wars. On Palm Sunday, Pope Francis appealed for an Easter truce leading onwards to a lasting peace and reminded the world that planting your flag on a pile of rubble is not victory. He has also engaged in diplomacy reaching out to President Putin's administration and speaking directly to Patriarch Kirill and President Zelensky of Ukraine. Two Cardinals have travelled to Ukraine as the Pope's representatives bringing medical equipment. Pope Francis has expressed a wish to visit Ukraine personally.

People of good will are shocked and terrified by the rivers of blood and tears that have flowed in Ukraine since 24 February 2022. The blood and tears of Holy Week became the glory and peace of the Resurrection. We pray that peace will soon find a home in all hearts.



Homily of Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of Ossory

27th March, Laetare Sunday

The Solemn Blessing of the Ambo and Consecration of the Altar at St Mary's Cathedral

Laetare Sunday offers us a short reprise from the starkness and austerity of Lent. A moment to rejoice, to celebrate, to savour. "Laetare" means rejoice. Just like on our journey through Advent, this is the moment when the Church expresses hope and joy in the midst of fasts and penances. The rose coloured vestments are simply a glimpse of the joy Easter brings.

No greater rejoicing than in the return of the Prodigal into the arms of his loving father. No matter how often you listen to Luke's text a different line, a different aspect of that return journey speaks. For me, this evening, it's the line "all I have is yours". And it's in words addressed not the prodigal but to the older son.

This Sunday evening, we rejoice as we near the completion of the works, commenced by Archbishop Dermot, on the sanctuary area here in our Cathedral. Enormous credit is due to Paul O'Daly for very sensitively creating a sacred space where we can all as prodigals be embraced by a loving and welcoming father.

Thomas Glendon's choice of the natural Combe Brune limestone quarried in France is significant in that the Altar and Ambo reflect the curves of the limestone columns that frame the sanctuary. While those splendid columns were carved here on site in the late 1840s; the altar and ambo were carved and sculpted in Loughrea. I think that Loughrea was Tom Glendon's sanctuary during lockdown!

St Paul in our second reading re-echoes the message of Ash Wednesday, reminding us how we are ambassadors for Christ. I love the state ceremony where an accredited ambassador presents their credentials to our President. We can only be His ambassadors if we have met Christ, if we have come to know and love him, and if we believe that Christ walks with us as we reach out to others with the joy of our faith.

And that is why what we are celebrating this evening is so important in our blessing of the ambo and consecration of the altar. And it is here, gathered together around the table of the word and the table of the altar that you and generations after you, will continue to encounter and be nourished by Christ – by his Word and by his Body and Blood.

From here, we listen to the loving words of God speaking directly to us whenever the scriptures are proclaimed. It is from here that we receive God's words of encouragement and support, of challenge and invitation – words that reveal for us the person of Christ. Words of mercy, Words of embrace, Words of healing. It is here we are reminded every time through His word that "all I have is yours".

So, too, we are fed and nourished from the altar of Christ's sacrifice. Like the ambo, the altar is a place set apart, exclusively for the worship of God and the sacrifice of the Mass. That is why we will bless and anoint and incense the altar.

Carved out of Combe Brune, this altar is a clear symbol of Christ the Living Stone, the stone which the builders rejected who has become for us our cornerstone. It's around the altar we gather to give thanks and to be nourished. During the more severe pandemic lockdowns we missed this sense of gathering and nourishment.

It is appropriate that this day is also Mother's Day, and we gather in the Mother church of Ossory to bless the ambo and consecrate the altar. We realise that while sacred elements will speak, the greatest voice will be the presence of mothers, fathers, children, young people, older people – all who by coming here, leave as ambassadors for Christ.

The Prodigal returned to the father and I use this opportunity to encourage all of you, who perhaps are with us on webcam and have become comfortable in that space, to return to public worship in your parish. At the heart of the life of our parish communities is the Sunday Mass. When we gather, our communal celebration with our brothers and sisters shapes us into the community we become.

Those who are in any way anxious or vulnerable are not under any compulsion to attend, but for the vast majority of us returning to worship is a powerful expression of our faith. A faith that will endure long after us as others in their day will gather around this sanctuary and other sanctuaries to be nourished by His word and by His body and blood.





The new Altar and Ambo are in integral part of the celebration of Mass.

Solemn Blessing of the Ambo and Consecration of the Altar at St Mary's Cathedral

Richard Scriven

162 feet in length, 100 feet wide and 186 feet tall St Mary's Cathedral has stood over the city of Kilkenny for 165 years. Over its years the interior has been transformed: in the 1890s by Bishop Brownrigg who significantly changed the sanctuary; Bishop Collier added the mosaics and a new organ in the 1930s; Bishop Birch oversaw the re-ordering of the Cathedral in accordance with the changes in the celebration of Mass following the Second Vatican Council. Bishop Freeman commenced the present phase of work in 2011 when the sanctuary mosaics and windows were cleaned and restored, offering for all who entered the Cathedral the wonderful vista of the Apse behind the Sanctuary and Altar.

In January 2019 Bishop Farrell invited liturgical architect Paul O'Daly to visit the Cathedral. Paul, a native of Dublin, has vast experience in the design of several new churches and in the restoration and reordering of many churches and religious houses in Ireland. Paul brought an understanding of liturgy and the concept of 'sacred space', including the interaction between language, ritual, and the appropriate furnishing of a church. Paul met with local architect

Brian Dunlop of Kilkenny and together they began the plans and design process that culminated in the celebration on Sunday 27th March.

Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese, was the chief celebrant at Mass in the Cathedral on Sunday 27th when the Altar was consecrated and the Ambo was blessed. Bishop Denis was joined by 20 priests of the Diocese including four previous administrators of the Cathedral: Canon Pat Duggan, Fr Noel Maher, Fr Oliver Maher and Mgr Kieron Kennedy.

The new Altar and Ambo are in integral part of the celebration of Mass. The Ambo, or often called the Lectern, is the place where the Word of God is proclaimed. The Altar is the place of sacrifice where the Bread and Wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The new Altar and Ambo are the work of Mr Thomas Glendon and his son Philip. Thomas is a renowned Irish craftsman specialising in sculpture, letterform, ecclesiastical work and design in stone, wood and bronze. St Mary's Cathedral is the second cathedral where Thomas' work can now be seen; he is the sculptur

of the new Altar in St Mel's Cathedral in Longford. Thomas visited St Mary's numerous times and took his inspiration for the new Altar and Ambo from the curves and designs of the magnificent pillars of the Cathedral. Listening to Thomas speak of stone and its form is poetic. Watching him at work in his workshop in Loughrea and in the Cathedral was magical: carving, chiseling, shaping, curving – the chisel in his hands used with the ease of years of experience.

Locally, Kevin Moore and his team provided services to the work over the past three months. Local stonemason Donal McDonald restored the side altars, reinstated the marble reredos that have been cleaned and repaired. Jody O'Dwyer repaired the mosaic floors and Pat and Robert Walsh restored the magnificent black and white tiles of the centre nave.

Bishop Denis welcomed all to the Cathedral for the blessing and consecration commenting that, "Ours is but a small contribution to its long history; ours are but some of many prayers that have been, and will continue to be, placed before the Lord in this magnificent place. We shall pass, and generations of people will pass after us, and still these stones and timber will be standing here, an enduring memorial of our brief stay on earth but our abiding and enduring faith."

At the beginning of the Mass water was brought from the River Nore, the Breaghagh, the fields of Clonmoran, Kenny's Well and the Well of St Kieran in Seir Kieran. As the water was poured into the Baptismal Font in the Baptistry, Ger Cody, commentator of the Liturgy, remarked: "This evening water is brought from we live. The water from these wells and rivers represents our backgrounds, our stories that become one when we gather as the people of God, water from holy places where our stories and lives are blended."

Bishop Denis blessed the water which was then sprinkled upon the new Ambo and Altar.

After the homily Fr Richard Scriven intoned the Litany of Saints. Bishop Denis poured the Oil of Chrism upon the Altar, and he was assisted by Lucy Culleton (St Canice's Parish), Dwayne Joyce (St John's Parish), Kyle Tanap (St Mary's Parish), Orla Dowling (St Patrick's Parish), all who will be confirmed this year. A brazier of charcoal and incense was placed on the altar symbolically representing our prayers which ascend to heaven.

Sacred Music was provided by the Cathedral choir under the leadership of John O'Neill and organist Joy Bibby. Readings and prayers were read by Tina Lawler and Michael Whelan who are regular readers in the Cathedral, Pat O'Neill sang the psalm. The Offertory gifts were presented by the O'Neill family; Rebecca was the bell ringer for the Mass.

At the end of the Mass the choir sang the anthem to Our Lady: The Ave Maria. During this hymn the new lighting in the side chapels of Our Lady and St Joseph was lit. The sacristans lit two candles in the Lady Chapel recalling those who had died of Covid in the past two years and also the people of Ukraine at this time.

At the end of the Mass Fr Scriven, Administrator of the Cathedral, saluted the work of the various tradespeople and in particular the architects Brian Dunlop and Paul O'Daly for their work and dedication to the project. He acknowledged the work of Bishop Farrell, now Archbishop of Dublin, who during his time in Ossory had initiated this phase of work. Fr Scriven thanked Bishop Denis for his time and energy in this interregnum period as we await the appointment of a new Bishop. He invited all present to take some time to stroll around after Mass to admire the work and then to gather for a cup of tea in the Chapter Room of the Cathedral.

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...



FR KIERAN O'SHEA
VOCATIONS DIRECTOR
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An age-old faith meets modern tech thanks to the Adult Faith Development Group successfully securing grant aid of over €50,000 from the Benefact Trust



An age-old Faith meets modern tech



The past number of years has seen us all move to the digital space. Meetings, which before necessitated us to come together, have now seamlessly moved online. We think nothing of gathering with a group of people from all around the country, and often beyond, via one of the many platforms that facilitate our coming together. Using similar technology, which has been developed over the past two years the team at Aspal, in the Ossory Adult Faith development Group, have

developed an online platform for faith formation. Easy to use with the ability to access content anywhere and at any time, this App and digital platform allows people to deepen their faith from the comfort of their own home and at any time that is convenient for them. Imagine having access to the best lecturers in any town, village or parish throughout the Island of Ireland. The team at Aspal have now made that possible.

As we journeyed through Lent in these past weeks the Aspal team, in collaboration with St Patrick's Pontifical University, and with the wonderful cooperation of Professor Séamus O'Connell, has delivered a weekly course on praying with the scriptures – *lectio divina*. Over 200 people followed the sessions which were released each week accompanying them as they deepened their understanding of, and love for, the Scriptures. The pre-recorded session, available at a time and place to the users that best suited their lifestyle, were supported by a number of live sessions which allowed for interaction, reinforced learning and wonderful moments of prayer together.

In the coming weeks the Aspal team, through their collaboration with St Patrick's Pontifical University, will be offering all parishes and dioceses in Ireland an opportunity to offer faith formation to Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist – enabling those who help animate our liturgies to get the best possible preparation, again in a time and place that best suits people with busy lives.

Coming also in Easter, an exploration of the synodal journey, as the Aspal team support a collaboration between The Irish Institute for Pastoral Studies (Mary Immaculate College) and St Patrick's Pontifical University, in a course that will bring before people the leading synodal minds in the Church at this time – including, from the Vatican, Sr Nathalie Becquart, undersecretary to the Synod of Bishops in Rome.

The Aspal team, though their collaboration with St Patrick's Pontifical University, have helped equip three cutting-edge technology suites on the campus in Maynooth offering multiple opportunities for even more exciting digital faith formation projects into the months ahead. All of this was made possible thanks to the collaboration of a very talented team and the invaluable

support of the Benefact Trust who have granted aided the development of the necessary technology with over €50,000 of support. The Benefact Trust is one of the UK's largest grant-making charities and awarded more than £23 million to Churches, charities and communities in 2020. Further funding has been secured from, among others the Koch Foundation, all meaning that the necessary funding has been fully secured to design and develop the necessary infrastructure to deliver the highest quality digital faith formation to every parish in Ireland.

Aspal, even though it was born in Ossory, is, thanks to the collaboration of St Patrick's Pontifical University, now serving the complete Island of Ireland. Rev Dr Dermot Ryan, Director of the Ossory Adult Faith Development Group, noted that "this is but the first step in our journey of something we believe can serve the Irish Church providing the very best digital faith formation to people in a way that makes learning more accessible – and in so doing makes deepening our knowledge and love of God easier". Gemma Mulligan, who along with her work as Ossory Pastoral Coordinator, found time to partake in the Lenten Scripture course, observed, "It was wonderful to have access to someone like Professor Séamus right in the comfort of our own home. Even though we were from all corners of Ireland it felt fully like we were together in a room – it was a great way to learn, I will do more of this".

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 for Aspal much has been learned and the immense possibilities for a high quality means of engaging with people of faith in every corner of the country has been clearly seen.

...the iconic Hiberno-Romanesque doorway at St Lachtain's Church is an open and welcoming doorway at all times for the community in Freshford

In the footsteps of St Lachtain

Ned Kennedy



From left: Esther Farrell, Acolyte; Dean Stephen Farrell, Bishop Michael Burrows, Bishop Denis Nulty, Monsignor Kieron Kennedy, Canon Richard Marsh.
Photo by kind permission: Michael Brophy.

The Millennium Quatercentenary (1400th anniversary or MQC) of the death of Freshford's patron, St Lachtain, was commemorated in Freshford on Saturday, March 19, 2022 with an ecumenical service attended by both Bishops of Ossory, Bishop Denis Nulty, Apostolic Administrator of the Diocese of Ossory and Bishop Michael Burrows, Church of Ireland Bishop of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory.

The service, titled "Celebrating our Shared Christian Heritage," was composed by Monsignor Kieron Kennedy, Parish Priest of Freshford and Canon Richard Marsh of the Union of Kilkenny Parishes. It began at 3.00 p.m. in St Lachtain's Church of Ireland led by both Bishops, Dean Stephen Farrell, Church of Ireland Dean of Ossory, Canon Marsh and Monsignor Kennedy. The choirs from St Canice's Cathedral and St Lachtain's R.C. Church sang at both churches. The Bishops

created their own bit of history when Bishop Nulty addressed the congregation in the Church of Ireland and Bishop Burrows addressed the congregation in the Catholic Church. In his sermon Bishop Nulty emphasised the equal importance of the home missionaries in Ireland who spread the gospel in the early years of the church, and since, as well as the foreign missionaries who ministered abroad during the history of the church.

Following Bishop Nulty's address, a procession took place to St Lachtain's Catholic Church. A replica of the Shrine of St Lachtain's Arm, made by local artist Kevin Buckley, was carried in the procession. In his address Bishop Burrows mentioned the iconic Hiberno-Romanesque doorway at St Lachtain's Church and spoke of the importance of it being an open and welcoming doorway at all times for the community in Freshford. The service concluded with the singing of

"Lachtaín Naofa," composed by the late Tom Waldron.

After the service an informal reception was held in in Freshford Community Hall where an exhibition of artifacts connected with St Lachtain was on display. These included Kevin Buckley's replica of the Shrine of St Lachtain's Arm and a wooden interpretation of the shrine executed by local student Pádraig Donnelly. Two other representations of the Shrine, executed by local artists Gemma Fullam and Seosamh Ó Faoláin, were shown with an artistic interpretation of the hymn "Lachtaín Naofa" by Larry Hamilton also on display.

The ecumenical service marked the opening of Féile Lachtaín 2022 which also celebrates more than 1400 years of worship in the parish of Freshford and in particular on the site of St Lachtain's Church of Ireland. The site



The procession leaves the Church of Ireland on March 19.



Members of the congregation arriving at St Lachtain's R.C. Church.

is acknowledged as the place where St Lachtain set up his first monastic foundation c. 570 A.D.

Today St Lachtain's Church of Ireland is famed for its iconic 12th century church doorway. In the Hiberno-Romanesque style, it is acknowledged to be one of only three or four similar churches in the country. It dates from c. 1150.

Féile Lachtain 2022 will continue for the rest of the year. Various events are planned. Highlights will include Pilgrimage Sunday on July 10 when participants will walk to the church ruins at Clashacrow; return to the village and continue on to the 13th century Ballylarkin Church before finishing at the Green in Freshford.

The MQC Concerts will take place in October with the Rafter Family performing at St Lachtain's Catholic Church on Saturday, October 8 while the Choir of St Canice's Cathedral will sing at a concert in the Church of Ireland on October 15. The festival will conclude on the weekend of November 12/13 with Mass at St Nicholas's Church Tulla and St Lachtain's Church, Freshford at which the spiritual songs of Elvis Presley will be sung by Alexander Rafter.

A series of lectures and exhibitions will also be held during the year. Information can be found on www.ionadlachtain.com

and on Facebook and Instagram at Ionad Lachtain.

Souvenirs of the celebrations are on sale in the craft shop at Ionad Lachtain which is open every Friday and Saturday. All are welcome to come and help celebrate this special year in the history of the church in the parish of Freshford and in the Diocese of Ossory.



Monsignor Kennedy and Bishop Nulty with a replica of the Shrine of St Lachtain's Arm made by local artist Kevin Buckley.



Bishop Burrows addressing the congregation.

Please remember Diocese of Ossory Priests in your Will

Ossory Priests Society

The Ossory Priests Society is a registered charity within the Diocese of Ossory structure. It is responsible for supporting Priests in their retirement and ensuring that the Priests of the Diocese are adequately provided for in relation to illness and healthcare costs.

A gift/bequest is a wonderful way to express your gratitude to the Priests of the Diocese for their lifetime of service. The gift you give to the Ossory Priests Society will establish a lasting legacy of love and thanks to the Priests.

A gift/bequest can be made by way of Will, or if you wish to make a donation at any time you may do so by way of cheque (payable to Ossory Priests Society), Diocesan Office, James Street, Kilkenny, or by direct payment to Ossory Priests Society at Bank of Ireland, Kilkenny IBAN :IE49BOFI90606480991544

If you have any questions or wish to consider a gift/bequest, your solicitor can advise you, or alternatively you can phone Declan McCann, Chairman, Ossory Priests Society at 086/7722201.

Forms of Bequest

Pecuniary Legacy (fixed sum)

I give and bequeath to the Ossory Priests Society the sum of To be applied to such charitable purposes connected with the work of Ossory Priests Society as the Ossory Priests Society may decide. The receipt of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Ossory or other proper officer of the Diocese shall be sufficient discharge in relation to the payment of this bequest.

Residuary Legacy

Instead of leaving a specific amount in your will, you may wish to simply leave a certain proportion of the residue of your estate. Your solicitor can advise you as to how best this might be expressed.

Alternatively, donate now

Finally, you may wish to do something now to support the work of the Ossory Priests Society, rather than leave something in your will.

Beneficiary Account: Ossory Priests Society
Beneficiary Address : Diocesan Office, James Street, Kilkenny
Bank: Bank of Ireland
Account Number: 80991544
Bank Address : Kilkenny
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IBAN :IE49BOFI90606480991544

Pope Francis wants to hear you and we do too.
Every voice makes the parish.

The Ossory Synodal Journey thus far

Dermot Ryan



Pope Francis wants to hear you and we do too. Every voice makes the parish. With these two bold statements the Synodal Journey in Ossory was started. Our mandate was quite simple provide opportunities for people to have their voice heard on their experience of Church today and their hopes for its future. However, simple missions are often the most complicated to deliver.

Some months back, now, Bishop Denis approached Gemma Mulligan, the Coordinator of the Ossory Pastoral Plan, and Sr Helen Maher of the Diocesan Forum

and myself to appoint us as diocesan delegates for this synodal journey. A role, individually and collectively, we were most happy to undertake. After all, this was a nice job asking people what they thought, ensuring that as many as possible be included and that every voice was made welcome.

From the very outset it was clear that broadening the conversation was to be our immediate imperative and quickly we asked others to come on this journey with us too. With many, often immediate, positive responses we soon had a core

group to drive synodality in Ossory. We met in person, or via Zoom, on a weekly basis from the very beginning up to, and through, Lent.

In deciding how best to proceed we felt that in the initial months we would approach the synodal journey in three phases: a first period of making synod known; a second period of listening sessions; and finally a period of synthesising that which was heard to make it known to those who spoke it and to Bishop Denis, and through it to the Irish Episcopal Conference.

many ways, making it happen. By the end of this preparatory phase, and as we approached Lent, we had identified the questions, planned and booked venues throughout the Diocese and done all we could to help encourage people to engage with this synodal journey. It was wonderful to know that even by then all parishes had been encouraged to simply pray the prayer to the Holy Spirit at every Mass - a simple way of our marking the fact that this was a journey towards God that we were on a journey that we were on together.



Tweets, radio interviews, posters in parishes, letters to schools - primary and secondary - webposts and many other means of creating awareness were undertaken by the group in those first weeks. The task was simple - to let people know that there would be opportunities to be heard and that in truth we wanted to hear. The energy which those involved brought to these early weeks was both humbling and exiting - busy people really threw their shoulders to the wheel - be that in thinking about this or simply, in so

This Lent, then, was a listening Lent during which we held 13 sessions throughout the Diocese, inviting people to come and reflect on the two base questions: firstly, when I think of Church what works well and is a source of joy today and why is that so? and secondly, when I think of Church what doesn't work well and is a source of disappointment today and why is that so? These questions were explored under the banners of Communion (Who are we with/or not with); Participation (How do I take part or do not) and Mission (What is it we do or should be doing).

In preparation for these listening sessions there was the training of a team of nearly 40 facilitators who were prepared so that they could help manage and hear correctly that which would be spoken at these listening sessions, and as soon as we were ready the listening began.

The sessions were, thankfully, as varied as the people who attended them. Some worked well and others struggled a little - but that was good as it reflected where we are; that was, after all, another way of our hearing what needed to be said. It was synodality being lived. Some venues had 10 or so participants, others had 60-100. Some finished early and others did not get done! In fact, one pastoral area wrote to request permission to set up their own listening session while utilising the trained diocesan facilitators! We were delighted with the initiative shown. Over those weeks many wrote letters, emails or took part in the online surveys which were shared as widely as possible and many of the children from our schools took part in the synodal journey too - answering questions in their classes prompted by letters from Bishop Denis to their teachers - and some simple technology on the Diocesan Website.

Is synod done in Ossory - No! It has only started. At the Mass of Chrism we symbolically carried that which was spoken to the Altar in St Mary's Cathedral, an important manner of showing the honour these words were, and will be, given. The task now is to synthesise this first phase of listening and to report back so that people will have a real sense that what they said was heard, and documented.

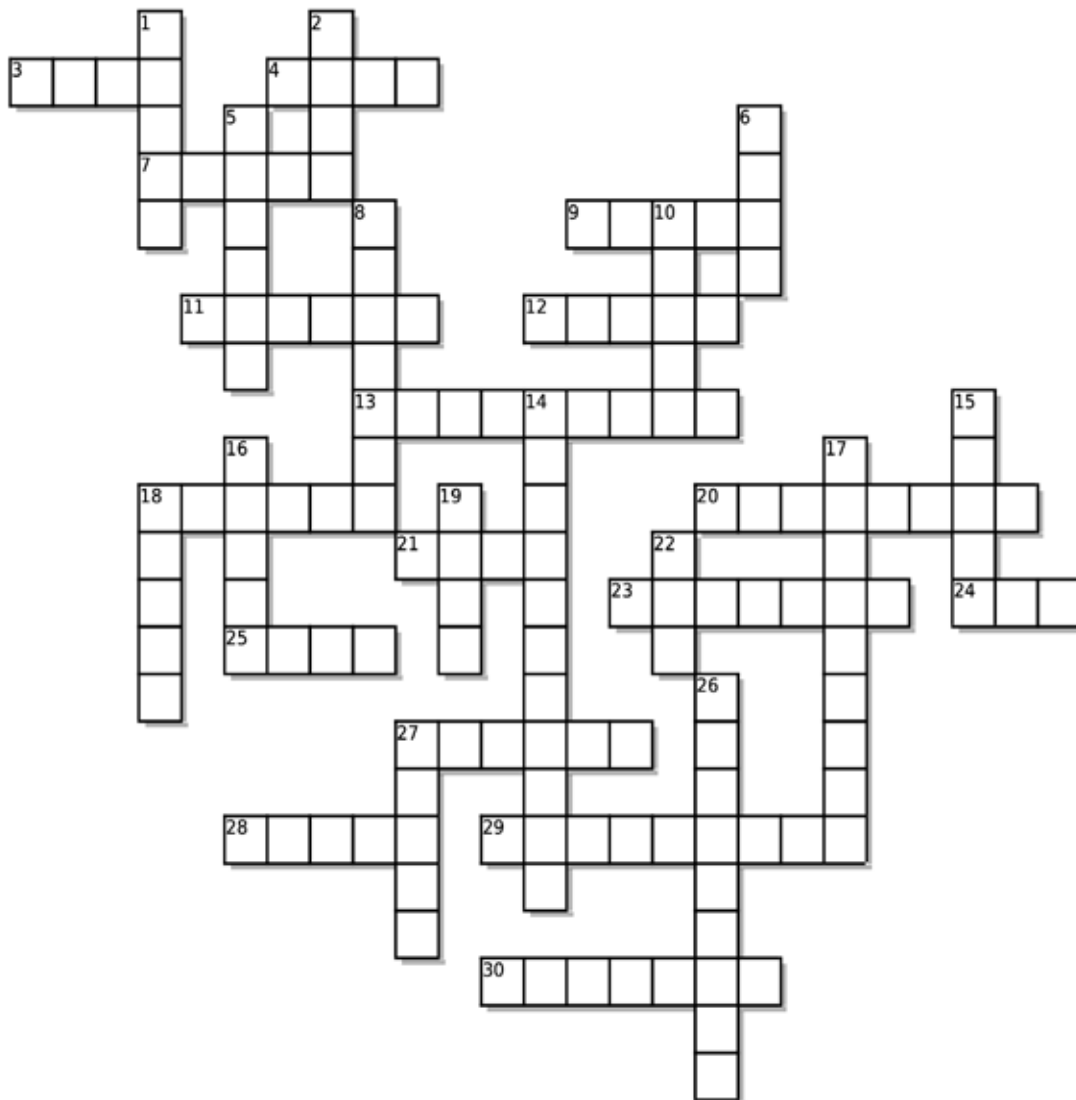
With all this talk of synod one wonders is it a new word or concept. The very opposite is the reality. This is not the first synod in the Church - it was common in the early Church that several neighbouring bishops in the second century would gather together to find solutions to their common problems. Since his election Pope Francis has, in fact, convened a

number of synods. A synod on the family, one on young people, and one on the Amazonian region.

In calling for this synod, Pope Francis has launched the synod to take place over two years, culminating in 2023. This synod is at its heart an exercise in mutual listening. It starts, as we have done, in the local church where each diocese is holding these listening sessions to allow people to have their voice heard. Each diocese will forward a synthesis to their Bishops' Conference. Who then in turn will undertake a further synthesis of what was heard to be, then, brought to the Synod of Bishops in 2023. It is after this synod, in Rome, that the actions as a result of the listening will be brought to life. On these actions Pope Francis is clear - he speaks with frustration of leaders who make "a few adjustments here and there, but they are basically advocating for the same system as before. When they talk of "recovery" they mean putting a bit of varnish on the future, touching up the paintwork here and there, but all to make sure that nothing changes. I'm convinced that this will lead to an even greater failure, one that could ignite a huge social explosion.'" The actions emerging from the synod, then, are to be real and necessary.

Pope Francis was clear in calling for this synodal journey. It was not a road to any particular destination; it was not preparation for some event. It was a new way of being Church. A way of journeying together. Thankfully in Ossory we have a long history of this journeying together. Much great work has been done in this area, by successive generations of those involved in the Forum, the Ossory Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Council of Priests, and so many other good groups in our Diocese. We are fortunate to be, merely, building on their success.

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 3 Wise Guys
- 4 Saint who saved France
- 7 Catholic actor won an Academy Award for Father Flannigan
- 9 Church instrument
- 11 Name of God revealed to Moses
- 12 Abbot's assistant
- 13 Sinead against hope
- 18 A member of the clergy
- 20 School from here stopped a College All Ireland this Lent
- 21 CLI + CL
- 23 One of the Gospels
- 24 Mattress for Baby Jesus
- 25 Faith is one
- 27 St Stephen
- 28 Magdalene and the sister of Martha
- 29 The day before this day
- 30 rest grant unto them, O Lord

DOWN

- 1 This commandment forbids killing
- 2 We are many parts but we are all one _____
- 5 Curates here were troublesome
- 6 Baptismal basin
- 8 Master Craftsman who carved an altar
- 10 The Infant of Prague holds one
- 14 History and this of the Diocese of Ossory written by Carrigan
- 15 His prophecy said that Jesus would be born in Bethlehem
- 16 Land with a cavalry in Ezekiel
- 17 Jewish President now in news
- 18 Inferno author
- 19 310, In ancient Rome
- 22 _____ company corrupts good morals (1 Cor 15:33)
- 26 Waterford or Kilkenny it is all Ossory
- 27 He saw the burning bush

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 20th July 2022 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 28 competitions:*

Adult Crossword:
Patsy Carragher

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

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

Colouring Competition



For ages 5-8



Wordsearch Competition



For ages 8-13

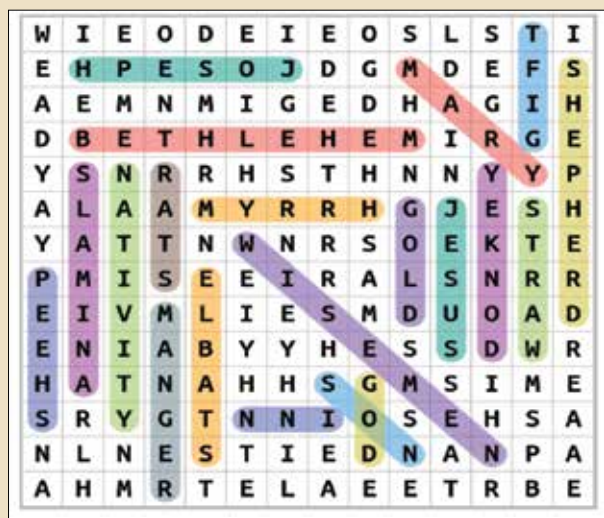
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APOSTLES
BETRAYAL
CAVE
CHURCH
CROSS
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DISCIPLES
FAITH
GOOD FRIDAY

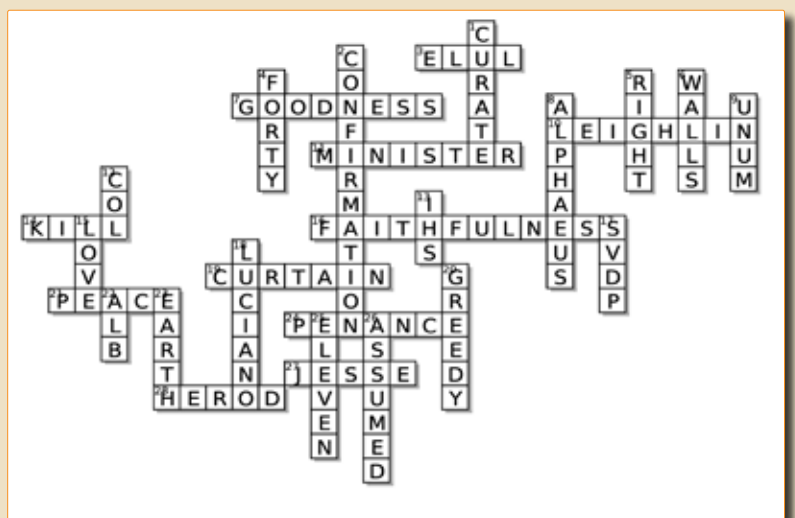
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LAST SUPPER
LENT
MARY
MIRACLE
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PENANCE
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PRAYER
REDEMPTION
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RISEN
SAVIOR
SON
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TOMB

Answers to Ossory Times Issue 28



Answers to Ossory Times Issue 28



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

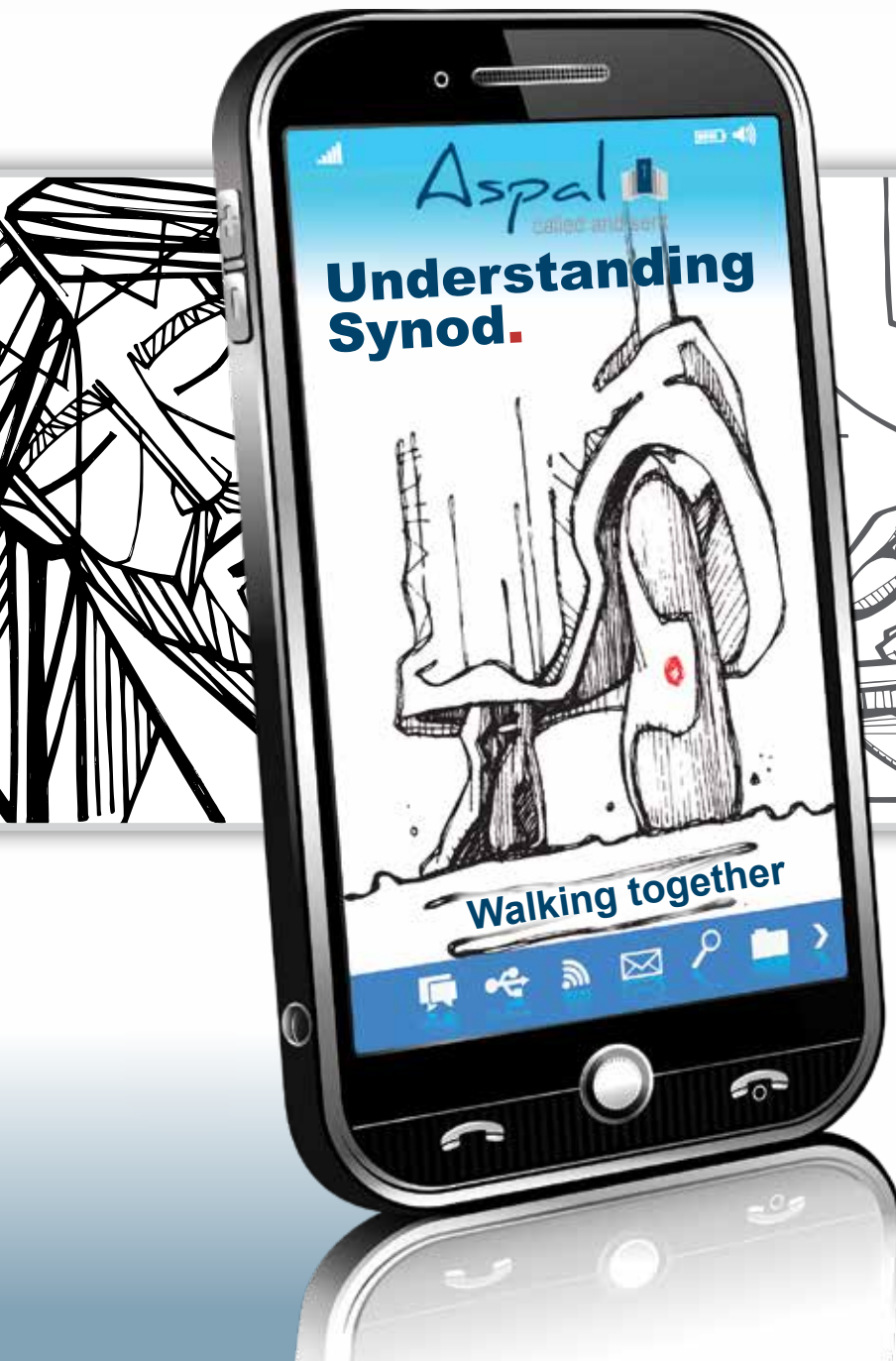
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