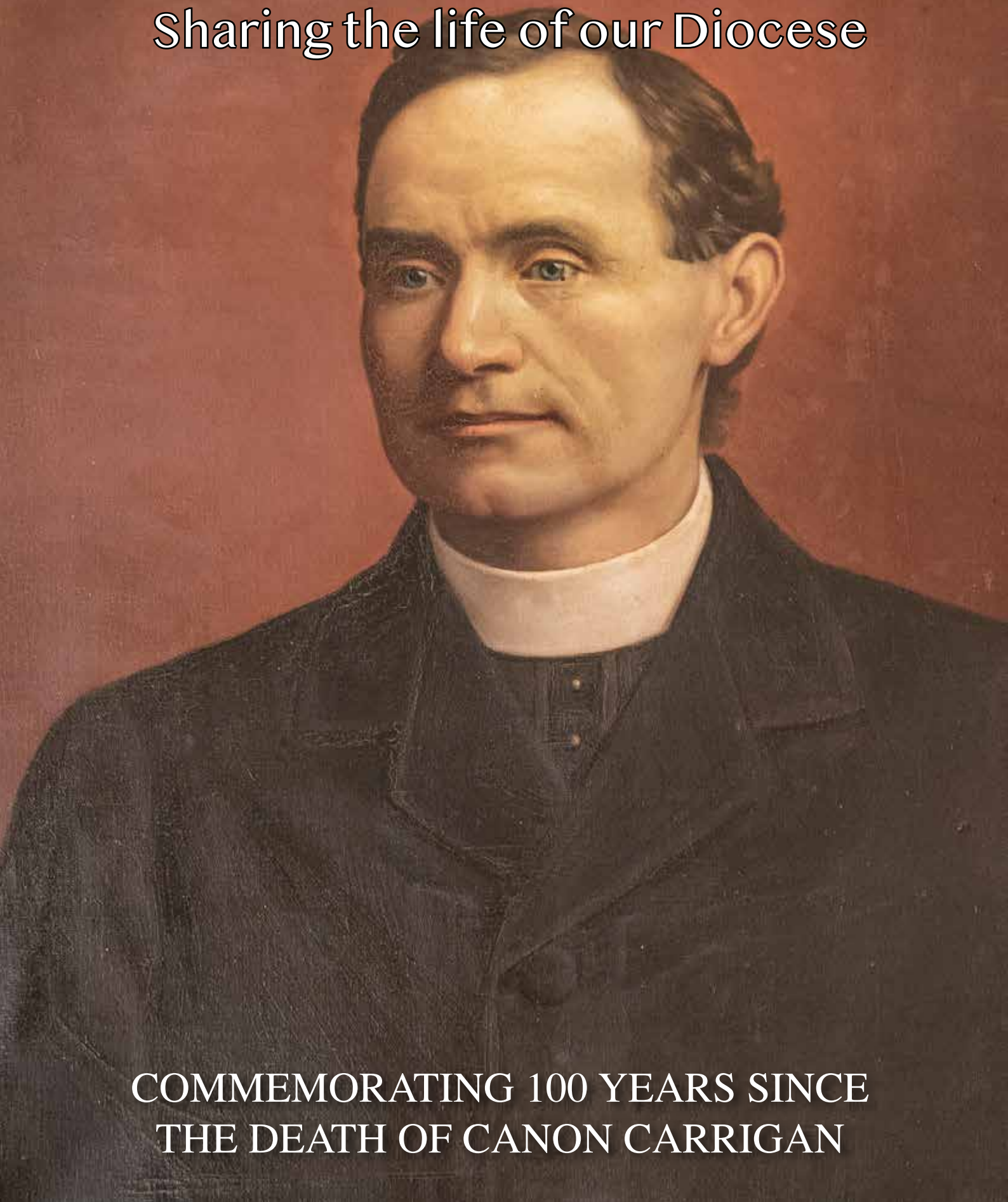


OSSORY TIMES

Sharing the life of our Diocese



COMMEMORATING 100 YEARS SINCE
THE DEATH OF CANON CARRIGAN



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

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1st Prize	€2,000	7th Prize	€200
2nd Prize	€1,000	8th Prize	€100
3rd Prize	€500	9th Prize	€100
4th Prize	€300	10th Prize	€100
5th Prize	€300	Promoters' Prize	
6th Prize	€200	€100 1st Prize Winner Promoter	
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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

Recently, in preparation for Christmas and as part of our Advent journey, some parishioners brought the large Cathedral crib from its place of storage into the sanctuary where they assembled it. This particular crib, like many in our churches, is a big jigsaw - literally and figuratively. It slowly comes together from lots of smaller pieces to finally stand as the complete picture - the magnificent Crib that invites us into the Christmas story.

It strikes me that the same people who assemble our crib also prepare the fire for our Easter Vigil each year... little pieces that come together to form the complete picture. It is very appropriate - without the crib we would not have Easter - the two are forever intertwined. The crucifixion is the historical counterpoint to the nativity. Without Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection from the dead, his birth would have, for us, no meaning. His resurrection, marked by that fire, is for him, and for us all, a birth to new life. Just as the infant welcomes us into the Christmas story with arms outstretched so too do those same outstretched arms embrace humanity in the scene of the crucifixion. The swaddling clothes of one reminding us of the burial wrappings of the other. Art has long linked these events and a fine example of this is Domenico Ghirlandaio's *The Nativity and Adoration of the Shepherds* (1485), an altarpiece in the Sassetti Chapel in Santa Trinità in Florence. Here we see the manger clearly depicted as a sarcophagus the reference could not be bolder.. So yes we know the story - but do we see how the parts matter...

The pages of the *Ossory Times* draw together some of the parts of the life of the our faith and Diocese that make the complete picture: the commemoration of the centenary of the death of the famed priest-historian Canon Carrigan, by means of a conference at St Kieran's College and the celebration of a memorial Mass by Bishop Niall in Durrow Parish; the importance of preparation for the sacraments of initiation - in theology and in practice; a timely reflection on political leadership in *Morality Matters*; and a reflection on the upcoming jubilee Year of Hope in *Church Matters*; a celebration for St Patrick's 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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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 where he served, and St Kieran's College as, along with Maynooth, his place of formation. The College now proudly names one of its libraries in his honour and is home to the extensive collection of notebooks which formed the basis of his four volume work. On the 12th December we marked the 100th anniversary of his death. St Kieran's College was proud, then, to host, on that weekend, a conference to mark that occasion. In recognising the anniversary of Canon Carrigan's death, we needed to honour not only the man himself but also the enduring relevance of his work for scholars today. Carrigan's 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 and it was important, on this occasion, that the College and Diocese mark that fact.

In line with the conference title "Carrigan: Church, Culture, Context", the weekend sought to place Carrigan's work within the ecclesiastical, cultural, and historical frameworks of his time. Papers, so generously offered by many speakers, explored 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.

Over the course of two days speakers explored various perspectives feeding into the context of this wonderful historian. In welcoming those who gathered we noted, as Fr Fearghus had once written, that "The chorus of praise that greeted Carrigan's monumental work was thoroughly merited and the appearance of a rather intemperate review of inordinate length published under the pseudonym GPO did nothing to dampen the enthusiasm for Carrigan's Magnum Opus an enthusiasm that has remained undimmed and indeed has increased in the 100 years since its publication". It was fitting then that we gathered to continue that recognition on this occasion.

On the opening evening of the conference, Chaired by Bishop Niall, the keynote lecture was delivered by Prof. Tom O'Connor, emeritus Director of Arts & Humanities Institute, Maynooth University, who spoke to the title "Reading archives and writing critical history in the afterglow of religious controversy: William Carrigan's (1860-1924) historical achievement". By means of dividing his thoughts into three



Members of the Carrigan family with Rev. Dr Dermot Ryan and Bishop Niall Coll.

sections - the diocesan history as a means to provide unity to places where division was still felt and the hopes of Brownrigg; the Catholic Diocesan History as a Genre with a focus on Meath's early pioneer, Anthony Cogan (1826-1872) who in 1862-70 produced the first dedicated Irish diocesan history; and finally exploring the Post-Cogan Diocesan History era and how it was that Carrigan's sets its own finer tone and strove after a more rigorous standard, Prof. Tom set Carrigan in his rightful context.

Saturday morning saw Prof. Marian Lyons of Maynooth University chair Dr Richard Hyland as he explored the context of a Kilkenny in which Carrigan was formed and into which his history was written before a second session in which Dr Brian Gurrin, the census and population specialist on the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland Project based at TCD, explored the contribution of the Carrigan Collection to the (partial) reconstruction of the lost census records of County Kilkenny in the Virtual Record Treasury of Ireland. In so doing he shared some startling statistics on how it was that Carrigan's work has contributed so greatly to the restoration of lost data before concluding his piece exploring his theory, with strong evidence, that Carrigan had 171 notebooks and not, as was previously thought, 168. The afternoon sessions were chaired by Prof. Tom O'Connor as Mr Denis Bergin offered a very personal reflection on the merits

of context and the imperative honouring history today and into the future before our own Rev. Dr Fearghus Ó Fearghail shared wonderful insights into the details of the life of Canon Carrigan - from the perspective of one who knows him best! Those gathered were delighted to hear Fr Fearghus speak of him as if of an old friend - with the meticulous attention to detail that the Canon himself would surely appreciate. Concluding the conference all were invited to join for the Memorial Mass which was to take place the following morning in Durrow. This was a fitting tribute to this wonderful son of Ossory and all the more so given many of his family were in attendance.

There is no doubt but that 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 workings of this conference, and some associated papers, will be published in 2025.

Fr Delaney had aptly referred to Canon Carrigan as 'a man of the people'...

Canon William Carrigan Centenary Mass

Ann-Marie Kiely

It was with a sense of great esteem and reverence, that the centenary of Canon William Carrigan's death was commemorated in the church of the Holy Trinity in Durrow, Co. Laois on Sunday the 15th December. Hundreds were in attendance for the mass, celebrated by Bishop Niall Coll and presided over by Fr Martin Delaney, the current parish priest of Durrow along with Canon Seán O'Doherty. Whilst Canon Carrigan's widely acclaimed and much admired published work *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory* held a fundamental position within the celebration, the liturgy was principally focused upon and perhaps even embodied the humanity of the Canon himself.

A gathering or offering of symbols by local parishioners representing the life of the Canon opened the mass and provided a most appropriate backdrop to celebrating his life and work, as well as providing an insight into who he was and how he lived. A candle and quill pen were presented in remembrance

of his dedication in both time and energy to his historical research on the diocese of Ossory. A stole and holy oil acknowledged his lifelong dedication to his ministry, his relationship with God and with his parishioners. He is reported to have carried these everywhere he went. So too did he carry a pencil and notebook, which were offered to honour his rare ability to be ever-present and observe the happenings amongst the people in the parishes he served in. Bishop Niall Coll would go on to describe the Canon in his homily as 'a conscientious priest who tended to the people, especially the old and the sick.'

An Irish language book symbolised his love of Gaeilge and the resident church choir paid their respects to this devotion through their soothing renditions of *Ag Críost an Síol* and *A Mhuire Mháthair*. A framed image of the inside of the Public Records Office in Dublin, signified his unique care and precise approach to his historical research. This is reported to have been a most beloved space for him where he spent thousands of hours



Left to right: Canon Seán O'Doherty, Bishop Niall Coll and Fr Martin Delaney



Members of the Murphy family currently residing in the former home of Canon William Carrigan on Castle St. Durrow



Parishioners begin to gather to welcome Bishop Niall Coll for the commemorative Mass for Canon Carrigan.

over the years making detailed notes, all for the purpose of recording practically every antiquity in the diocese of Ossory. Finally, the presentation of one of the original volumes of his work, along with a copy of the extracted piece related specifically to the history of Durrow parish itself was an invitation to the congregation present to take a moment in gratitude for the Canon's restorative historical influence that would no doubt leave its imprint on the diocese for many more years to come.

Bishop Coll's homily beautifully encapsulated both the pastoral and secular nature of Canon Carrigan's ministry, naming him as a 'gifted scholar,' but also a person who was sincerely valued and respected by all. In fact, he called upon the congregation to see Canon Carrigan as a 'John the Baptist figure; one who recognises that the task of the disciple and the church in every age is to keep pointing the people in the direction of Jesus.' He emphasised that the pathway to fulfilling this mission is through studying and writing about churches, monasteries, clergy and parishes just as Canon Carrigan had done in his lifetime.

In endeavouring to record the historical past of the church and its parishes, he continued and indeed, continues to this day, to direct us towards our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

A procession led by Bishop Coll, Fr. Delaney and Canon O'Doherty closed the mass itself, but continued the commemoration into the outdoors and towards the graveyard located behind the church. Fr Delaney had aptly referred to Canon Carrigan as 'a man of the people' in his opening remarks earlier in the mass. He went on to state that with this being the Canon's primary sentiment in life and ministry, he also wanted to be buried 'amongst his people.' Bishop Coll prayed with the gathered congregation for the Canon's restful peace with God at his graveside. With holy water, he blessed his grave before placing on it a most exquisite leafy and berry wreath in remembrance. These quiet, calm moments of prayer and blessings concluded the proceedings which seemed fitting in reflecting the modest and gentle nature of Canon William Carrigan himself.



Homily at Canon Carrigan Centenary Mass, Church of the Holy Trinity, Durrow 14 December 2024

It is a delight for me to be in Durrow this morning as we include in our prayer the memory of a former parish priest here, a Ballyfoyle native, Canon William Carrigan, in this centenary year of his death in 1924. Dr Carrigan arrived here as curate in 1897 and in 1909 he became parish priest, a post he held until his death. Contemporary accounts from his time here in Durrow and indeed in the other parishes of the Diocese of Ossory in which he served (Ballyragget, Conahy, Templeorum and Rathdowney), recount that that he was shy, scholarly in demeanour, a good pastor, a conscientious priest in the way he celebrated Mass and the other sacraments, and attended to the people, especially the old and the sick. Seemingly, he was no great orator, a modest preacher, like many of us clergy in my experience!

Why Canon Carrigan is not forgotten like most of his contemporaries, whether priest or lay person, is that he was a very gifted scholar, a historian, who wrote extensively on the history of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Ossory – most especially in his four-volume treasure-trove, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, published in 1905.

His academic work continues to be greatly respected, valued and consulted by historians. His scholarship is widely appreciated well beyond the boundaries of Ossory. Scholars agree that his history of this Diocese, compares favourably with

those of other Irish dioceses. Something about which we can be proud.

A conference devoted to reflection on the Canon's contribution to Ossory and wider Irish Church history, one hundred years after his death, was held in St Kieran's College, over the last two days. The informative lectures and discussions which were at the heart of that event now give way to a pilgrimage to this parish, so close to Canon Carrigan's heart, and where he is buried, so that we who participated in the conference, whether scholar, relative or interested local, can join with the parish community in the celebration of the Eucharist.

It is good to remember that as we gather on this third Sunday of Advent to celebrate Mass, preparing for Christmas, we are doing what Canon Carrigan and the parishioners of that time, your own people, your own antecedents did when they gathered to celebrate the Eucharist. The language of the Mass may have changed - no longer in Latin – but the essence of the Mass itself is unchanged and unchanging. The Word of God is proclaimed, the bread and wine are offered and transformed, through the power of the Holy Spirit, into the Body and Blood of Christ, and, following Communion, we are sent out at the end as disciples, called to bring the Gospel and the loving ways of Jesus into the world of everyday life.

In these secular times when many have lost sight of faith and religious practice, it is good to remember now that our Eucharistic action is in fidelity and continuity with the instruction Jesus gave at the Last Supper, when, having blessed the bread and wine, he said, 'Do this in memory of me'. It is around this command of Jesus to his followers that the practice of gathering on Sundays to break the bread began among the earliest Christians. At first, when the numbers of disciples were small, the breaking of the bread took place in family homes at the end of ordinary meals. But as the numbers of Christians began to grow and persecutions abated, then over the centuries, special buildings, churches, were established for the faithful to more comfortably gather for worship.

By the fifth century, the Christian faith had arrived in Ireland. Most closely associated with St Patrick, over the following centuries the Catholic faith took root, people converted, churches, monasteries, high crosses, round towers would in time become important features of the Irish landscape dotted around the country. Canon Carrigan's importance lies in the manner in which he studied, recorded, catalogued and interpreted this faith-filled heritage as it was found across the Ossory Diocese, much of which had been contested because of Ireland's history of conquest and colonisation. Thus, the bishop of Ossory who encouraged Canon Carrigan in his writing, Dr Brownrigg, in his preface to the four volume history, praised, among other things, the way in which it shed light on 'the persistency' with which Irish Catholics, following the reformation, 'clung to the ruins of their churches when torn down ... how they used to visit them on pilgrimage, steal stones from them to be inserted in their new [...] chapels, and how they had no dearer wish at the end of life than to rest their bones beneath the shadow of their crumbling walls.' (p.xv)

Canon Carrigan in these volumes also wrote at length about the bishops of

Ossory and about the history of the various patchwork of parishes that constitute the diocese, incorporating almost all of county Kilkenny, the best parts of Laois and Seir Kieran in Offaly.

All in all, the parish of Durrow and the Carrigan family can be rightly proud of the Canon for the difficult work he undertook to put on permanent record what might otherwise have been lost.

Finally, it needs to be recognised that Canon Carrigan's calling was primarily one to the priesthood. He lived it out in a way which seems to have happily incorporated both the pastoral and the scholarly. As we give thanks to God for his love for Ossory, for its clergy and people across the many centuries of Christian witness which he studied and chronicled, may we, in line with today's Gospel, see him as a John the Baptist figure. That is one who recognised that the task of the disciple and the Church in every age is to keep pointing the people in the direction of Jesus. Because in studying and writing about the churches, high crosses, monasteries, clergy, parishes and so much more of Ossory, he was ultimately pointing to that which inspired their establishment in the first place, namely faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ. Because without Jesus the Christ as the foundation and direction of all that the Church is, does and says, the history and the antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory would have been neither necessary nor possible.

One hundred years after the death of Canon Carrigan the urgency of the decision of faith is more important than ever. The Church is called in the final words of today's gospel 'to exhort the people and to announce the Good News to them'. Thankfully, this work continues in the changed and changing circumstances of our own day here in Ossory.

+ Niall Coll
Bishop of Ossory

...a synodal structure where everyone's voice is heard and respected, from parishes to pastoral areas, from maintenance to mission, from observer to participant

Memories and Hopes

Albert McDonnell



CHURCH MATTERS

Change invites memories and hopes. I have ministered in Radharc na nOileán pastoral area and lived in Kildysart, Clare since 2012. That period in my life has now come to an end and I look forward to moving to Tradaree pastoral area, where I will live in Newmarket-on-Fergus. Moving punctuates the lives of diocesan priests and provokes reflection, causing us to look backwards as well as forwards. I am still at the stage of memories, no doubt my focus will move to the future before too long.

'Jesus and his disciples made their way through Galilee' were the opening words of the gospel reading on my final Sunday in my previous appointment. We all make our way as best we can through life. Everyone's pathway is different and brings its own unique joys and hopes, griefs and anxieties. Each person finds his/her own pathway to happiness and holiness. At the conclusion of my time in Radharc na nOileán, I rejoice in the great many joys that I experienced during my twelve years there.

A priest of our diocese once said to me that the key to a happy and fruitful ministry is to love the people. Emerging from the sacristy and making eye contact with the people is to experience warmth and welcome. People are glad to have someone to lead them in prayer. Like every relationship, ministry is a two-way process. I have certainly felt supported and cared for by the people who make up our faith communities in Radharc na nOileán. I experienced great kindness and love in both the ordinary bits and pieces of life and ministry and in the more difficult moments. I am especially grateful for the goodness of people at the time of the sudden death of my sister, Gerardine on 17 October 2017. I recall returning to the presbytery to find that someone, often anonymously, had left a cake or perhaps an apple tart. Gestures of care and concern lift us up.

Priests have precious contact with people at key moments in their lives. You see it especially in people's eyes. The pride, delight and joy in the eyes of parents at the baptism of their children, the love, joy and hope in the shared gaze of couples on their wedding day, the happiness, energy and vibrance of children at First Holy Communion and Confirmation, and the love expressed through tears at times of bereavement are all beautiful, grace-filled expressions of our wonderful, mysterious humanity.

Priests receive much friendship and goodness. Ministry can never be a solitary or private activity. We are blessed to work and collaborate with so many people, all the while receiving and hopefully giving encouragement and inspiration. It is a source of strength and joy to walk with and minister with other priests, volunteer pastoral workers, members of pastoral councils, finance councils, liturgy groups, secretaries, sacristans, teachers, boards of management, choirs, eucharistic ministers, readers, altar groups, community development, sports associations and so many others. It is

life giving to spend time with bereaved families, engaged couples, teachers, parents preparing for their child's baptism, first holy communion or confirmation planning a liturgy to celebrate and ask God's grace at a milestone in their lives.

We live through a time of change. Not everybody plays an active role in our faith communities anymore. Some experienced great pain, are angry or feel excluded. Pope Francis invites us to go the margins. We rejoice in those who work to keep our faith communities alive and vibrant as places of welcome for all who come. We strive to view each other with the eyes of Christ seeing and celebrating the marvel at the heart of every human being and in the wonder of creation. Nevertheless, all indicators point to ever decreasing interest in spirituality. Our response requires both faith and courage.

The future is a mysterious place. If our faith and our faith communities are to thrive or even survive, we need to move from exclusive leadership by priests to a synodal structure where everyone's voice is heard and respected, from parishes to pastoral areas, from maintenance to mission, from observer to participant. To abandon the spiritual is to risk becoming lesser people lacking a sense of wonder and eternity. The spark of the divine is planted deep within each of us making the life of every human being precious and unique. Each of us reflects something of God's perfection that the world would never have known had we not being created.

Our Church needs purification and restructuring. As individuals, as families, as faith communities, as a diocese we strive to fan into a flame the spark of faith. May the Lord continue to tenderly embrace each of us as we journey through life sustained by faith, hope and love.

The communal aspect of the sacrament can so easily be overlooked...

Liam Bergin

Born Again ... Together



SACRAMENT MATTERS

For the past ten years I have hosted a monthly meeting with parents who are presenting their children for baptism. The parish where I reside in Boston requires that all parents attend one of these meetings before their daughter or son receives the sacrament. Recently, I paused to reflect on the effectiveness of these meetings. Are they an unnecessary burden on parents who are coping with the birth of their child or do they offer something valuable to those who want their child to grow in faith, in hope, and in love?

Baptism is a sacrament of initiation, a rite of entry into the community that is the Church. On many occasions the sacrament is celebrated privately with

just the immediate family of the child present. The communal aspect of the sacrament can so easily be overlooked in these circumstances. When the parents meet together for the pre-baptismal meeting, they are immediately reminded that they are part of an extended family that is their parish. They share the joys and trials of being a parent and they are mutually reassured that they are all in this together.

The conversation among the parents allows them to discuss why they have made this choice for their child. Baptism is not like the many one-off tests and vaccinations that every child must undergo. Baptism is not about a day; it is about a free choice for life. As one father

noted, "baptism is not about making grandma happy – although it certainly will do that! - it is about deciding that our child will share and grow in the Christian faith and in the values that have always been important to our family." That decision, they acknowledge, entails a commitment to nurture faith by praying at home and with the Church community.

Two questions, in particular, engage the parents. First, why do we pour water three times on the child's head? Immediately they respond that the child is baptized "in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit." Correct, but that is just half of the answer! As St. Paul reminds us in his letter to the Romans, "when we are baptized, we die with Christ so as to rise to new life with him." The triple pouring of water is a symbolic uniting with Christ in the three days he spent in the tomb so as we can rise to new life with him. That's why Easter is the ideal time to celebrate baptism. That's why we light the Easter candle beside the baptismal font whenever baptism is celebrated. Baptism is about the new life of the Risen Christ that is given to the candidate.

Second, what does the word "Christian" mean? A follower of Christ, surely! But, then, what does "Christ" mean? The parents are generally intrigued to learn that "Christ" is a Greek word, that translates as "Messiah" in Hebrew, and as "Anointed One" in English. During the baptismal ceremony the child is anointed on the head with a beautifully perfumed oil to remind them of their dignity as newly born daughters and sons of God, conferred on them by the Holy Spirit. This oil is called "chrism," anointing oil. When Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist in the River Jordan, the voice of the Father declared "this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased" as the Holy Spirit descended in the form of a dove. While we cannot guarantee the same pyrotechnics at every baptism, the same reality unfolds! The gift of the Holy Spirit is given to the newly born daughters and

sons of God in whom the Father is well pleased.

Perhaps the most significant change to the pre-baptism meeting over the years has been its timing. It was originally scheduled at 7.00pm on a Monday evening, not the easiest time for parents who may need to arrange babysitting as they return from a day's work. It now takes place on Sunday mornings an hour before Mass. This, we found, is more convenient for the parents (and for the godparents who are welcome to attend) who bring the children with them and then stay for the celebration of Mass afterwards.

Many baptismal fonts are octagonal in shape. This is to give architectural expression to the belief that in baptism the candidates are born again and become a new creation. According to the account in Genesis 1, creation took place in seven days. The eighth day, then, is the day of the new creation.



Baptismal Font, Gate of Heaven Church,
South Boston

May the iconic Trócaire Box
be found in and used in every home

Reflections on an Ethiopian Visit with Trócaire

Bishop Niall Coll



Last month I was one of a number of Irish bishops who paid a short visit to Ethiopia to see the work that Trócaire is undertaking there. Founded in 1973 by the Irish Bishops Conference in line with Pope Paul VI's 1967 encyclical *Populorum Progressio*, Trócaire's mission is to give concrete expression to the Church's social vision of working to promote human dignity and development where it is most needed.

Significantly, down to our own time, this work is carried out on a focused

scale in a number of countries, most especially in Africa and Latin America. Interestingly, the assistance is given on the basis of need, rather than as a means to promote a Catholic religious identity. Thus, for example, Trócaire's important development work in Ethiopia is carried out in a country which is less than one percent Catholic (Orthodox Christians 44%, Muslims 31% and Evangelical Protestants 19%) and it constitutes a real blessing to the communities which they serve.



The meeting with people living in an internal displacement camp.

MY ABIDING IMPRESSIONS OF MY ETHIOPIAN VISIT

Meeting so many people living in poverty and deeply scarred by a recent civil war in the Tigray Region in the north of the country was a most troubling, humbling and enlightening experience. They live in a country where the government does not provide children's allowance, old age pensions, unemployment payments or other types of social assistance that we in the West take for granted. I must say that I was touched by the great dignity of the Tigrayans we met and talked with especially those in the very sparse 'internally displaced persons camps' we visited (they could not be called 'refugee camps' because the people are still living in their own country - Ethiopia).

Despite their dispossession and suffering – having lost their land and their homes – these people retain a firm determination to pick up the pieces of their lives, and those of their families and communities, by returning home, if and when the occupation of their land ends. When representatives of these people met and talked with us, it was clear that they are particularly appreciative of the good will and assistance that Irish Catholics share with them in the shape of Trócaire's work among them. I found this most encouraging.

Among the examples of the assistance that Trócaire gives that we saw, one involved a woman, a widow (her husband had been killed in the civil war), who had been helped to buy chickens which she reared and drew an income from on the basis of the eggs she sold daily. In addition, and very importantly, she was taught how to keep accounts and manage her small business enterprise, skills which she will hopefully hone and develop as her business experience expands. Clearly, she and her family have a future, and, happily, Trócaire employs this same useful methodology with many other people. Whatever the great value of this and other projects, I am nevertheless aware that so much more needs to be done in the great ocean of need that exists there.

Another highlight for me was to meet Bishop Tesfasellassie Medhin of the Catholic Eparchy of Adigra. Our host for much of the visit, he witnessed at firsthand the unspeakable suffering and deaths of hundreds of thousands of Tigrayans in the recent civil war. Staying with his people, refusing to flee at the height of the fighting, he is an inspirational faith leader. Feted now not only by his own people but by the Orthodox and Muslims of Tigray also for his courage and articulacy in seeking an end to violence and the promotion peace and justice.



Sr Medhin



Bishop Tesfaselassie Medhin

A final example of the network of partners with whom Trócaire works is the Daughters of Charity in the Tigray Region. In the past many of their sisters were Irish born and they were instrumental in establishing schools, health services and livelihood supports particularly for women. Today, their work continues and excels under the leadership of the redoubtable Tigrayan, Sister Medhin, who welcomed us so warmly to an excellent school catering for all that the sisters founded and run. The school is a real beacon of hope in an area of the country that was devastated over the last few years by a bitter and deadly civil war, and it is a testimony to the sisters's courage, dedication and

faith in the most difficult circumstances imaginable.

Since returning home from Ethiopia I feel more compelled to play my part in raising awareness, especially among young people, of the need to encourage greater solidarity among Irish people towards people in the developing world. So much needs to be done. For one thing, I intend to redouble my efforts to encourage our parishes and Catholic schools to be as supportive as possible of the 2025 Trócaire Lenten campaign. May the iconic Trócaire Box be found in and used in every home and school throughout the Diocese of Ossory this Lent!



Today it is very important that we meet people and especially young people where they are at, and this programme does exactly that.

MyFaith Programme of Sacramental Preparation

Olivia Maher

This is my fourth year being involved in leading the myfaith.ie programme with my parish. I have also had the opportunity to visit many other parishes undertaking this course and witnessed the enthusiasm for this kind of a programme. I have seen the programme grow in popularity over the last number of years and there is a real buzz around the fun and interactive nature of the programme among parents and children. My experience so far has shown that children and parents are craving something extra, to help them mark this rite of passage on their faith journey. Parents and children are particularly drawn to the range of engaging lessons and interactive games that the programme contains. Parents are responding to the structure this course gives the year of sacramental preparation. The focus can often be on the end game, the big day, however, with the myFaith programme, there's something to keep the children engaged throughout the year with different lessons coming online every 2/3 weeks. The emphasis is on the journey towards the sacraments and preparing together with parents and the parish.

MyFaith.ie is a parish-based programme of Preparation for the Sacrament of First Holy Communion and Confirmation. It is designed to be completed at home with

the child and parent. The programme gives parents the opportunity to get involved in their child's preparation in a meaningful way and it was also a great way for the parish to be involved in their preparation and be part of their journey. The lessons reinforce what the children are doing in school as part of their sacramental preparation and the course encourages the children to attend Mass weekly and helps them understand what is going on using a Mass workbook that goes along with the online lessons. There are also two other workbooks that the children receive as part of the programme which again gives families the opportunity to engage with the preparation together in the home.

The programme is simple and easy to use. The parish registers the children and the young people receive their own personal login and password details and begin the lessons as they become available online. The lessons begin at the start of the child's faith journey, baptism and work on from there, marking significant liturgical seasons and of course the important moments relating to their sacrament, e.g. Learning to Say Sorry, and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit etc.

This programme of sacramental preparation is a unique learning tool for the sacraments



that has a faith formation element tucked into very well-designed lessons. Today it is very important that we meet people and especially young people where they are at, and this programme does exactly that. I would highly recommend parishes to use MyFaith.ie as part of their programme for sacramental preparation.

Two years ago, I introduced my parish to this programme for the First Holy Communion children in our three local primary schools. My own daughter was making her first holy communion that year and I was drawn to the very interactive and fun nature of the programme. I approached our Parish Priest about running this programme for the children in the parish and I volunteered to act as group leader along with him. I found the enrolment and set up very easy and there was great support from the MyFaith.ie office. The programme involves the children completing 20 lessons online with their parents over the course of the year. Alongside this, the children are given two workbooks to complete that supports their online lessons.

Once I received the children's login details and workbooks from the MyFaith office, I organised a launch night with the parents and children involved. I used the PowerPoint

on the MyFaith.ie website to explain the programme and demonstrated how to use it. Overall, there was great enthusiasm for this kind of programme as it involves both the parents and the children journeying together to prepare for sacraments. It was also a lovely way for the parish to be involved in their preparation and be part of their journey. I believe the MyFaith.ie programme made the day of the First Holy Communion even more meaningful for all.

This programme includes a mass workbook that encourages parents and children to come together with the parish to pray on a weekly basis. The workbook helps make the content of the mass more meaningful for the children and encourages them to reflect on what they have witnessed at mass. I was able to stay in touch with the families involved through our monthly family masses. The children preparing for the sacrament read prayers of the faithful at these masses. This helped them feel part of the parish and supported them on this journey. I met the full group twice after the launch, where I planned some reflective time for the children as a little bonus. I organised a session of Godly play for the children at one of our meetings. This was a new experience for the children and a

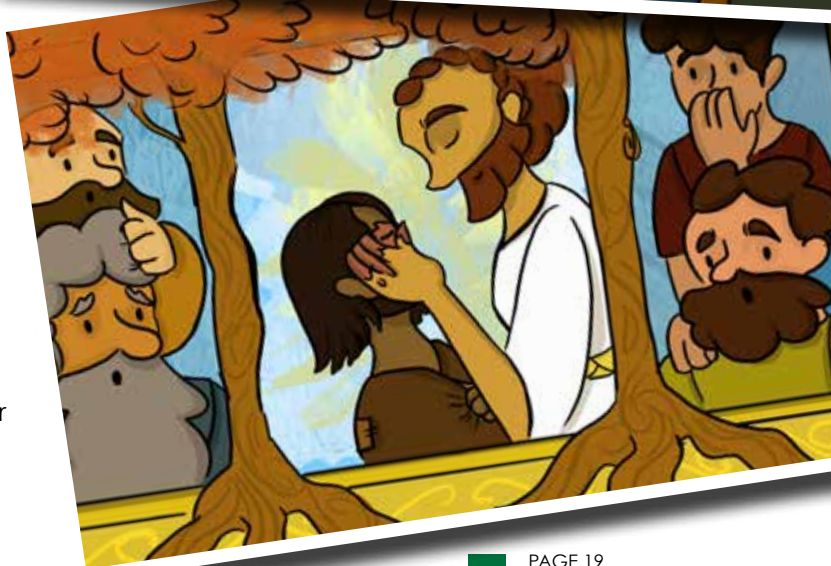
lovely way for them to explore the Word of God.

The facilities on the MyFaith.ie website meant that I could keep an eye on how the programme was being used by the children and intervene if I thought there was a problem accessing the sessions. This monitoring tool meant that I could gently encourage the children along at their own pace. In my experience the children loved keeping track of their progress and seeing the sessions completed and their overall progress being logged. The programme is a fantastic way to encourage learning and exploration of their faith during this special year.

After a successful first year using the MyFaith.ie programme, my parish used the First Holy Communion and Confirmation programme the following year. This was equally successful and rewarding for all. I found that the Confirmation children really enjoyed the extra input from the parish and were well able to manage the course themselves with a little input from me along the way.

I found the primary schools and teachers very supportive of this programme and some teachers even opted to use the workbook and the online session in some classes in addition to their curriculum. However, the programme is designed to be done at home with the children and parents working together. The feedback from parents was very positive, some parents even asking questions of their own faith because of listening to the sessions with their children. This programme of sacramental preparation is a unique learning tool for the sacraments that has a faith formation element tucked into very well-designed lessons. Today it is very important that we meet people and especially young people where they are at, and this programme does exactly that.

I would highly recommend parishes to use Myfaith.ie as part of their programme for sacramental preparation.



Pope Francis... worries about the state of politics in so many parts of the world, as many people do



MORALITY MATTERS

Give me a crash course in ... Political Leadership

Michael Shortall



So, the end of another year, and another General Election is over us. What's next?

Well, the discussions have already started. Who will lead, what priorities will they focus on, and how will they manage all the challenges for the new year ahead?

I wonder – what makes a good leader? Is it experience, charisma, or just having the right policies?

Good question. There are plenty of opinions. There is a tradition of thought in Catholic church that might help answer the question. It's called Catholic Social Teaching (CST)?

Isn't that more about charity and social justice than political leadership?

Not at all. It has a lot to say about leadership, especially political leadership.

The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us that leadership is ultimately about service:

"Those who exercise authority should do so as a service. 'Whoever would be great among you must be your servant' (Mt 20:26). The exercise of authority is measured morally in terms of its divine origin, its reasonable nature, and its specific object: to promote the common good" (CCC, paragraph 2235).

So leadership isn't about power or control but about helping others and working for the common good.

Okay, that sounds lovely and all, but what does that actually mean?

Let's start with Pope Francis. He worries

about the state of politics in so many parts of the world, as many people do. Sometimes it can effect Irish politics too. He writes:

Political life no longer has to do with healthy debates about long-term plans to improve people's lives ... Amid the fray of conflicting interests, where victory consists in eliminating one's opponents, how is it possible to raise our sights to recognize our neighbours or to help those who have fallen along the way? (*Fratelli Tutti*, paragraph 15–16)

In contrast is what he calls good politics or healthy politics. In one of his World Day of Peace messages, which he gives every on the first day of January every year, he says:

"Good politics is at the service of peace. It respects and promotes fundamental human rights, which are at the same time mutual obligations, enabling a bond of trust and gratitude between present and future generations" (*World Day of Peace Message*, 2019).

That's a high bar. So leadership is about rights and responsibilities?

Exactly. Political leadership is a responsibility to guide others toward a better future – not for personal gain but for the well-being of all.

How is a political leader supposed to that?

Well CST does not offer an exact blueprint or map. Rather it gives a set of principles. To share with you the most important: Let's break it down into CST's key principles:

1. *Dignity of the Human Person*: Every decision a leader makes should respect and promote the inherent worth of all people, from conception to natural death. It's not about profit or popularity – it's about protecting and uplifting others.
2. *The Common Good*: True leadership asks, "What's best for everyone?" rather than "What's in it for me?" This principle challenges leaders to think beyond their own interests or those of a select group.
3. *Solidarity*: Leadership means recognising that we are all connected. A good leader doesn't just serve any special group —they think about the

wider impact of their actions, standing with those who are marginalised or struggling.

4. *Subsidiarity*: Decisions should be made at the most local level possible. A good leader listens, delegates, and trusts others to play their part.

5. *Care for Creation*: Stewardship of the environment is a leadership responsibility too. Leaders must consider how their actions affect the planet and future generations.

But isn't this idealistic?

Sure, it's not always easy to live up to these principles. Leadership can be messy, and the pressures to compromise or prioritise short-term gains can be overwhelming. But CST doesn't expect perfection – it calls for principled integrity. Leadership is about striving to reflect justice, compassion, and service, even when it's difficult.

What about everyday leadership?

You might be thinking, "I'm not a politician. How does this even apply to me?" Well, leadership isn't just about holding a formal title. Parents, teachers, volunteers, colleagues – we're all leaders in some way. Every time we influence someone else's life, we're taking on a leadership role.

A challenge worth taking up

So, whether we're talking about politicians or ordinary people, CST offers us a vision of leadership that's deeply countercultural. It's not about power or prestige but about serving others, acting with integrity, and working for the common good.

And for those newly elected, they might do well to reflect on Pope Francis' challenge:

"Political authorities are obliged to respect the fundamental rights of the human person. They must dispense justice humanely by respecting the rights of everyone, especially families and the disadvantaged" (CCC, paragraph 2237).

Now that's leadership worth aspiring to.

Happy Christmas to all the readers of *The Ossory Times*. May the future year bring peace across the world, true prosperity to all, and health and happiness to you and yours.

The holy year of hope will begin when Pope Francis formally opens the holy door in St Peter's Basilica in Rome on 24 December.

Hope will not disappoint us

Albert McDonnell



CHURCH MATTERS

I was fortunate to spend the last two months back in Rome. It is a city that I know well having lived there for almost twenty years. It looked very different this time. The city seemed to be almost dominated by scaffolding. Wonderful focal points such as the Trevi Fountain, the interior of Peter's Basilica and Piazza Navona were partially obscured due to restoration work. However, the scaffolding won't be there for much longer. By Christmas Eve the work must be completed as on that date the Holy Year of Hope begins.

Our tradition of holy years or jubilees goes back to 1300. Prior to that Christians went on pilgrimage to the Holy Land to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. War made that impossible, so Pope Boniface VIII invited people of faith to instead travel to Rome, where so many relics from the early days of Christianity are preserved. Initially, holy years were celebrated at the beginning of each century. However, they were later celebrated at twenty-five-year intervals, so that most people would have the opportunity to take part at least once during their lifetime.

The holy year of hope will begin when Pope Francis formally opens the holy door in St Peter's Basilica in Rome on 24 December. That symbolic act will proclaim 2025 as a year of blessing and grace. Bishops throughout the world are invited to lead their faith communities in the celebration of Mass in their cathedrals on 29 December so that all believers and people of good may share in this special time.

The pope has chosen a phrase from St Paul's letter to the Romans as the theme for this holy year. 'Hope will not disappoint' will be the mantra that will accompany us throughout 2025. In his document launching the holy year, the first sign of hope that the pope identifies is the desire for peace in our troubled world. Francis invites us to celebrate life in all its many and varied forms. Furthermore, we 'need to recover the joy of living, since men and women, created in the image and likeness of God, cannot rest content with getting along one day at a time, settling for the here and now and seeking fulfilment in material realities alone.'

Pope Francis lists several concrete initiatives that would make 2025 hope filled. Perhaps controversially, the pope invites governments to consider reviving the ancient practise of granting some prisoners an amnesty as an expression of hope. He will open an additional holy door in Rebibbia prison on the outskirts of Rome on St Stephen's Day.

Pope Francis invites Christians to extend 'inclusive attention to all those in particularly difficult situations, who experience their own weaknesses and limitations, especially those affected by illnesses or disabilities Care given to them is a hymn to human dignity, a song of hope'. He further expands on the theme of bringing hope to the margins by reminding us to reach out to the young who 'face an uncertain and unpromising future, who lack employment or job security, or realistic prospects after finishing school'. He invites us to bring

hope to migrants who are driven from their homes by recalling the Lord's words "I was a stranger, and you welcomed me". The pope also refers to the elderly 'who frequently feel lonely and abandoned ... Esteem for the treasure that they are, their life experiences, their accumulated wisdom and the contribution that they can still make, is incumbent on the Christian community and civil society'.

Forgiveness of debt is central to the jubilee tradition. Pope Francis invites affluent countries to 'acknowledge the gravity of so many of their past decisions and determine to forgive the debts of countries that will never be able to repay them'. He adds that 'a true "ecological debt" exists, particularly between the global North and South, connected to commercial imbalances with effects on the environment and the disproportionate use of natural resources by certain countries over long periods of time".

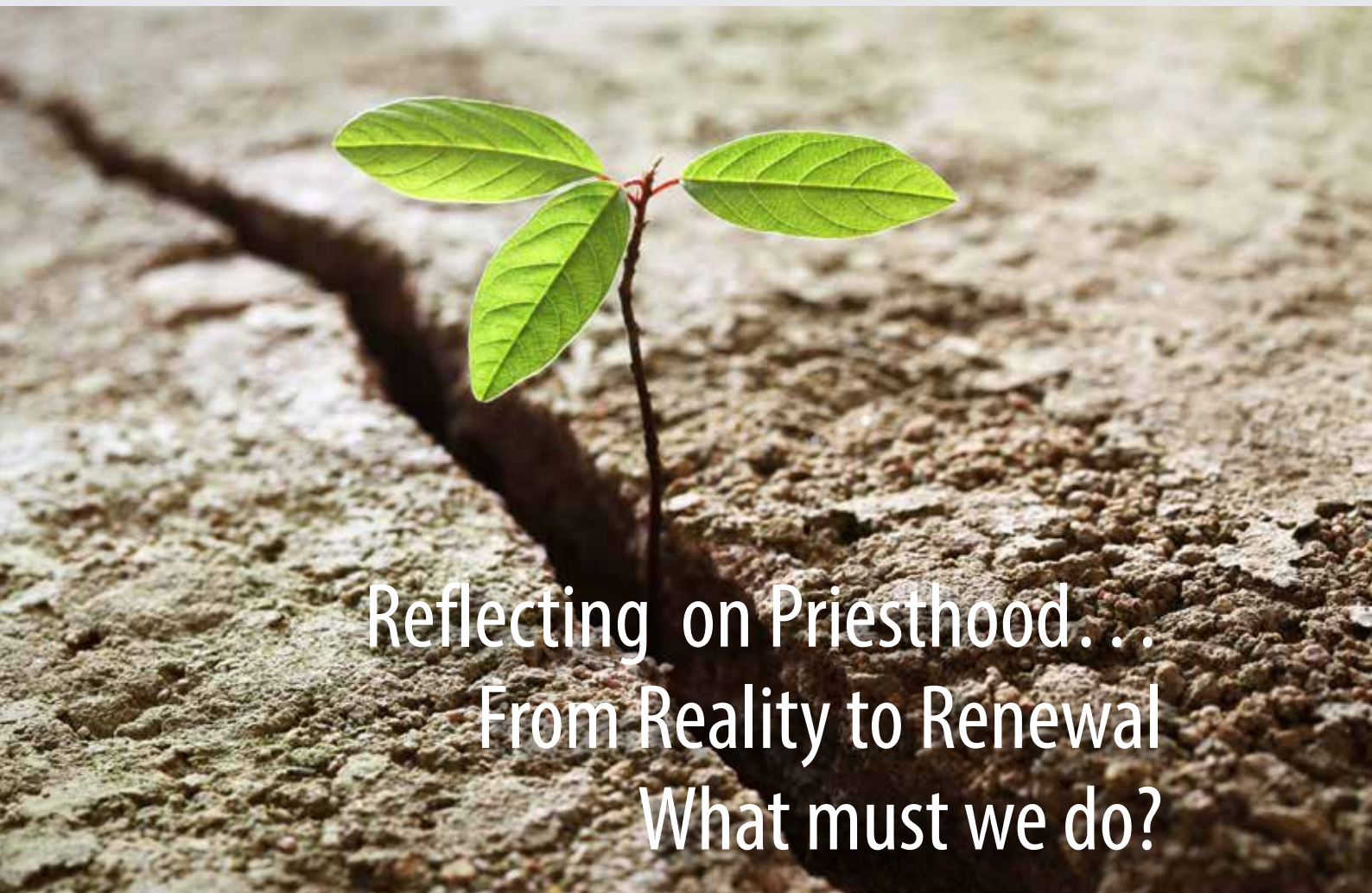
Pilgrimage, particularly to Rome, is another feature of holy years. A series of special Roman celebrations is scheduled. The largest such celebration will be the jubilee for young people from 28 July until 3 August which will include a group from Killaloe diocese. Two men of faith, both of whom died while still young, Carlo Acutis and Pier Giorgio Frassati, will be declared saints during 2025.

The prayer that Pope Francis prepared for the holy year takes us its hope-filled heart:

*May your grace transform us
into tireless cultivators of the seeds of the
Gospel.*

*May those seeds transform from within
both humanity and the whole cosmos
in the sure expectation
of a new heaven and a new earth,
when, with the powers of Evil
vanquished,
your glory will shine eternally.
Amen*

Succumbing to the temptation to believe that the chance of anything new happening in the Church is slim or none is not the preserve of any particular age group.



Reflecting on Priesthood... From Reality to Renewal What must we do?

Kieran O'Shea

Delivering his first Advent homily in the presence of Pope Francis on Friday 6th December 2024 the new preacher to the Papal Household, Capuchin Friar Roberto Pasolini observed that "welcoming good news is not easy, especially when reality has long been marked by suffering, disappointments and uncertainties. The temptation to believe that nothing new can happen often creeps into our hearts".

For those of us in ordained ministry this temptation is indeed understandable particularly as we age as a presbyterate and dwindle in numbers but it remains a particular tragedy when we give way to it. Succumbing to the temptation to believe that the chance of anything new happening in the Church is slim or none is not the preserve of any particular age group. How many priests of mature years do we know who

continue to embrace ministry with joy and enthusiasm. Pope Francis at eighty eighty years of age, despite many mobility restrictions is a case in point.

Giving way to this temptation means we have slipped into the darkness of unbelief where we can only find comfort in looking back to the past while the road ahead is too frightening to travel.

In the book of Genesis we read of Lot's wife who could not resist looking back and as we all know she was changed into a pillar of salt. Salt of course is a preservative and sometimes our desire to preserve the past and to continually look in that direction can make us rock solid in our refusal to embrace any way forward and more worryingly cause others with whom we are called to travel with to be frozen in their tracks too.

Unbelief in this context is not necessarily 'not believing in God' but a failure of trust in the one who says "See I make all things new" (Rev. 21:5) and to trust that our Baptised sisters and brothers who have been anointed with the Holy Spirit have the charisms necessary to carry the light of the Gospel forward. Of course unbelief or lack of faith is not unique to our generation of disciples.

Jesus encountered it almost every day as he formed the original group of Apostles. Often an impediment, it slows our progress towards authentic Discipleship. However lack of faith or unbelief can also become the catalyst for renewed faith, the post resurrection episodes with Thomas in the upper room and the experience of two Disciples on the road to Emmaus being worthy examples. When our hearts are open to the hope of the Resurrection each day our faith and pastoral spark can be reignited by our experience of the risen one walking with us along the road making our hearts burn within us. This is our Hope.

However when apathy, tiredness and even anger take hold the fire of passion for ministry can come close to being extinguished and we are left cold. For those who long for a new day of the Lord and who are ready to walk the path with us into the future this scenario can be very frustrating as their expectations are thwarted by a perspective that "reality can no longer offer us new glimmers of light" as Br Pasolini points out.

Moulded by a model of Church in which responsibility has been invested in a small minority of the Baptised namely the clergy, many people look to us to accompany them in their reality and they want to accompany us in ours.

When we reject these glimmers of light we condemn ourselves to be covered in a haze of thick smoke generated by an attitude that proclaims the show is over, last out turn out the lights, it will see me out! When the doors of our hearts close to the possibility of anything new emerging from the ashes of a past often viewed through rose tinted glasses, it is more destructive than the original causes of our 'suffering, disappointments, and uncertainties', because it shuts out any willingness to participate in the project of building something new.

If we want to be liberated from this mindset and be counted among those willing to sow the seeds of the future then the question asked by the people who came to John for Baptism in the Gospel passage for the third Sunday of Advent 'What must we do?' (Luke 3:10) is indeed appropriate.

In this question are found the seeds of hope, the desire to change, to repent, to find a new way, to move beyond our stagnation, our fears and negativity. Perhaps a recent news story might provide an answer to the question, and given that I have already used imagery associated with fire the joy filled reopening of Notre Dame Cathedral

in Paris may just offer us a road map to welcoming good news and openness to the new.

In April 2019 when Notre Dame was severely damaged by fire there was considerable shock and dismay not just among Catholics but also by people who simply appreciated the cultural significance of this hallowed edifice.

Five years later as promised Notre Dame opens its doors again to the world having been beautifully restored by a team of thousands of craftspeople in various fields who worked together to ensure that this symbol of the complex relationship between faith and reason French style, could become for people everywhere a sign of Hope and in many ways a sign of Synodality, a concept that some Catholics have more difficulty understanding than the French abstraction of *Laïcité*!

At the conclusion of a visit to mark the beginning of events to celebrate its reopening to the public, French President Emmanuel Macron, speaking inside the Cathedral, addressed workers and all who have been part of the restoration project. "You have achieved what was thought impossible," the President remarked. "The blaze at Notre-Dame was a national wound, and you have been its remedy through will, through work, through commitment." He went on to say that the Cathedral's reopening will be a "shock of hope."

Some commentators are already discussing what they describe as the Notre Dame effect, hailing the fire and restoration of Notre Dame as a pivotal moment in the revival of French and even Western Catholicism and as the catalyst for a new entente between Church and State. While all that remains to be seen and one might be forgiven for harbouring a healthy dose of scepticism in this regard there can be no doubt that the Notre Dame story

teaches us that the most effective way to rise from the ashes of negativity and fear of losing control over the familiar past is coming together, working together, walking together.

Once it was decided that the only option was restoration the complexities of relationships between the various bodies faded into the background as they kept their eyes firmly fixed on the goal.

So what must we do to joyfully welcome good news? What can we do to banish from our hearts the temptation to believe that nothing new can happen?

Primarily we must listen to the voice of the Spirit who will help us discern what we must do by inviting us to reflect on questions such as the following:

Can we muster enough faith and hope to abandon any tendency to isolation and be part of the renewal, the rebuilding of the Church made up of 'living stones' (1 Peter 2:5)? Can we work with all the crafts people of God who have the gifts and materials necessary to restore the beauty of our faith communities?

Acknowledging the wounds of the past can we commit to healing them through will, through work, through commitment? Are we ready to work as a team under the watchful eye of the Master who wants all of us to share in the joy of presenting the Good News in new ways becoming for the world a shock of Hope.

Do we trust and acknowledge, in the words of the Papal Preacher Br Pasolini, "When God's light manages to show us that within the fear of what lies ahead, there is the faithfulness of an eternal promise, wonder arises within us, and we find ourselves able to finally say, 'Here I am.'"

St Patrick's Church is 125 years old

Ray Cleere



St Patrick's, Church situated at the junction linking the Ormonde Road, the College Road, New Street and Upper New Street was blessed, dedicated and opened 125 years ago on Sunday, November 26th, 1899, by Most Rev. Dr Abraham Brownrigg, who was Bishop of Ossory at the time. The opening of the Church was a most impressive ceremony and was attended by a large congregation.

From an architectural point of view St Patrick's Church which, when it is full to capacity has seating accommodation for approximately 400 people, is unquestionably one of the most beautiful religious buildings in Kilkenny City. Chaste and graceful in its lines, it reflects the highest credit to the architect, the contractor, and all who were involved in the building of the Church at the time. The Parish Chapel of St Patrick's was built by Mr. Walter Butler and continued in use from 1782 until Sunday, November 26th, 1899, when the parishioners at the time attended Mass in it for the last time.

Building on the present St Patrick's Church began in May 1896. Patrick Nolan from Monaghan was the builder, and the architect was William Hague of 50, Dawson Street, Dublin. That same team built the neighbouring St John of God convent at the same time. They also built St John's Church which took eleven years to build (1897 – 1908).

It cost £7,326 to build the present St Patrick's Church. The cost included the fitting of stained-glass windows, altars and pews. Approximately one half of the cost was donated by Mr. John Hudson, The Parade, Kilkenny, and the remaining half was contributed by the parishioners at the time.

Subscriptions for the new Church began in May 1895. Private donations, which ranged from one shilling to ten pounds, street to street collections and a "Penny A Week" collection were the main means of fundraising. A monster bazaar held on June 29th/30th, 1803, raised the sum of £706.

The first administrator of the new St

Patrick's was Fr Richard Keoghan who was appointed in 1894 while the old St Patrick's Church was still in use. He was assisted by Fr Joseph Murphy who was appointed Curate in 1895. The old Church was situated at Chapel Avenue. No trace of it remains today except the stone Holy Water Stoups in the wall at the entrance to Lanigan's house.

The present Church originally had three altars: the present altar and two wooden altars one on each side. The wooden altar at the sacristy side was surmounted with a beautiful statue of the Sacred Heart while the altar at the convent side was adorned with an equally impressive statue of Our Lady.

The centre marble altar was purchased by Bishop Abraham Brownrigg with money left to the Sisters of St John of God by a wealthy citizen whom they had nursed for many years.

The Baptistry was located inside the main door of the Church, to the left as one entered. It was enclosed by a wrought-iron railing and entered by the iron gate, which is now the entrance to the six small houses for the elderly in the grounds of St Kieran's College. Those houses were built under the guidance of Fr Jackie Robinson in 1980.

On the convent side of the Church there is a side porch which was used as a mortuary chapel. Immediately over the porch is another area – the tribune – where the organ is located. Another feature of St Patrick's Church is the basement, which is found under the sanctuary and the sacristy. The section under the Sacristy was formally used to store fuel for heating the Church. The sisters also stored candlesticks and candle branches there and holy water was blessed there. Under the sanctuary area is a passageway leading from the convent to the sacristy. This was used in the past to get from one place to another while ceremonies were taking place in the sanctuary.

The remains of the late Bishop Abraham Brownrigg, who was responsible for the building of St Patrick's, lie buried within the Church.

St Patrick's Church has two bells, one larger than the other. The large one was rung for Sunday and Holy Day masses. It was also rung for funerals by the Chapel Man who also prepared for baptisms. The sturdy rope attached to the big bell descended through the ceilings into the porch from where it was rung. The smaller bell was rung daily by the Sisters for Mass, for school and for the Angelus. It was also rung at 8pm each evening to remind people in the locality to pray for the dead and dying. After being silent for many years Fr Kieran O'Shea had the bell restored and returned to working order in 2024

EARLY INFLUENTIAL FIGURES

A native of Freshford, Fr Richard Keoghan studied for the priesthood in St Kieran's College and was ordained on July 19th, 1885. He spent the first four years of his priestly life in Salford, England, after which he served as curate in Mooncoin for three years. In June 1892 he was appointed curate in St Patrick's and on October 26th of that same year he succeeded Fr James Dillon as Administrator of that parish. For the next 19 years he served the people of St Patrick's during which time he took responsibility for the building and paying of St Patrick's new church.

On February 10th, 1913, he was appointed Parish Priest of Inistioge and served there until his death on September 30th, 1928. Before his death he left instructions that his tombstone should say only the following: "Here lies the remains of one who was at one time parish priest of Inistioge". His wish was granted. Fr Keoghan and Bishop Brownrigg, who worked so closely together to provide St Patrick's with its new church, died just one day apart: Fr Keoghan on September 30th, 1928, and Bishop Brownrigg on October 1st of the same year.

Born in 1804, John Hudson, the Parade, Kilkenny, was a major benefactor of the new St Patrick's Church. He was a butcher by trade and his family address was 14, Rose Inn Street. John Hudson's own address on the Parade was Parade House, later the home of the late Dr Richard Purcell. On his death on April 23rd, 1892, John Hudson left

£3,000 towards the building of the church. By the time work had begun four years later, that sum had increased to £3,300. As the contract price at the time for the building was £5,500, his contribution amounted to two-thirds of the cost.

A native of Templeorum, Fr Joseph Murphy was ordained on July 3rd, 1892, having studied for the priesthood in St Kieran's College. He was appointed to St Patrick's on February 13th, 1895, having served in England and Callan Workhouse. On March 31st, 1902, he left St Patrick's for Mooncoin and later served in several parishes before he retired, due to ill health, in November 1931. He died on February 8th, 1932, and is buried at Donaghmore, Ballyragget.

LAYING OF THE FOUNDATION STONE

Following the 12pm Mass in the old St Patrick's Church thousands of people lined the street and witnessed the procession from the Church to the site of the new St Patrick's. The procession was led by St Patrick's band followed by a vast number of parishioners, ecclesiastical students from St Kieran's College, clergy and the then Bishop of Ossory, Dr Brownrigg. The archway in Patrick Street was decorated in evergreens, as was the Home Rule Club. Banners were hung along the route of the procession. At the entrance to the site, a large arch was erected by Michael Corcoran. A circuit of the site was made by the Bishop and priests, following which prayers were said and the litany of the saints chanted. The foundation stone was then lowered into place by Bishop Brownrigg on Pentecost Sunday, May 24th, 1886.

The opening ceremony began at 12 noon and was performed by Dr Brownrigg, assisted by a large number of clergy. The bishop blessed and dedicated the Church and began the ceremony at the entrance to the Church. After the ceremony Mass was celebrated by Rev. W. Cassin, Adm., St Mary's Cathedral assisted by Rev. M. White, St John's and Rev. M. Holohan, St Kieran's College. On Sunday, November 20th, 1949, the 50th anniversary of the opening of St Patrick's Church was celebrated. The then Bishop of Ossory, Dr Patrick Collier attended.

Mass was celebrated by Fr Andy Walsh, Curate. St Patrick's Choir sang during the mass and Miss Mary O'Carroll played the organ. She sang at the opening ceremony 50 years earlier.

CHANGES

Since the 1960s the interior of St Patrick's Church has undergone a number of changes. The two side altars, altar rails and pulpit have gone as has the partition dividing the nuns chapel from the sanctuary.

In 1987 and 1988 the altar table was brought forward to face the congregation and an Ambo and Baptismal font were added in the sanctuary in accordance with up-to-date Liturgical requirements. To the rear of the Church, the original confession boxes were replaced and resited along the back wall beside the newly arranged entrance porch. On Sunday, November 25th, 1999, St Patrick's Church celebrated its 100th anniversary, Mass was celebrated by Bishop Laurence Forristal.

Down through the years many priests have served in St Patrick's Parish since the present Church opened. They included: Fr Andy Walsh (RIP); Fr Richard Ryan (RIP); Fr Brian Flynn (RIP); Fr Gerard Rice (RIP); Fr Michael Ryan; Fr Jackie Robinson; Fr Frank Purcell; Fr Mark Condon; Fr Pat O'Farrell (RIP); Fr Larry Wallace; Fr Brian Johnston; Fr John Creegan; Fr Sean O'Neill; Fr Raymond Dempsey; Fr Dan Carroll; Fr Roderick Whearty and Fr Peter Muldowney who celebrated 40 years of priesthood on August 18th, 2024.

The longest serving priest in St Patrick's Parish was the late Fr Andy Walsh. Born in 1914 and a native of Mooncoin, Fr Walsh served as curate and as administrator for 28 years from 1943 until 1971 when he was transferred to Galmoy as parish priest. He died on December 9th, 1973, aged 59.

The first mass in the new St Patrick's Church was celebrated by Fr Richard Keoghan, Adm., on Monday, November 27th, 1899. In November 2024, 125 years later and for the first time in its history, St Patrick's Parish is served by one priest. He is Fr Kieran O'Shea, a native of the parish of Durrow, in County Laois.

Vocations in Ossory

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

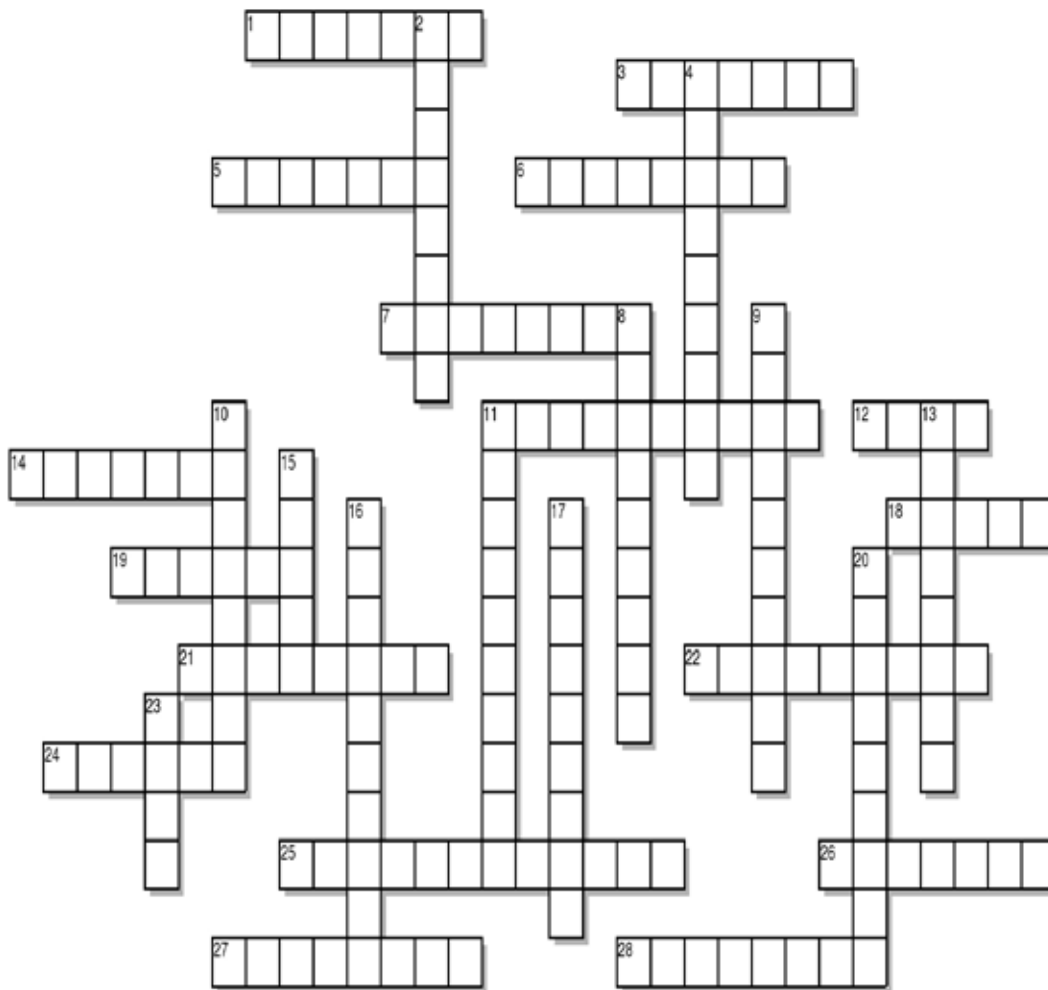
How do I know what life path
I should take?

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



Contact
FR MARK CONDON
VOCATIONS DIRECTOR
vocations@ossory.ie

CHRISTMAS CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 With his word this story started
- 3 A special anniversary or event - this one of hope
- 5 Pius X/II
- 6 He called for the census
- 7 Kierkegaard's The ____ unto death
- 11 The gathering of a nations bishops
- 12 Ancient Roman day
- 14 This town gave birth to the crib
- 18 A certain mount
- 19 This season of arrival
- 21 Famed priest historian
- 22 Works of mercy
- 24 Our ____ king
- 25 Gold and myrrh
- 26 He gave us the first crib
- 27 These pipes long associated with the

Carrigan family
28 Works of mercy

DOWN

- 2 Some bishop visited here to see the support of charity
- 4 Micah foretold it would be here
- 8 They followed a star
- 9 Much to do of this now
- 10 Between God and us
- 11 Many young people will make a first this year
- 13 Three kings day
- 15 Noster
- 16 A journey of faith
- 17 Birth month of Mary
- 20 Here the Bishop has a seat
- 23 Three of them

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

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

by 10th March 2025 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:
Susan Moran

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

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

Colouring Competition



For ages 5-8



Wordsearch Competition



For ages 8-13

- NATIVITY WORDSEARCH -

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

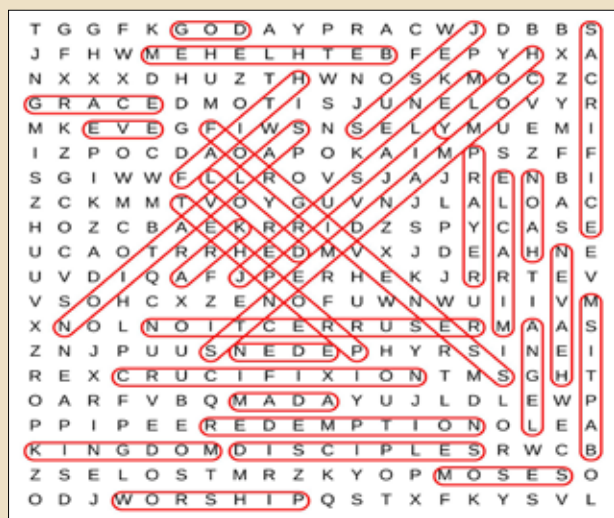
BETHLEHEM
NAZARETH
DONKEY
VIRGIN
MESSIAH

GOLD
WISE MEN
MYRRH
MANGER
SHEPHERDS

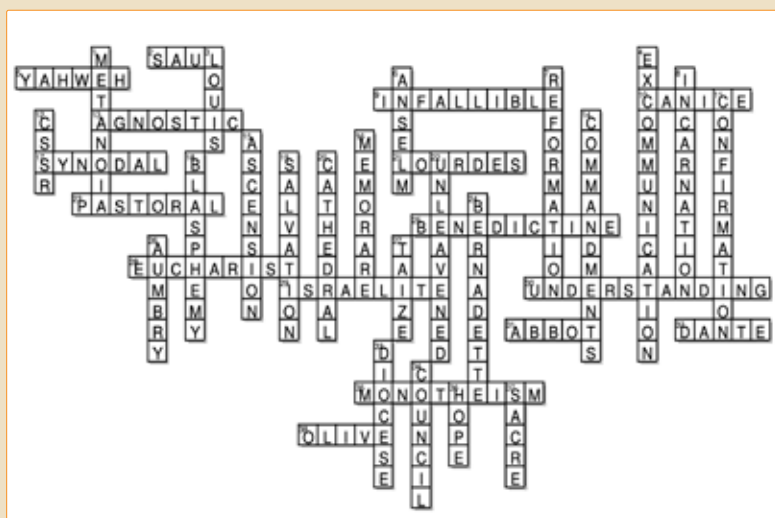
STAR
CHRISTMAS
FRANKINCENSE
ANGEL
JESUS

JOSEPH
BIRTH
HEROD
MARY
STABLE

Answers to Ossory Times Issue 36



Answers to Ossory Times Issue 36



OSSORY DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2025

19th-25th May 2025

PACKAGE DETAILS

The Ossory Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes will take place from 19th – 25th May 2025. Bus transport from Loughboy Shopping Centre and Castlecomer GAA pitch to Cork airport.

Direct flights to Lourdes. Full religious programme.

Choice of 3* and 4* hotels €949 and €995 respectively.

Assisted pilgrims contact Fr Anthony O'Connor 087-2517766

**Bookings: JWT 01-2410800
or email info@joewalshtours.ie**



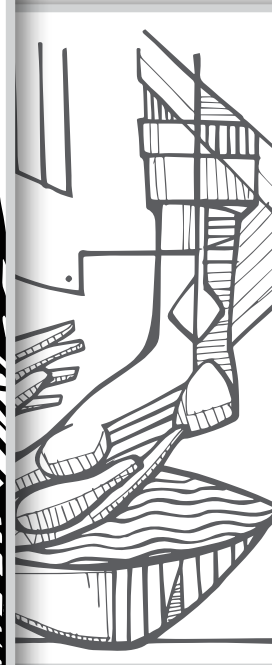
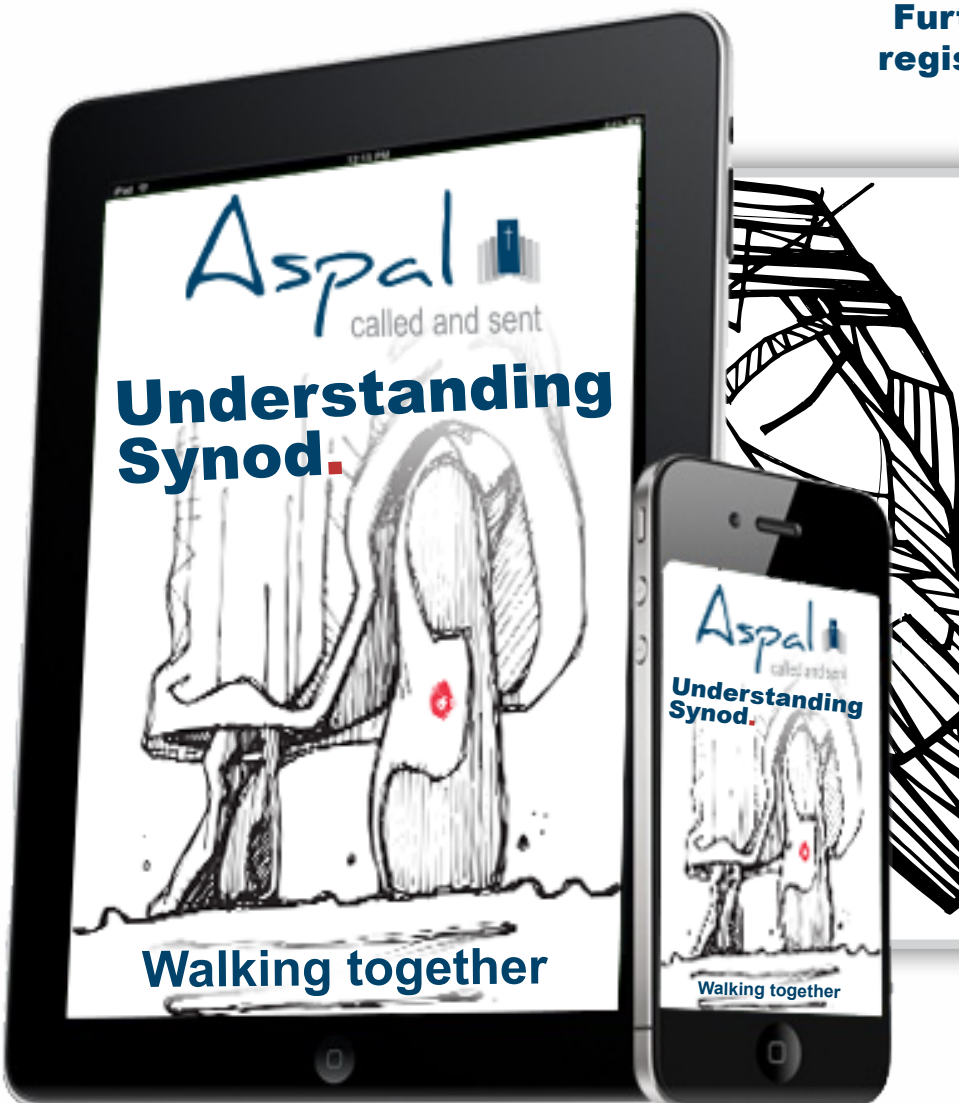


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