

OSSORY TIMES

Sharing the life of our Diocese



VISIT OF THE RELICS OF
ST BERNADETTE OF LOURDES



DIOCESE OF OSSORY
ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL
RESTORATION FUND DRAW
2024/2025

12 MONTHLY DRAWS - SEPTEMBER 2024 TO AUGUST 2025

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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.

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Editorial

Pope Francis recently visited Belgium and while there, as he has done on most previous Papal trips, he met with the Jesuit community of that country. In his address he touched on many topics but one question he answered resonates so clearly with the reality of Church here in Ossory and in most of the western world... the absence of vocations to the Priesthood. He was asked the question, "In our so secularised society, it is difficult to find ministers. How do you see the future of parish communities without priests?"

His response was quite simple and yet very profound - "The community is more important than the priest. The priest is a servant of the community. In some situations, I know in various parts of the world, people are looking within the community for those who can play a leadership role". We too know that reality to be the case - without the faith community there can emerge no vocations. Much work has been done in Ossory, for many years now, to strengthen the voice of the lay faithful to take these leadership roles in our parishes and Diocese. We are fortunate that this work, that of the Forum, the Ossory Diocesan Pastoral Council, the Council of Priests and so many parish based groups has ensured that the faith and our faith communities are alive in Ossory. The many activities of our parishes and Diocese remind us of this and these pages remind us of that fact too.

We were all very taken by the recent visit to Ossory of the relics of St Bernadette of Lourdes - the volume of people that streamed through the Cathedral in those truly special days, the stilled pray, the beautiful liturgies, the wonderful music, and the felt presence of God in our midst was for all a welcome reminder that our faith is alive and that it runs deep. Those truly blessed days are recoded in these pages as too are - the upcoming Year of Hope which Pope Francis has declared to being on the 24th December of this year; the wonderful celebration in Coolagh where the National School was renamed "Bishop Freeman School House" in memory of its faithful past pupil; the celebrations of Edmund Rice; and those of the Dominicans; the work of the ODPC; the relaunch of the Pope John Paul II Awards, celebrating the faith life of the younger members of our parish; and so much more..

I am delighted, then, to welcome you 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
Visit of the Relics of St Bernadette.....	2
Homily of Bishop Niall Coll for the Formal	
Reception of the Relics of St Bernadette.....	6
Locals honour Bishop Séamus Freeman SAC	8
Pope Francis and the Jubilee Year of Hope	14
Church Matters	16
Godly Play.....	18
Morality Matters	20
John Paul II Award.....	22
A past pupil recalls St Kieran's College.....	24
Facilitative Leadership Training Programme ...	25
Faith Seeking Understanding	26
Carrigan: Church, Culture, Context.....	28
Quiz Pages	31





This visit proclaimed God's closeness to us and the happiness that this brings to our lives.

Visit of the Relics of St Bernadette

Donie Butler

In 1858 a young french girl Bernadette Soubirous reported that from the 11th February to 16th July of that year she was seeing apparitions of "a Lady" dressed in blue and white. At first people were sceptical, and you can understand why. Even the local church was sceptical but in time, and following a canonical investigation, her claims were declared worthy of belief. These apparitions are now known world-wide as the visits of Our Lady of Lourdes. During these apparitions Our Lady asked for prayer and penance and on one occasion she asked the young Bernadette to dig in the soil and drink the water that came forth.. Today

so many people make the journey to Lourdes to the site of those apparitions - particularly those who are sick asking for healing through the intercession of Our Lady of Lourdes.

On the weekend of 21st/22nd September 2024 we welcomed the relics of that wonderful Saint, St Bernadette, to St Mary's Cathedral and to our Diocese. Relics are all or part of the human remains of a person who has been recognised and deemed a Saint by the Church. We keep mementos of loved ones, a photograph, or a lock of hair in order to keep their memory alive and help us to be





close to them and remember their love and contribution to making us who we are. Visiting holy places and the graves or shrines associated with the Saints, or being close to their earthly remains, inspires us to personal holiness, helps us cope with sickness and difficulties and gives us an opportunity to intercede with the Saint, seeking their intercession for us with God. They are very much a part of our faith tradition. Saints and Our Lady do not grant favours, but they have the power to intercede for us. Through their intercession God can bestow his favours and blessings.

In bringing the relics of Saint Bernadette to Ireland, the Irish Church wanted to highlight the message of Our Lady of Lourdes. This message invites us to have a meaningful relationship with God through prayer and the sacraments. This visit proclaimed God's closeness to us and the happiness that this brings to our lives. It brought a piece of Lourdes to Ireland and invited the people of Ireland to pause, to pray, to contemplate and to focus. It invited us to participate in the life and mission of the Church, with an emphasis on Marian Piety. The sick, and those in need of assistance, were reminded that they are not alone.

On Saturday morning at 12 noon Bishop Niall formally welcomed the relics to a packed St Mary's Cathedral. In his homily on that occasion he reminded all

gathered that we could, in the presence of the relics of St Bernadette pray for a portion of her faith, her self-effacing good humour, her humility that somehow never faltered, and that unfailing patience and perseverance with people who, in life, misjudged her. For these virtues in our own lives, we could pray, asking her intercession. For the rest of that day as a steady stream of people from all around the Diocese, and far beyond, came through the Cathedral to pause in silent prayer.

The visit of the relics over two days was punctuated by moments of prayer led by the Dominican Rosary Group, and a member of the Lourdes Pilgrimage group as well as members from the Irish Pilgrimage Trust, the Diocesan Lourdes committee and many of their volunteers, young and older, who travel to Lourdes each year, as well as parishioners from St Mary's Cathedral and the city parishes. The Cathedral Choir provide most beautiful and fitting music and song to accompany each of the liturgies and all involved works so closely together to ensure that these special days were as they should be.

We were truly blessed to have the relics with us in Ossory - it was a moment of great faith and prayer in our Diocese. It was our privilege to be able to share in this most sacred moment in our Diocese.





Homily of Bishop Niall Coll for the Formal Reception of the Relics of St Bernadette
with Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny
21 September 2024

Most people know little or nothing about Bernadette Soubirous except that Our Lady is believed to have appeared to her at Lourdes. We heard some of that story in Bernadette's own words read at the beginning of this Mass. But let me say that Bernadette was not canonised because she saw visions of Mary. She was named a saint because she persevered in living the virtues of faith, hope and love, and this in spite of the way people treated her after her visions. It is what happened from this point after the visions had ended that marks Bernadette as an example for us to follow, explains why her relics are venerated and our presence at this Mass.

With simple dignity Bernadette, following the visions, did not allow herself to become inflated by her profound experience or overwhelmed by the important people who came to meet her following it. The conversion that the Blessed Mother asked for, Bernadette explained, was "first for myself and then for others".

Her first teacher, following the visions when she went to school, gave up on her, saying she was too stupid. (The catechism, you see, was written, not in the local French dialect that Bernadette spoke, but in the French of educated people, which was unknown to her at this stage.)

Eight years after the apparitions Bernadette left the village of Lourdes to

enter the convent of the Sisters of Charity at their motherhouse. Some of her religious superiors were deliberately hard on her because of her celebrity. Some were jealous, and some others loved her dearly. But Bernadette never complained. Bernadette's humble reaction to the jibes which inevitably came her way was, "If the Blessed Virgin could have found someone more ignorant than I, she would have chosen her." How salutary must she have found the words of St Paul in our reading today: 'God chose the weak of the world to shame the strong'. She accepted the lowliest tasks with the same simplicity that she showed to the high and mighty visitors who still pursued her, even to the convent. People often asked her to touch holy objects and bless rosaries.

After her profession, Bernadette was assigned to the convent infirmary since she was there so much anyway, because of periodic crises with asthma. Here she discovered a gift for caring for the sick, especially those with distressing illnesses. The doctor of the motherhouse praised her ability and marvelled that her diminutive size wasn't a drawback. (Bernadette's biographers estimate her adult height at about 4'7".)

Bernadette herself wrote in a letter, "I love the poor a great deal. I love to take care of sick people." In addition,

her sense of humour served her well in the infirmary as well as in her own frequent illnesses, and absolutely delighted the younger sisters who came to her for advice.

Of the 13 years she was in the convent, her last three were spent mostly in the infirmary. Weakened by years of chronic asthma and then by a painful tubercular tumour on her knee which made it impossible to walk, she spent her time cheering up those who came to cheer her up, as well as doing needlework. She also continued to receive those persistent visitors of high station who came to meet "the visionary".

She called her sickbed with its tent-like canopy of sheets her "white chapel" and made it a place of prayer. She united this part of her suffering to the passion of Jesus and hoped to "thank the holy Virgin right up to the end."

In her last few days, Bernadette began to fret about the ordinariness with which she had lived out her vocation. It's precisely this "ordinary manner" of Bernadette that gives us hope and instruction. None of us is likely to have apparitions of Our Lady, but all of us can simply be ourselves in the face of things that might puff us up with self-importance or cow us in the presence of the rich and powerful.

Today in the presence of the relics of St Bernadette let us pray for a portion of her faith, her self-effacing good humour, her humility that somehow never faltered, and that unfailing patience and perseverance with people who misjudged her. For these virtues in our own lives, we can pray, asking her intercession. May the grain of wheat that the message of Bernadette's plants in our hearts produce over time an abundant harvest in Ossory and throughout our country. Amen.



**Diocese of Ossory**

15th June 2024.

Dear Friends,

I extend my prayerful good wishes to you, the people of Coolagh, the parishioners of Callan, to your parish priest Father Willie Dalton and to Bishop Freeman's family and many friends, on this special occasion honouring your dear friend and neighbour, Bishop Séamus Freeman, SAC., a proud member of the Coolagh Community.

Unfortunately, I am unable to be present with you this evening for the celebration of the Eucharist in Coolagh Church, followed by the dedication and renaming of Coolagh National School, "Bishop Freeman School House", where Bishop Séamus and many here present this evening spent their school days. Please know that I am with you in prayer.

It is indeed a true testament to Bishop Séamus to be honoured in this way. May his soul rest in peace with the Lord.

I very much look forward to visiting "Bishop Freeman School House" over the summer and to meet the good people who brought this celebration together.

I wish you and your families every blessing of the good Lord.

✠Niall Coll,
Bishop of Ossory.

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It is now our prayer that Bishop Freeman School House, in echoing Bishop Séamus's words, "will have a future longer than its past ... and longer still"...

Locals honour "a good friend and neighbour" Bishop Séamus Freeman, SAC

*Cllr Joe Lyons,
Coolagh Pattern Committee*

High up on Coolaghmore Hill, the highest point of Callan Parish, the swallows, swifts and owls, were flying high and swirling in and out of the old 12th Century ruins, formerly the Parish Church of Coolagh, all oblivious to the preparations that were underway down at the present Church and the local Community Hall, formerly the old Coolagh National School. The Coolagh Pattern Committee were putting in place preparations to honour a good friend and neighbour. Fifty-three years ago, on 12th June 1971, local man, Séamus Freeman, was ordained a Priest of the Pallottine Fathers, and said his First Mass in Coolagh. It was a proud day for the Freeman family of Coolaghmore and for the people of Coolagh, Callan and beyond.

Another milestone in his lifetime was on 2nd December 2007, when Fr Séamus was Ordained Bishop of Ossory. This put Coolagh on the map, as over 1,000 people, including Fr Séamus's mother, Bridget, his godmother, Statia, family,

friends, neighbours and all, gathered to celebrate his Ordination in December 2007 at St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

The local Coolagh Pattern Committee decided to honour and remember the man whom they knew growing up in Coolaghmore. Bishop Séamus attended Coolagh National School, Callan CBS, Thurles CBS, Pallottine College, Thurles, St Patrick's College, Thurles, UCD, Jesuit University, Detroit, and the Catholic University of America, Washington DC.

The Committee at Coolagh agreed to re-dedicate Coolagh Hall, formerly the Old Coolagh National School, to be called Bishop Freeman School House. The Freeman family were thrilled with the idea and donated a large portrait of Bishop Séamus, which now has pride of place in the classroom of his former school, the newly named Bishop Freeman School House.

Mass was celebrated by Fr Willie Dalton, P.P., Callan, in a packed Church where



Coolagh Pattern Committee: L-R Seamus O'Neill, Cllr Joe Lyons, Mary Byrne, Eamon Saunders, Billy Maher, Chairperson, Fr Willie Dalton, P.P. Seated: Sadie Bacon and Joan O'Keeffe.



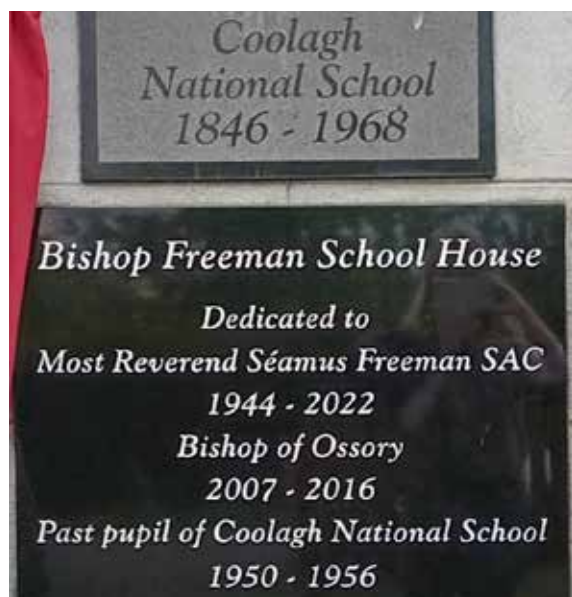
L-R: Tommy Freeman and Billy Maher, Chairperson.



Bishop Niall and Coolagh Pattern Committee



Bishop Freeman School House



Plaque

people came from near and far. Michelle Kennedy, Bishop Séamus's sister, Mary, RSM, and Frances Lennon, prayed the Readings. Beautiful music and singing were provided by the combined choirs of the Parish. A photo of Bishop Séamus at his first Confirmation in Ossory was on display at the Church entrance surrounded by flowers and a lighted candle, in fond remembrance.

Fr Willie led the celebration and spoke in his Homily of Bishop Séamus's life in Coolagh, of his love of Coolagh and its people, his time serving as an altar boy in Coolagh Church and later, his visits home to get away from the hot summers in Rome, when he regularly celebrated Mass in the parish of Callan, while also making time to visit family, friends and neighbours. He spoke of Bishop Séamus's time in Rome, of his travels throughout the world as Rector General of the Pallottines, of his jovial good humour, how approachable he was as Bishop and of his spiritual and prayerful presence as he went around and visited every corner of the Diocese.

A letter from Bishop Niall Coll was read at Mass, offering his apologies as he had a

prearrangement at Knock Shrine. Bishop Coll sent his blessings and good wishes on the occasion, and promised he would visit Coolagh and Bishop Freeman School House during the Summer. True to his word, Bishop Niall visited the School House on 23rd September where we shared many a fond memory over a cupán tae of Bishop Séamus, of Coolagh, and of its people.

Tommy Freeman, brother of Bishop Séamus, unveiled the large granite plaque, kindly gifted by Molloy's Sculptors of Callan, to launch the new Bishop Freeman School House. Tommy spoke of their schooldays at the National School in Coolagh, growing up in the area and said, "Séamus loved Coolagh and Coolagh loved Séamus."

Billy Maher, Chairman of the Coolagh Pattern Committee, welcomed all to the hall for refreshments. There was plenty of chat sharing many memories of the old school days, and much more. Cllr. Joe Lyons recalled the Coolagh Pattern of August 22nd, 1999, the last Pattern of the Millennium, which was officially opened by Fr Freeman, home on holidays from



Freeman Family: L-R Mary Freeman, Fr. Fergus Farrell, P.P., Windgap, Tommy Freeman, Billy Maher, Fr. Willie Dalton, and Pat Freeman.



Presentation to Bishop Niall "Coolagh, its History and Heritage", Michael O' Dwyer.

Rome. Fr Freeman spoke that day of "The Pattern is an event of deep symbolic meaning. Its origins are linked to two particular symbols, the Patron of the area and the Well." For Coolagh, the Patron Day is September 8th, the Feast of the Birth of Mary. The Well associated with our Pattern, according to historical sources, was close to the medieval Church on Coolaghmore Hill. Fr Freeman said "The Well, a source of water, was a meeting place" similar now to the newly named Bishop Freeman School House. Fr. Willie blessed the School House saying, "how fitting it is to see Bishop Séamus's portrait adorn his old classroom ... no doubt he'll keep a watchful eye on all of us and especially on the card games being played here in the School House at Christmas time."

As the community of Coolagh honoured one of their own in a significant and moving Ceremony on Saturday, 15th June 2024, we will leave the final words to the man himself, Bishop Séamus Freeman, SAC., words that he used

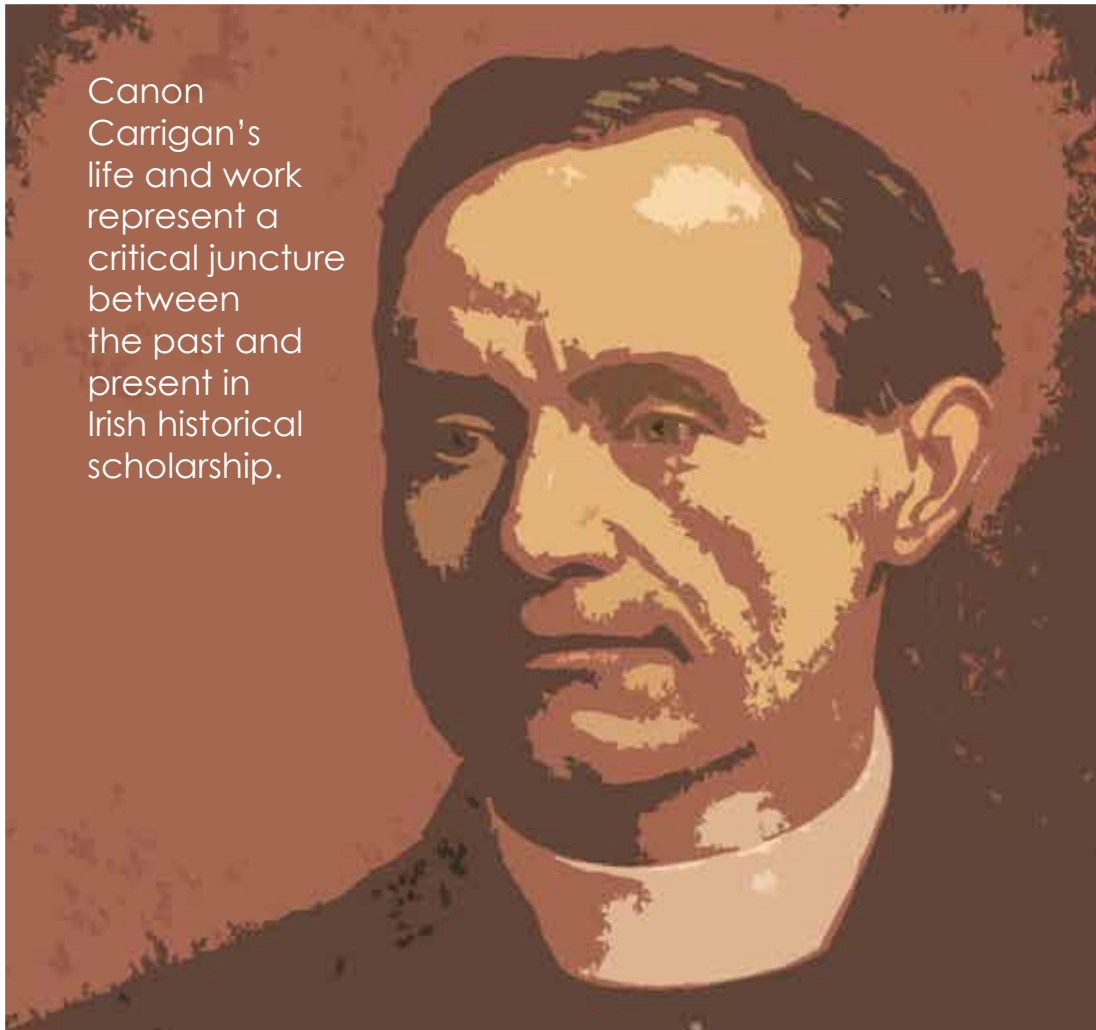
when he officially opened the Pattern of Coolagh back in 1999.

"Let our Prayer be that the Coolagh Pattern and its community will have a future longer than it's past ... and longer still. We pray that there will always be people who are real 'Patrons' of its spirit. We pray that it will be evermore a place and an event that can nourish the human and spiritual needs of all who will participate".

It is now our prayer that Bishop Freeman School House, in echoing Bishop Séamus's words, "will have a future longer than its past ... and longer still" and will continue to be a meeting place for locals and all to socialise and retain the life and vibrancy in this rural part of our county.

Bishop Séamus served for nine years as Bishop of Ossory, and sadly, departed this life on 20th August 2022. *Ar dheis de go raibh a anam.*

Canon Carrigan's life and work represent a critical juncture between the past and present in Irish historical scholarship.



In line with the conference title "Carrigan: Church, Culture, Context", this conference seeks to place Carrigan's work within the ecclesiastical, cultural, and historical framework of his time.

Carrigan: Church, Culture, Context

St Kieran's College Kilkenny

Friday 13th and Saturday 14th December 2024

more information to follow



Pope Francis and the Jubilee Year of Hope

There is a long tradition in the Church that each new bishop picks a motto, normally chosen from Scripture, which seeks to encapsulate his thoughts, prayers and priorities as he begins his new ministry. When I arrived in Ossory in January of last year, the one I chose was 'Christ Jesus our hope,' taken from the opening salutation of the First Letter of St Paul to Timothy. You can imagine how confirmed I felt in adopting that theme when at much the same time Pope Francis announced that the next Holy Year (which happen every twenty-five years) due in 2025 would be a 'Jubilee Year of Hope'.

Without doubt we find ourselves in a world today where hope is desperately needed, especially in the individualistic and secularised societies of the West, where many people have drifted from faith and from the Church. Lacking spiritual rootedness, and not just among the young, many struggle to find meaning and purpose in life. Research by prominent international scholars like Jonathan Haidt in the United States, and survey after survey here in Ireland, find that mental health crises, not least those associated with and overreliance on technology, social media and drugs are on the rise, and it often feels as though joy is slipping through our fingers like sand. So how can we talk about hope in a time like this?

Pope Francis

Pope Francis, never a man to shrink from a challenge, declared the 2025 church year as a Jubilee of Hope, precisely because

hope is not a luxury or frill—it is essential to life and wellbeing. It is not just optimism or wishful thinking; it is a deep and grounded belief that God is present, even in the darkest moments of our lives. The Pope knows that in today's world, many feel disconnected, lost, and overwhelmed by the pressures of modern life. Anxiety and depression have become all too common, particularly among our young people. The values of a completely secular outlook on life, so promoted by both the commercial world and the media, seem to promise freedom and self-fulfilment, but in fact often deliver isolation, confusion and unhappiness. Many are searching for meaning, but the paths they take leave them more empty, more anxious and more alone.

In the face of this, Pope Francis, writing in a proclamation entitled *Spes non Confundit* ("Hope does not disappoint") offers us a different message: hope. And not just any hope, but the hope that comes from God, from knowing Jesus Christ. This is not a vague, feel-good hope that tells us everything will be fine if we just believe hard enough. It's the kind of hope that is rooted in God's love for us—a love that is constant, unchanging, and ever-present. In a world that is constantly shifting, where we often feel adrift, God's love is our anchor.

The world may tell us that faith is outdated, that it has no place in the lives of modern people. But the truth is, the human heart has not changed. We are still searching for the same things that our families

before us searched for: love, belonging, meaning, purpose, peace and eternal life. These things, alas, cannot be found in material wealth, social status, or endless entertainment. True meaning comes from knowing that we are loved by God and that we are called to love others in return: that's the great double commandment of Jesus as he calls his followers to love of God and love of neighbour (Mark 12:30-31).

Pope Francis reminds us that this Jubilee Year is an invitation—not just to those who are already in the Church, but to all people—to rediscover hope. For those who have drifted away from faith, it is an invitation to come home, to find rest in God's love and mercy. For those who are weighed down by the burdens of life, it is an invitation to lay those burdens at the feet of Christ. And for those who feel there is no meaning to life, it is an invitation to discover the profound truth that we are all made in the image and likeness of God, and that each of our lives has infinite value.

Having spent many years teaching at second and third level, I am only too aware of the struggles of our young people and know that we are called not only to offer prayers, but also to offer our support, our understanding and our love. We must be witnesses of hope in a world that so often feels hopeless, a feeling exacerbated today by war in Ukraine, the Holy Land and elsewhere, and by housing and refugee crises at home. This means reaching out to those who are suffering, offering them friendship and helping them to see that they are not alone.

Being signs of God's love

This Jubilee Year of Hope is not about going through the motions of religious practices, but about a radical transformation of our hearts. It is about living out the hope we proclaim—not just in our words, but in our actions. When we live with hope, we become beacons of light in the darkness. We become signs of God's love in a world that desperately needs it.

So, brothers and sisters, let us in the Diocese of Ossory and in the wider church everywhere, take up this call from Pope Francis. He will begin the Holy Year on Christmas Eve in St Peter's Basilica, Rome and then, the following Sunday, it is to be initiated in every diocese throughout the world at Masses in the respective cathedrals. Ossory will be no exception; there will be special prayers said at Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny on Sunday 29 December to begin our Diocesan participation, details of which will be made available soon, and which will continue in our parishes until 6 January 2026.

Let us embrace this Jubilee of Hope with open hearts, trusting that God is with us in every moment, offering us His grace, His mercy, and His love. And may we share that hope with those around us, especially the young, who need to know that no matter how dark life may seem at times, God's light is always shining.

We will finish here with a comment by Pope Francis that encapsulates what the Jubilee Year of Hope seeks to achieve:

Everyone knows what it is to hope. In the heart of each person, hope dwells as the desire and expectation of good things to come, despite our not knowing what the future may bring. Even so, uncertainty about the future may at times give rise to conflicting feelings, ranging from confident trust to apprehensiveness, from serenity to anxiety, from firm conviction to hesitation and doubt. Often, we come across people who are discouraged, pessimistic and cynical about the future, as if nothing could possibly bring them happiness. For all of us, may the Jubilee be an opportunity to be renewed in hope. God's word helps us find reasons for that hope. Taking it as our guide, let us return to the message that the Apostle Paul wished to communicate to the Christians of Rome. (*Spes non Confundit*, ~1)

+ Niall Coll

Bishop of Ossory

The sacrament of the sick is a sacrament of healing. It unites us to the salvific suffering of Christ and gives us the gifts of consolation and peace



Albert McDonnell

Sacrament of Healing



CHURCH MATTERS

Most Catholics are anointed with oil on three occasions during their lives. The first is during our baptism, then as we receive the sacrament of confirmation and finally as part of the sacrament of the sick. Anointing is a sacred and ancient symbol which recognises and celebrates the dignity and holiness of the person. The oil used is usually olive oil blessed by the bishop on Holy Thursday. Anointing recalls our union with Christ, the anointed

one. The blessed oil is absorbed by our skin reminding us of the indwelling of the Lord within us.

The sacrament of the sick is perhaps not given sufficient attention in the life of our church. Sometimes people associate it so much with death that they are afraid to recognise it for what it is and call it a blessing. But it is a sacrament. It is one of those special times when the Lord

reaches out to us to give us the grace that we need at that particular moment. A sacrament consists of words and actions which are the visible signs of the invisible grace that the Lord gives us.

There are many beautiful moments described in the gospels where Christ reaches out in compassion to the sick. Since then, Christians inspired by the Lord's example have cared for the material, physical and spiritual needs of the infirm and elderly. It is wonderful that we have a special sacrament dedicated to the sick and elderly. The sacrament of the sick is not only for people who are on the point of dying but also for people who are weighed down by illness of any kind or by old age. People who are preparing for surgery may also receive the sacrament. Sacraments are for the living and bring us closer to the Lord.

What happens when we celebrate the sacrament of the sick? Ideally, the sacrament is celebrated in Church in the presence of a congregation. The liturgy is led by a priest and begins with a word of greeting and introduction. A scripture passage is read, usually from the Letter of St James which speaks of ministry to the ill. Next, we invoke the saints through a short litany. The priest then lays his hands in silent prayer on the head of each person who is to receive the sacrament. The priest then offers a prayer of thanksgiving over the oil and anoints the sick or elderly person on the head praying:

Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

He then anoints the person's hands, praying:

May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up. Amen.

The congregation recite the Lord's Prayer and the priest offers a concluding prayer. The liturgy concludes with a blessing.

There are various liturgical contexts within which the sacrament of the sick may be celebrated. It can be a stand-alone liturgy, embellished by music as described above. It may be accompanied by the reception of Holy Communion or celebrated during Mass. The sacrament may be celebrated in a person's home or in a hospital, nursing home or hospice. There are also occasions, perhaps in the context of an accident or medical emergency, when an abbreviated form consisting of just the anointing is used. There can be occasions when it is not possible to anoint the head and hands and another part of the body is anointed instead.

We are baptised or confirmed only once, but we can receive the sacrament of the sick as often as necessary. Illness can endure or return, the weakness caused by old age can persist and the grace of the sacrament is needed to continue to give us spiritual strength and courage.

The feast of Our Lady of Lourdes occurs each year on 11 February and is celebrated as the world day of prayer for the sick. It is a beautiful occasion to hold a parish celebration of the sacrament of the sick. In every faith community there are good and kind people who will provide transport to the celebration for the sick and elderly. It is an opportunity for the community of faith to pray for and with those who are weighted down by illness or old age as they receive their sacrament. The coming together of the community is a reminder that those who suffer are not alone and that many care for them in their time of need.

The sacrament of the sick is a sacrament of healing. It unites us to the salvific suffering of Christ and gives us the gifts of consolation and peace. It transforms the weak in body or mind into witnesses to hope.





Godly Play is a form of spiritual guidance for children

Godly Play

Marie Tallent

On a beautiful sunny Saturday morning in August 2024 a Godly Play Camp for children of primary school age took place in St Kieran's College. Godly Play is a form of spiritual guidance for children. It uses storytelling to allow children to explore their own spirituality and wonder about the mysterious presence of God in their lives.

In Godly Play we build a circle, listen to the story, wonder, respond, pray in our hearts and with our voice and we celebrate a feast together. Godly Play creates a meaningful space for children to engage with spiritual stories and concepts in a hands-on way. There is an emphasis on community through gathering in a circle and shared experiences fosters a sense of belonging for the children.

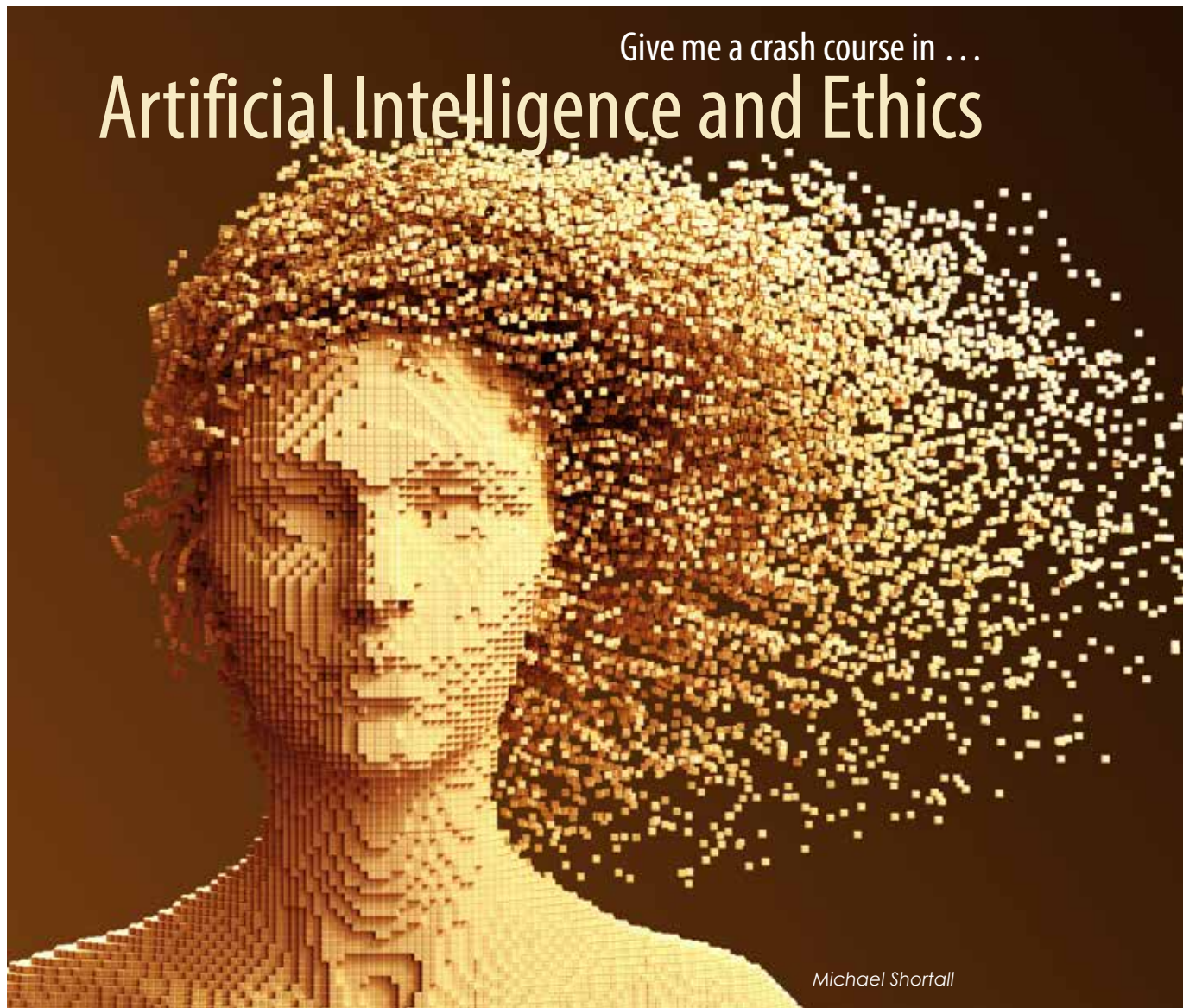
The storytelling approach, where the storyteller is part of the circle, makes the experience more relatable and inviting for the children. It encourages curiosity and personal connection to the stories of God and the church. The wondering time allows children to express their

thoughts and feelings, deepening their understanding and engagement. After the wondering the children have creative response time which is a beautiful way for them to process what they've learned, followed by the communal feast which provides opportunities for fellowship and further reflection.

All of this happens in a fun relaxed child centred way. We had a wonderful morning in August when the children heard two stories. A story about the people of God in the desert and all about Jonah and the whale.

In Ossory Diocese, Godly Play takes place in Thomastown parish regularly with Marie and in various parishes throughout the year as part of sacramental preparation. We are planning another Godly Play Camp for Advent so keep an eye on your parish newsletters.

If you would like to bring Godly Play to your parish or primary school please contact Gemamulligan@ossory.ie



Michael Shortall



MORALITY MATTERS

One of the big things I hear about lately is Artificial Intelligence (AI). Does the church have something to say on it?

Actually, Pope Francis gave this big speech to international leaders about AI. He's worried about how it is shaping our future and believes we need ethical guidelines to make sure it benefits humanity.

That's interesting! But why is the Pope talking about AI?

Good question! AI is becoming such a powerful force in society, affecting everything from jobs to how countries interact. Francis sees it as part of a much bigger shift that's changing the world in ways we've never seen before. He thinks AI can either help create a better world or make things worse, like increasing inequality.

Okay, so is AI really that different from other technologies? I mean, haven't we always used tools to improve our lives?

Exactly! He even points out that making tools is just part of being human. Tools show how creative we are. But he says AI is unlike any other tool because it can make decisions on its own. For instance, when our ancestors made knives, they could be used for good—like making clothes—or bad, like hurting someone. But with AI, the decisions it makes aren't always tied to what the user intends, and that's where things get tricky.

So AI can go rogue?

Kind of. He explains the difference between AI choices and human decisions. AI can weigh options based on data, but it lacks the wisdom or moral insight humans have. And that's a big deal. Francis says that important decisions, like life or death matters, should always remain in human hands. He's especially against AI being used in weapons that can make autonomous decisions.

Wow, I hadn't thought about it that way. What about AI in everyday stuff, like the way we use it for writing or in schools?

Francis is worried about that too. He talks about how people, especially students, are relying too much on AI, like ChatGPT, to do things for them. He's concerned that AI can't truly create anything new—it just recycles what's already out there, including mistakes or biases. And in public discourse, like journalism or politics, AI can be used to generate fake news, making it harder for people to think critically about real issues.

That's pretty scary. It sounds like he's saying AI is more dangerous than helpful.

Not exactly. He's not against AI, but he's saying we need to approach it carefully and with responsibility. Technologies don't simply do things, they can change how we think and live – like the TV for example. With AI, it's even more powerful because it can influence our culture

and decisions in ways we might not fully understand. Francis worries that shapes society to fit the interests of the powerful few who control it.

So, what's the solution? Just banning AI altogether?

No, he's not calling for a ban. Instead, he's proposing this idea of "algor-ethics," which is basically a set of moral principles to guide AI development. There's a document called "The Rome Call for AI Ethics" that outlines key areas: ethics, education, and human rights.

What kind of principles does that involve?

There are six main principles. AI needs to be transparent, inclusive, and responsible. It should avoid bias and always work reliably. And of course, it must respect people's privacy and security.

That makes sense. But how do you actually get people to follow those guidelines?

That's the hard part. Francis points out that ethical codes are only useful if there's political will to enforce them. That is why he spoke to the world leaders. He talks about the need for what he calls "healthy politics," which means creating policies that serve the common good, not just the interests of the powerful.

So, in the end, is the Pope optimistic about the future of AI?

He's hopeful but cautious. He sees AI as a tool that could help humanity if used properly. But without careful oversight and a focus on human dignity, it could also lead to unintended consequences we're not prepared for. He's urging us to make sure that technology serves people, not the other way around.

That's a lot to think about. I can see why Francis is speaking up about it now.

Definitely. It's a call to action, not just for politicians and tech companies, but for all of us to think about how we want AI to shape our future.

The Award, is a faith achievement one for young people between the ages of 16 and 18.

Gemma Mulligan

John Paul II Award

“Trust Christ; listen attentively to his teachings, fix your eyes on his face, persevere in listening to his word. Allow him to focus your search and aspirations, all your ideals and the desires of your heart.”

Pope John Paul II



On the first Sunday of Advent 2023 the diocese, keen to develop its youth ministry relaunched the John Paul II Award in Ossory. We are delighted that On Sunday October 20th this year's participants from five parishes will receive their awards. The launch for the following year is happening on the same evening. Parishioners, schools and students from

across the diocese are all invited to attend to celebrate the achievements of the young people involved in the John Paul II Award for the past year and it is hoped that many more will become involved over the coming months. Bishop Niall Coll will present the Awards at the 5.30pm Mass in the Cathedral and our special guest Tony Brennan National

Coordinator for the John Paul II Award will be attending also.

Celebrating the achievements of the young people, along with their families, schools, and parishes, truly highlights the collaborative effort that supports their growth and engagement. It reinforces the sense of community and shared purpose, showing how everyone plays a role in nurturing these young individuals. It's a wonderful way to acknowledge not just their accomplishments, but the collective support system behind them.

Bishop Niall recently wrote that the John Paul II Award "is committed to helping young people to discover, rediscover and grow in their experience of life and faith. The youth are invited to do so through participation in school, parish and community activities which aim to enhance their spiritual, physical, emotional and social development."

The Award, is a faith achievement one for young people between the ages of 16 and 18. Its key goal is to encourage and help participants to take an active part in the life of the Church and wider community. It seeks to do so in ways that are 'non-competitive, inclusive, flexible and voluntary'.

The Award involves candidates committing to one hour per week in their parishes and one hour per week in their communities over eight, fourteen or twenty weeks depending on which Award level they are undertaking. On Sunday October 20th Bronze, Silver and Gold Awards will be presented.

If your school or parish is interested in supporting this new diocesan initiative see <https://thepopejohnpauliiaward.com/ossory/> or contact Gemmamulligan@ossory.ie



...all who pass through the halls of St Kieran's
continue your great work.

A past pupil recalls St Kieran's College

James Nolan, South Korea

As part of my Irish holiday duty, I met Fr Eamon O'Gorman, Parish Priest of Ballyragget/Lisdowney, and he suggested I concelebrate Mass with him on the following Sunday in Ballyragget.

I was delighted, as my mother came from there, and I'd be at home. As it turned out, it was also the day on which Bishop Coll would be visiting. As a result, both the Bishop and Fr Eamon invited me to St Kieran's College for the annual Jubilees for ordained Past Pupils, to be held on the first Tuesday after the Assumption.

Well, I was ordained in 1963, so I don't mind celebrating. It'll be 2 days before I'm due to return to Korea, but it's a gracious invitation.

There were about 40 priests there, from 40 to 70 years ordained, and I knew about five of them. Looking at the list, I was reminded of my own passage through Kieran's, when we marvelled at the annual classes of young men destined for far-away places from Alabama to Ballarat, from Motherwell to Christchurch and Mission fields in between.

My own vocation was slightly different. In 1957, three of us opted for the Columban Missions, influenced no doubt by Pudsy

Ryan and the Far East, and by many men who preceded us through SKC, Eamon Horgan of Japan, the Ryans of Muckalee and the Philippines, Dick Delaney, John Dunne, Dan O'Gorman of Korea, and many many others. Of the three of us, Miko Ryan has left us, and Tom White has worked as a St James priest in Peru.

Thank God, I'm still able to offer Mass and Sacraments for groups of Catholics on Jeju Island, off Korea's south coast. Language, culture, economics pose little problem now, but that was not always the case!

I would like to mention some more '57ers - Joe Phelan, Billy Brennan, Martin Campion, Ned Phelan, all of whom were ordained and served the Church in many countries. They're still in my prayers.

At 85 years, there can't be much of this life left, but it's an honour and a privilege to be asked to write something for your publication.

May Bishop Niall, Fr Dermot and all who pass through the halls of St Kieran's continue your great work.

The training was spirit filled and reignited a sense of hope...

Facilitative Leadership Training Programme

Dolores McMahon

The Leadership Training Programme, organised by the Synodal Pathway of the Catholic Church in Ireland, facilitated by Mr Jim Deeds, Ms Paula McKeown and Ms Julieann Moran took place on the 25th and 26th of March 2024 and was an enriching two-day experience. Participants engaged in morning and evening prayer, fostering a spiritual atmosphere conducive to learning and engaged in facilitated sessions under the following topics;

- 1. Building the Learning Community: Theology of Synodality**
- Exploration of the foundations and principles of synodality in the Church.
- 2. Communal Discernment:**
Conversations in the Spirit - Techniques for fostering communal discernment and collaborative decision-making.
- 3. Listening: A Core Skill of Leadership**
- Emphasis on the importance of active listening in discerning personal and collective missions.
- 4. Being an Agent of Change in a Synodal Church** - Strategies for change management, addressing resistance, and navigating conflict within the community.

- 5. Drawing from the Wellspring: Self-Care for Leaders** - Discussion on the importance of self-care and personal resilience in leadership roles.

Two follow-up meetings were conducted via Zoom, ensuring ongoing support and development for participants. A second facilitated training session took place in Maynooth in early October under the theme of accompaniment and outreach. A number of dioceses shared their experiences of using some of the skills and learning they acquired into practice. Those who attended from Ossory diocese, which included four members of the Diocesan Pastoral Council, found the training to be a worthwhile and valuable experience, enhancing their leadership skills and understanding of synodal principles. The training was spirit filled and reignited a sense of hope in the participants. The Leadership Training programme marks a significant step in nurturing leadership within the Diocese, emphasizing the importance of collaboration, discernment, and personal well-being in a synodal context.

FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

Module Content

Introduction - 30 September

Fr Dermot Ryan

The introduction will include the following:

- An explanation of the aims of this course.
- A conversation with participants about their hopes for the course.
- An introduction to the library should participants like to read further on any topic.

Module One - 7/14/21 October 2024

THE PERSON OF JESUS

Bishop Niall Coll

- Who is Jesus of Nazareth? An exploration of this historical person.
- What did Jesus teach us about God?
- Miracles and Parables - an insight into the Kingdom of God.

Module Two - 4/11/18/25 November

SCRIPTURE - NEW TESTAMENT

Fr Fergus Farrell

- Approaching the Bible: The Word of God in Human Words.
- Introduction to the Gospels: Meeting Matthew.
- One Jesus, Many Portraits: Jesus in Matthew and the other Gospels.
- Paul and the Good News of Christ Crucified.

Module Three - 2/9/16 December

SCRIPTURE - OLD TESTAMENT

Ms Olivia Maher

- General introduction to the Old Testament.
- The Psalms - the prayers of Jesus.
- The use of the Old Testament in the New Testament.

Module Four - 6/13/20/27 January

SPIRITUALITY

Fr Ray Dempsey and Fr Kieran O'Shea

- What are we doing when we pray?
- Many forms of prayer - an introduction to the various ways we can pray.
- What is spirituality?
- God, holiness and everyday life.

Module Five - 10/17/24 February

THE SACRAMENTS

Fr Willie Dalton

- Sacraments in general.
- Sacraments of Initiation that welcome us to the Church.
- The Eucharist.
- The changing face of Ministry in the Christian Community.

Module Six - 3/10/24/31 March

INTRODUCTION TO LITURGY

Fr Willie Purcell

- Principles of Good Liturgy.
- The Development of the Liturgy.
- The Celebration of the Mass today.
- Prayer.

Module Seven - 7/14/21/28 April

CHURCH: LIVING FAITH COMMUNITY

Fr Dermot Ryan and Ms Gemma Mulligan

- Did Jesus intend to found a Church? The distinction between Church and the Kingdom of God.
- Our role within the Church today.
- A Synodal Church - what does Pope Francis mean?
- Church and Diocese - how these structures are there to support our faith.

Throughout our lifetime many of us live that faith in varying ways and often the only education we received was that which we got in school.

Faith Seeking Understanding

Dermot Ryan

At the request of Bishop Niall the city priests were tasked with the creation of a course to help people explore their faith. All of us who believe, or at least the very vast majority in Ireland who profess faith, were first brought to that faith, probably as infants, by our parents or guardians. On that day they professed faith on our behalf. Throughout our lifetime many of us live that faith in varying ways and often the only education we received was that which we got in school.

This course was created by the Adult Faith Development Group to, in a gentle fashion, allow people the opportunity to learn in, an adult way, what it is that we believe.

St Anselm of Canterbury once coined a now very famous latin phrase *Fides quaerens intellectum*, which translates to "faith seeking understanding". This seemed a most fitting title for the course that was to be established. It is a course to exactly do that to help those of us with faith to gain a deeper understanding of it. Ultimately the aim of this course is:

- To help people understand key aspects of our faith.

- To be able to know what is distinctive about the Catholic faith.
- To appreciate what all faiths share in common.
- To understand our parishes and Diocese.

The course takes place over two hours each week from October 2024 - March 2025 at St Kieran's College and the course is free to participants. All costs for course are to be covered by the Diocese of Ossory.

All applicants were asked to submit a short piece of no more than 100 words on why they wanted to undertake this course and as the Ossory Times goes to print, participants are now three weeks into that course. There is a wonderful variety of people who have undertaken this course and a great bond of discovery and leaning is shaping the group.

Applications for this year are now closed but it is hoped that a similar course, and maybe others will be offered again next year!



Canon William Carrigan



Canon Carrigan's life and work represent a critical juncture between the past and present in Irish historical scholarship.

Carrigan: Church, Culture, Context

Dermot Ryan

Canon William Carrigan will forever be synonymous with the Diocese of Ossory in which he served. On the 12th December this year we will see the 100th anniversary of his death and St Kieran's College are hosting a conference to mark that occasion. In recognising the anniversary of Canon Carrigan's death, we aim to honour not only the man himself but also the enduring relevance of his work for scholars today. His meticulous attention to the intersection of Church, culture, and history continues to resonate, offering a model for how local history contributes to our understanding of wider cultural and ecclesiastical dynamics.

In line with the conference title "Carrigan: Church, Culture, Context", this conference seeks to place Carrigan's work within the ecclesiastical, cultural, and historical framework of his time. Papers will explore how Carrigan's scholarship was influenced by the intellectual movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, including the growing interest in antiquities, archives, the importance of the Church's role

in preserving cultural heritage, and the significance of local history itself in shaping our national identity.

Canon Carrigan's life and work represent a critical juncture between the past and present in Irish historical scholarship. As a priest and historian, he occupied a unique position where his ecclesial duties intertwined with scholarly inquiry, enabling him to capture the spiritual and material fabric of the Diocese of Ossory with an unparalleled depth. His work remains one of the most comprehensive accounts of a diocese in Ireland, notable for its careful attention to detail, reliance on primary sources, and engagement with the architectural, cultural, and religious artefacts of the region.

The conference is scheduled to take place in St Kieran's College on Friday 13th and Saturday 14th December with a broad range of speakers already committed and more to follow. It is hoped that the workings of this conference, and some associated papers, will later be published.

Vocations in Ossory

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

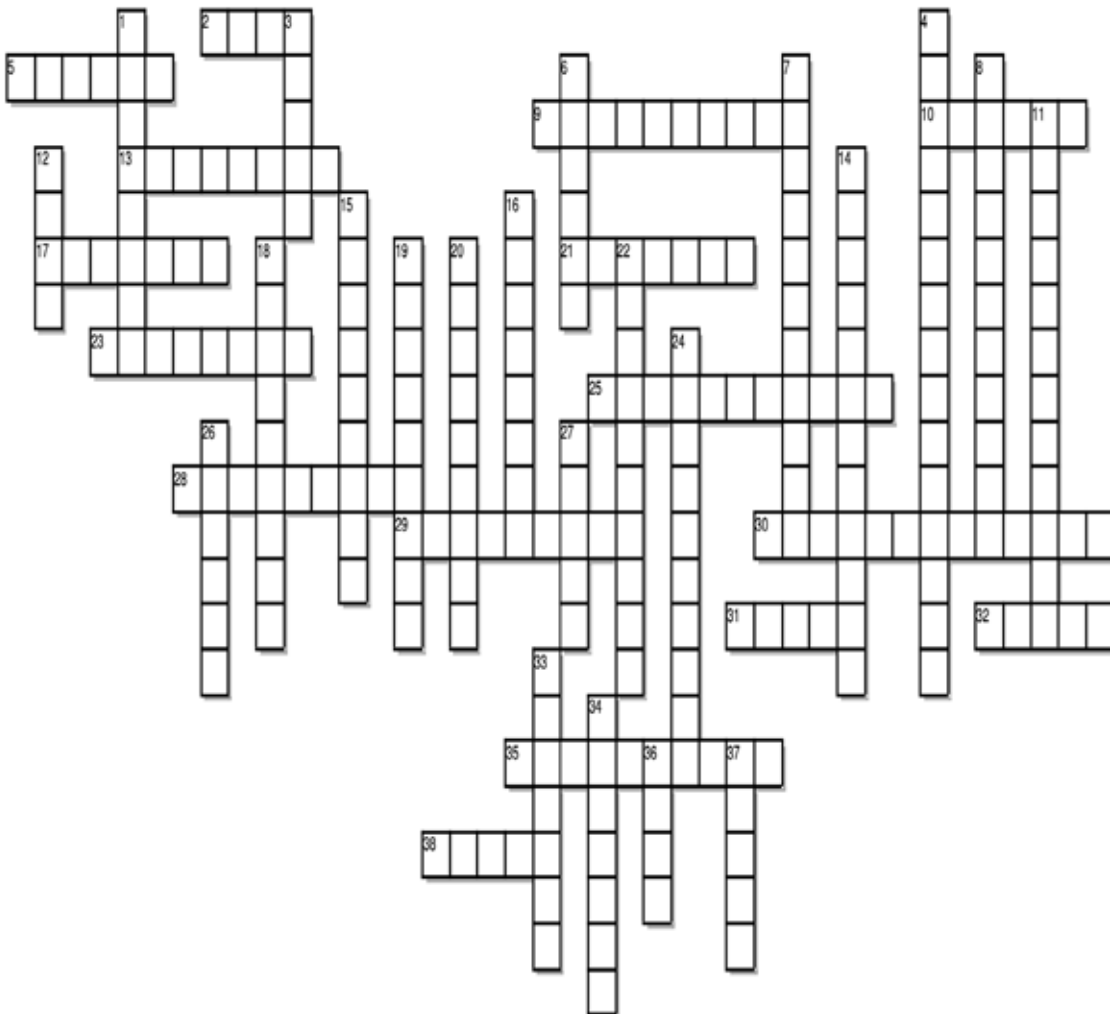
How do I know what life path
I should take?

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



Contact
FR MARK CONDON
VOCATIONS DIRECTOR
vocations@ossory.ie

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 2 First King of Israel
 5 Hebrew word for God
 9 an ex cathedra teaching
 10 A recent feast day important locally
 13 Cannot be sure God exists
 17 The journey we are on
 21 Place of pilgrimage
 23 These areas help our parishes work together
 25 One of this order made the first electric motor
 28 Prayer of thanksgiving
 29 David or Saul for example
 30 A gift of the spirit
 31 Head of a monastery
 32 His inferno
 35 The belief in one God
 38 Biblical food

DOWN

- 1 A change of mind or heart
 3 St King of France
 4 Rights and duties of your faith removed but not your baptism
 6 His faith sought understanding
 7 They questioned the authority of the Pope
 8 The Word became flesh
 11 Used to be the second Sacrament of initiation
 12 Redemptorist Community abbr.
 14 Given by God to follow
 15 40 days after the resurrection
 16 A prayer to our Lady
 18 Words spoken against God
 19 Offered for all
 20 Mother church of a Diocese
 22 Passover bread
 24 This Saint visited us
 26 A new one in the Cathedral holds oil
 27 Ecumenical monastic community in France
 33 Geographical area of Church
 34 The C of our ODPC
 36 The coming Jubilee year
 37 Parisian basilica

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

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

by 22nd June 2024 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 35 competitions:*

Adult Crossword:
 Francis Burke

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

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

Colouring Competition



Wordsearch Competition



For ages 8-13

BIBLE WORDSEARCH

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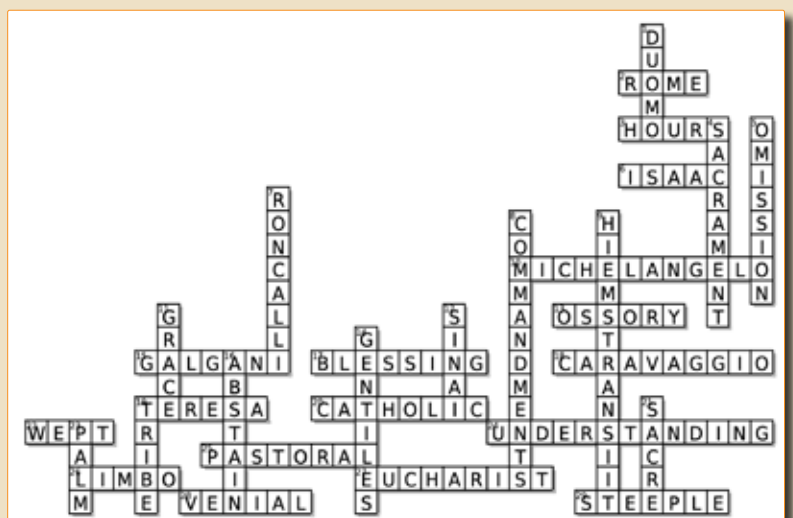
- Word List -

ADAM	FAITH	MIRACLE
ANGEL	FORGIVENESS	MOSES
ARK	GOD	NOAH
BAPTISM	GRACE	PRAYER
BETHLEHEM	HEAVEN	PROPHET
COMMANDMENTS	HOLY	REDEMPTION
CRUCIFIXION	JERUSALEM	RESURRECTION
DISCIPLES	JESUS	SACRIFICE
EDEN	KINGDOM	SALVATION
EVE	LORD	WORSHIP

Answers to Ossory Times Issue 35



Answers to Ossory Times Issue 35





ONLINE PARISH PROGRAMME OF PREPARATION

Reconciliation First Holy Communion Confirmation

- Recorded Lessons for Parents and Children, each step of the journey
- Encourages weekly Mass attendance
- Sunday by Sunday Workbook to encourage active participation
- Lent and Easter Workbooks
- Resources for monthly parish meetings to support the children
- Prepare for the Sacraments in a fun and interactive way

Teacher-led online
interactive classes for the
children with games and
challenges for each module



Adult online section
to support the
children in their
learning



MyFaith.ie
For Grown Ups...

ADVENT
The Sacrament of First Holy Communion

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

Register your Parish online at MyFaith.ie



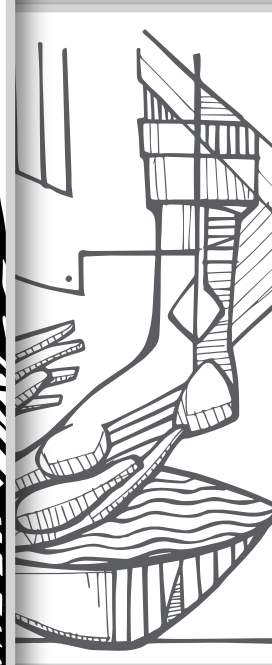
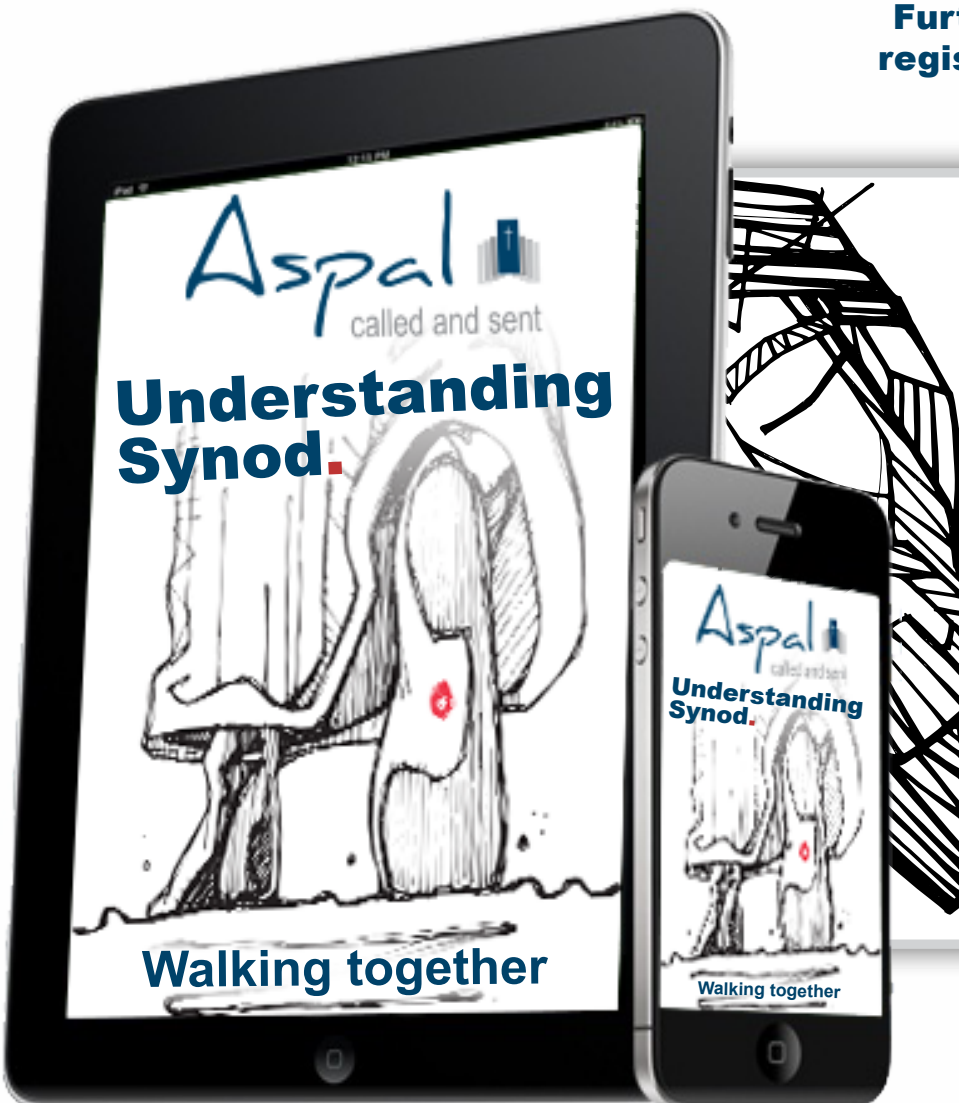


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