



# OSSORY TIMES

Sharing the life of our Diocese



CELEBRATING THE JUBILEE  
YEAR OF HOPE 2025



DIOCESE OF OSSORY

# ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL

# RESTORATION FUND DRAW

## 2024/2025

**12 MONTHLY DRAWS - SEPTEMBER 2024 TO AUGUST 2025**

### MONTHLY PRIZES

|                 |        |                                |      |
|-----------------|--------|--------------------------------|------|
| 1st Prize ..... | €2,000 | 7th Prize .....                | €200 |
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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 has invited us to journey together on a Jubilee Year of Hope. This year reminds us that we are 'Pilgrims of Hope' as it is titled *Spes non Confundit* – Hope Does Not Disappoint. This theme intends to encourage each of us to be messengers of hope in our world today - a world, we can all agree, that needs this hope.

This hope, of which this year reminds us, is not some lofty aspirational hope, nor is it the dreamy hope of poetry, prose or film, but rather it is a hope rooted in the reality of the Easter cross to which we turn in these days. It is a hard won hope that reminds us that hope does really exist in our world today even in the darkest of places. A timely reminder in a world broken by war, violence, oppression, and such economic uncertainty.

The tradition of Jubilee has its origins in ancient biblical times found in the book of Leviticus, wherein every 50th year was a time for setting slaves free, for forgiving debts, and for allowing the land to rest. In our Christian tradition the Jubilee has a strong focus on reconciliation and renewal, including our reaching out to people on the margins. Since the first Jubilee Year of Pope Boniface VIII in 1300, a Jubilee is normally celebrated every 25 years, so that most people can experience it at least once in their lifetime.

These pages of this edition of the *Ossory Times* display how it is that we experience that hope in our parishes, pastoral areas and Diocese - the hope that is so many young people coming together to bring St Patrick and the message of faith to our St Patrick's Day parade, the hope that is gifted us by Pope Francis in *Laudato Si'*, the hope that is found in pilgrimage, the hope that is found in new technologies, the hope that is found in our continued synodal journey, the hope of the work of Irish charity and so much more...

I am delighted, then, to welcome you to the latest edition of the *Ossory Times*. As always I trust you will 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:

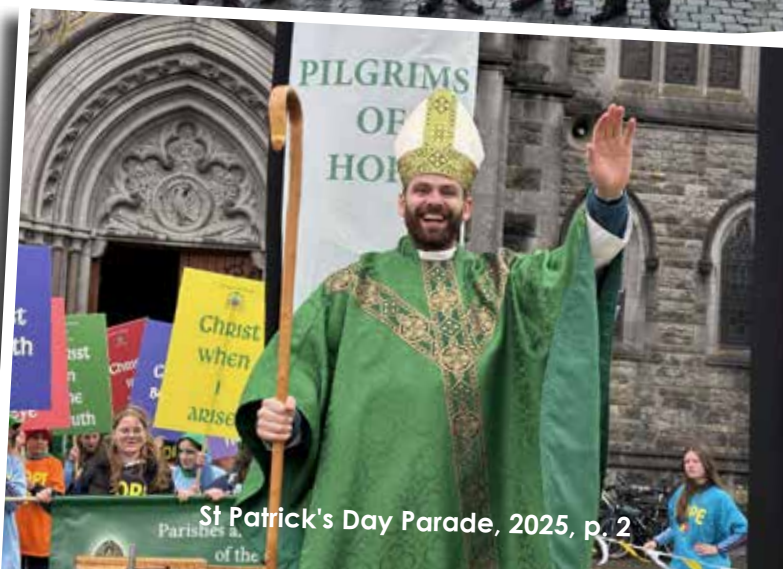
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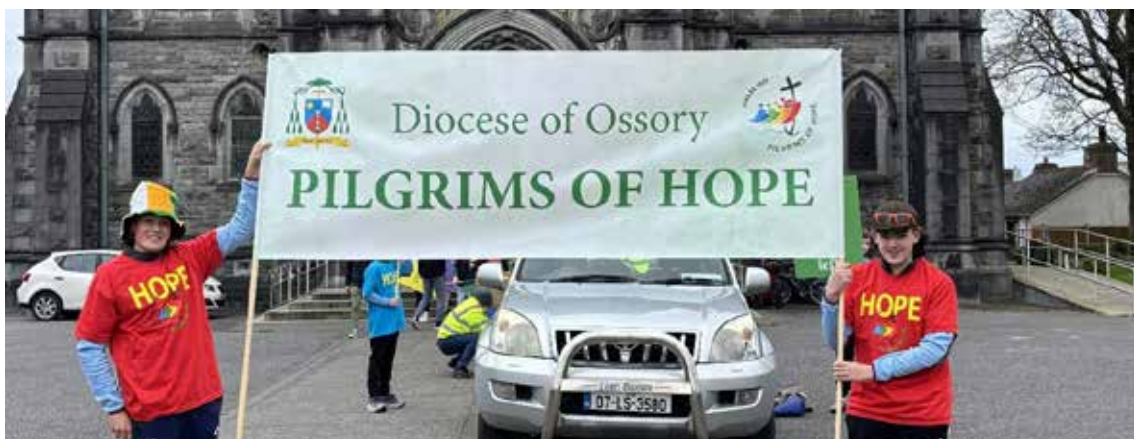
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'These young people are not only signs of hope for the future but hope for today'



### **Bishop Niall Coll calls for courage in speaking the truth with love in a secular world**

Bishop Niall Coll of Ossory has emphasised the importance of speaking the truth with love and courage in today's world, urging people to be faithful to their own values in the face of the pressures of life today.

In his homily for St Patrick's Day in St Mary's Cathedral, Bishop Coll pointed to the emptiness that can be so much part of life today and went on to say that 'many people now are growing weary of a secular pattern of life that forgets about God. While secularism promised freedom and progress, it has often left people feeling isolated, anxious and without meaning. The pursuit of material success and personal autonomy has not satisfied the human heart'.

Bishop Coll praised the involvement of the Diocese of Ossory in the Kilkenny St Patrick's Day parade. Reflecting on the event, he emphasised that such gatherings provide both an opportunity to celebrate St Patrick's enduring mission of love and forgiveness, and provided a real experience of belonging and community.

Bishop Coll went on to say that "The presence of the Diocese of Ossory in the parade highlighted that we are a community of faith, pilgrims of Hope. Seventy-five young people from various secondary schools throughout the Diocese accompanied a float of St Patrick in a boat, carrying banners displaying the much-loved words of St Patrick's breastplate. 'These young people are not only signs of hope for the future but hope for today' commented Bishop Coll as he commended 'their generosity of spirit and enthusiasm'.

'Patrick's deep trust in God is a lesson for all of us irrespective of our ethnicity or nationality. He prayed constantly, relying not on his own strength but on the power of Christ. His famous prayer, "Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me", reminds us that Jesus walks with us always on our path of life' said Bishop Coll.

Bishop Coll encouraged everyone to carry the spirit of St Patrick beyond the festivities, fostering love, forgiveness and unity in their daily lives.



**Homily at Mass on St Patrick's Day, 17 March, 2025  
in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny**

St Patrick's Day is traditionally marked by Mass, shamrocks, parading, a good bit of drinking, and in more recent times by the wearing of green leprechaun hats. I look forward to viewing the annual St Patrick's Day Parade here in Kilkenny in the early afternoon – though I will not be wearing a leprechaun hat!

Thinking just now about the life and teachings of St Patrick, it is good to recall that his mission was not just for his time—it is for ours as well. St Patrick's journey from slavery to sainthood speaks powerfully to us Catholics and to fellow Christians in Ireland and globally today. His unwavering faith in Christ and his courage in the face of opposition call us to renew our own faith and share the Gospel with the world around us.

St Patrick's story began in suffering. Taken as a slave from Roman Britain to Ireland, he spent years in isolation, tending flocks on the mountains. But rather than becoming bitter, he turned to prayer. In his Confessio, he

wrote, "More and more did the love of God and my fear of Him and faith increase, and my spirit was moved." Patrick encountered God in his suffering, and it was this encounter that shaped the rest of his life.

Pope Francis has repeatedly reminded us that "the Lord always enters through the wounds." Like Patrick, we all experience wounds—pain, loss, disappointment—but these are precisely the places where we are often most disposed to meeting the God who seeks to meet us.

Patrick's return to Ireland was an act of love and forgiveness. Having escaped from slavery, he could have remained in the safety of his homeland and middle-class family and comforts. Instead, he underwent a theological education in France, responded to God's call to go back and share the Gospel with those who had once oppressed him, the Irish.

This is true Christian love. Patrick had encountered Christ, and because of

that, he could not keep the Gospel to himself.

Today, Ireland faces many challenges of faith—secularism, materialism, indifference, and a loss of trust among many in the Church. Like Simon Peter and his companions in the Gospel for today's feast, we can be tempted to despair ...!

But they didn't. Heeding Jesus, they once again paid out their nets, netting a huge catch of fish.

Patrick, too, in the face of huge difficulties did not give up. Instead, he spoke the truth with courage, using simple means to teach profound truths.

The shamrock, which tradition tells he used to help him teach the Irish to better understand, however inadequately, the Trinity, reminds us that faith is not meant to be complicated but lived in everyday life. ...

Like Patrick, Simon Peter and companions, we, too, must not give in ...!

Indeed, there are signs today in our Western world, if the likes of Bishop Robert Barron and his Word on Fire online ministry are correct, that some people are growing weary of a secular pattern of life that forgets about God.

While secularism promised freedom and progress, it has often left people feeling isolated, anxious and without meaning. The pursuit of material success and personal autonomy has not satisfied the human heart.

That some are searching for something deeper—something real – does not surprise Pope Francis. He has often reminded us: "The human heart seeks something greater, it is searching for infinite happiness, for true joy."

The world offers temporary pleasures, but Christ offers abundant life.

Faith does not take away our struggles, but it gives us the strength to endure them with hope. In a world where many feel lost, our Faith reminds us that we are loved and have a purpose. In an age of division, Christ unites. In times of suffering, faith gives meaning.

This is why, despite the many shrill voices telling us that faith is outdated, some are being drawn back to God. As Pope Francis says, explaining the basis for the current Jubilee Year of Hope, "Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way ..." The message of Christ is not a relic of the past—it is the answer to the deepest desires of the human heart today.

Patrick's deep trust in God is a lesson for all of us irrespective of our ethnicity or nationality. He prayed constantly, relying not on his own strength but on the power of Christ. His famous prayer, Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, reminds us that Jesus walks with us always.

As we honour St. Patrick today, let us not simply celebrate his memory but imitate his faith and courage. Let us open our hearts to encounter Christ, trust in God's plan, and share the Gospel with those around us. Let us, 'Put out into deep water and pay out our nets for a catch'.

May we, in the spirit of Patrick and Simon Peter and his companions, see beyond the green leprechaun hat today and hear the voice of Christ in our own lives, calling us to follow him and cast out our nets anew.... Amen

+ Niall Coll

Bishop of Ossory

In 2015, *Laudato Si'* was a moral and spiritual rallying cry, but how does this cry sound today?



## *Laudato Si'*

Josh Treacy

This coming summer will mark ten years since the publication of Pope Francis' most influential encyclical, *Laudato Si'*. At the time, the climate crisis was at the forefront of global politics. The media swelled with images of flooded Pacific islands, masked children in Beijing's smog-filled streets, and—of course—a polar bear adrift on an ice floe. The year culminated with the Paris Agreement, a diplomatic masterclass which saw nearly every government on earth pledge to limit global warming to “well below” two degrees Celsius. There were tears, standing ovations, and a palpable sense that history had been made.

Needless to say, the times have changed. Two Trump administrations have twice withdrawn the United States from the Paris Agreement; a global pandemic came and went; the world was introduced to artificial intelligence; and two major

conflicts broke out and tragically persist. In 2015, *Laudato Si'* was a moral and spiritual rallying cry, but how does this cry sound today? What relevance does it have for—say—a forty-two parish diocese in south-east Ireland?

The first obstacle to hearing Francis' message today is that climate change does not attract the major public attention it did ten years ago. The nation has—quite rightly—focused on the housing crisis, rising living costs, and failing public services. However, it is this very focus on social problems to the exclusion of environmental problems that Francis addresses. As he reiterates in his autobiography *Hope*, published this year: “There aren't two separate crises—one environmental and the other social—but one single and complex socio-environmental crisis that is destined to result more easily in health disasters.”

This insight underscores the central message of *Laudato Si'*: everything is interconnected. We are intimately bound to the Earth, and to one another—across both geography and history. The choices of past generations echo today, just as the actions of distant governments and corporations, thousands of miles from our island, shape our lives here. Thus, we may not feel the effects of our overconsumption, but someone, somewhere, will. Developing countries have borne the brunt of global warming, resulting in a tragic increase in migration as people are forced to flee poverty driven by environmental collapse. We must dare to look such tragedies in the face. To ask, “what does it matter to me?” is to repeat Cain’s answer to God: “Am I my brother’s keeper?”

Beneath both economic inequality and environmental collapse, Francis detects the “modern myth of unlimited material progress.” Our pursuit of relentless technological development has brought with it a misuse of creation. If the twentieth century taught us anything, it’s that a technology severed from ethics cannot easily limit its own power. AI, for instance, can either democratise knowledge or create cognitive pollution through disseminating false information. Meanwhile, social media companies bent on profit create algorithms designed to steal our attention. In such examples, profiteering and technological growth are detached from any concern about human welfare.

Granted, most of us are not in a position to change the fiscal policy of our local GAA club, let alone the global economy. Nonetheless, our own interior lives can mirror the change in orientation which society so desperately needs. Each time we detach from the digital world and reengage with the rhythms of daily life, we rediscover values which are glaringly missing from our world. It is quietly revolutionary to reconnect with the nature around us, seeking not to master it—or

even understand it—but to simply let it be. This takes us to the unique contention of *Laudato Si'*, that the ecological crisis reflects a deeper crisis of the human spirit. Quoting Pope Benedict XVI, Francis notes that “the external deserts in the world are growing, because the internal deserts have become so vast.” The environmental crisis demands an inward renewal of humanity towards which Catholics have a unique contribution to make. There is a wealth of resources—from the canticles of St Francis of Assisi to the poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins—which capture a rich perspective of nature informed by faith. Such a perspective views nature as creation, recognising a givenness to reality which is not man-made. The Creator’s imprint is evident throughout the entirety of creation, in all plants and creatures. We are thus invited to praise alongside fellow creatures: “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!” (Ps 148:3-5).

The human spirit, like all things in nature, can recover from illness if it returns to its roots and rediscovers the source of its vitality. The same source which created “the ends of the earth” also “gives power to the faint, and strengthens the powerless” (Isaiah 40:28-29). The task of faith is to take such convictions out of the realm of abstraction and to incorporate them into an interior impulse which guides and gives meaning to our actions. If we can allow that impulse to be nourished by creation, and to care for creation in return, we will have embodied the kind of ecological spirituality which *Laudato Si'* envisions. Concluding his autobiography, Francis writes that although the opposite of love is commonly said to be hate, the more everyday opposite of God’s love is indifference. Love, by contrast, is restless. The message of *Laudato Si'* continues to resound restlessly to those who listen. The problem to which it responds will not go away if simply ignored. Of course, no one in this diocese can control the changing global order; but we can all control the domain of our own hearts.



**Chrism Mass Homily, 16 April 2025  
in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny**

It is good for us to be here together this evening. This Chrism Mass is a moment of renewal—a time for us, as priests, to gather in communion with one another and with Christ, who first called us to this ministry.

As we bless the oils that will anoint and heal, strengthen and consecrate, we are reminded of our own anointing as priests - the day we stood before the Church and gave our lives in service to God's people. That calling has not changed. But the world around us has.

And let us thank the Lord for the great number of parishioners from throughout the Diocese who gather with us now in a sign of faith and solidarity.

**A Priesthood for Today's Ireland**

The Ireland we serve today is different from the one many of us knew in years past. The Church no longer holds the central place in society that it once did.

People's trust in institutions has been shaken. The priesthood itself has been questioned, challenged, even dismissed in some quarters.

But that does not mean we are no longer needed. In fact, I believe the opposite is true. Our role as priests—our presence, our witness, our service—is more important now than ever.

Because while much has changed, some things remain the same. People still search for meaning.

They still long for something deeper than what the world offers.

They still hunger for hope, for truth, for love that does not fail.

And we, as priests, are sent into that reality—not to impose, not to retreat into the past, but to walk with people in the present, to meet them where they are, and to remind them of the God who never stops seeking them.

## **A Prophetic Voice in Troubling Times**

But to do this, we need to find our voice again.

Ireland and the wider Western world today are facing real challenges – some social and political. There is, for one thing, the endless dog-eat-dog rhetoric about trade wars and tariffs, signposting the threat of deepening economic hardship to come.

Locally, we see the effects of isolation, as many in our parishes, particularly the elderly, feel forgotten. The traditional sense of community is weakening, with fewer gathering in churches, local shops, community centres, parish halls, or family homes the way they once did.

Loneliness is becoming a silent epidemic, with mental health struggles rising across all age groups. Suicide rates, especially among young men, remain a deep wound in our society.

We see addiction in many forms. Substance abuse, particularly alcohol and drugs, continues to destroy lives. Gambling addiction is rampant, with young men in particular falling into its grip, often in secret.

And beyond substances, there are the quieter addictions—the endless scrolling on social media, the numbing distractions that keep people from facing the deeper questions of their lives.

We see despair in families struggling to make ends meet. Housing is out of reach for many, with young people unable to afford homes in their own communities and others trapped in cycles of homelessness.

Working parents, despite their best efforts, feel like they are always running just to stand still. Those on the margins—migrants, the homeless, the

forgotten—often feel that no one sees them.

We see a culture that often reduces human dignity to economic worth or personal convenience. The right to life itself is increasingly undermined, from abortion to growing calls for assisted suicide.

Human beings are too often seen in terms of what they can produce, how they contribute, rather than being valued simply for who they are.

We see young people searching for identity in a world that tells them they must create it alone. Many feel pressured to define themselves by their achievements, their image, their online presence.

They are bombarded with conflicting messages about what it means to be human, what it means to be free, what it means to love. Instead of being guided toward truth, they are often left to navigate these deep questions without support, without appropriate role models, without a moral framework, without hope.

## **Resisting the Temptation to Despondency**

We also know the despondency that comes with ministering in churches that feel emptier each year. In some areas, we look out on aging congregations and wonder who will be left in a decade or two.

We baptise children, we stand at the altar at weddings, funerals, baptisms and first Holy Communions, presiding for families who have no real or personal connection to the life of faith.

My brothers, we must resist the temptation to despair. We were never promised easy ground for the Gospel. Christ did not call us to be chaplains to a comfortable,

churchgoing society—He called us to be shepherds, even when the flock has scattered.

Even if people are not practicing, even if their understanding is miniscule, even if they do not return, we must believe that every breaking of the Word and Eucharist, every sacrament we celebrate, every moment of presence we offer, still carries the grace of God. We are not the ones who make that grace take root—God is.

Our task is to sow the seed, to be faithful, to keep showing up, even when the results are unseen.

### **Taking Care of Ourselves**

We are living and ministering in a time of increasing pressure, and I know that many of you feel the weight of it. The demands on your time and energy seem endless.

Parishes may be declining in the numbers who practice, but the workload does not shrink. We serve alongside fewer priests, an aging presbyterate, and ever-increasing responsibilities. The burden can feel heavy.

We need to share that burden more and more with parishioners as we encourage and nurture a greater sense of co-responsibility in mission in our parishes and pastoral areas. That surely is what lies at the heart of Pope Francis' dream of a Church which is truly synodal.

My brothers, it is easy to burn out, to get caught up in the constant rush of ministry, to forget that we priests, too, are human.

We are called to give, to serve, to pour ourselves out for others - but we cannot give what we do not have. We must make time to care for ourselves - spiritually, emotionally, physically.

We must pray. We must also rest, take time for renewal, support one another, and allow ourselves space to breathe.

In a time when many of us feel stretched thin, it is more important than ever that we do not neglect our own relationship with Christ.

We cannot give what we have not first received. In caring for ourselves, we strengthen our ability to serve others. So, I encourage you to lean on each other and to reach out to friends and colleagues when you need help. Take time for personal reflection and prayer.

Ministry is a marathon, not a sprint. The Church needs you healthy, strong, and focused – be you 50, 60, 70, 80 and more - even as the road grows difficult.

### **Renewing Our Mission**

So this evening, as we stand together as a presbyterate, accompanied by great numbers of our parishioners and their prayers and good wishes, let's ask for the grace to embrace our calling anew.

Let's pray for the courage to step forward, not backward. Let's support one another in the work that is ours to do—not as isolated individuals, but as brothers in the Ossory presbyterate.

Ireland is changing. Ossory is changing. The Church is changing. But Christ is the same, yesterday, today, and forever. And He has entrusted His mission to us.

Let's take up that mission anew with open hearts, clear voices, and renewed conviction.

+ Niall Coll

Bishop of Ossory

By walking together and discerning the Holy Spirit on this synodal pathway we hope to discover, "What does God want from the Church in Ireland today?"

# Universal Synod on Synodality

*Gemma Mulligan*

With the conclusion of the second and final session of the Universal Synod on Synodality in October 2024 and the publication of the final document and its implementation, the Catholic Church in Ireland is refocusing on the Irish Synodal Pathway. The priorities for the year ahead involve reflecting further in Spring and Autumn gatherings on the themes that have emerged from listening sessions and synodal gatherings. These three years of gatherings resulted in 17 key themes emerging. It is envisaged that refining and prioritising these existing themes will happen in 2025. "The journey during 2025 will be approached through the stance of "Hope," which reflects the spirit of the Jubilee Year in the Universal Church". During Spring 2025, parishes and dioceses are gathering to review the themes that emerged from listening gatherings in Ireland over the past three years. These gatherings will hopefully result in identifying priorities for action to be considered at future Synodal Assemblies in October 2025 and future gatherings into 2026 concluding with the National Synodal Assembly on 17th October, 2026. The 17 themes emerged out of three contexts. The local consultation at diocesan level, "Our Synodal Journey, First Steps", The National Synthesis for the Universal Synod and The Final Universal Synod Document. The themes are:

Baptism, Catechesis, Education, Faith Formation, Youth, Liturgy, Women, Clergy, Lay Ministry, Co-responsibility, Abuse, Sexuality and LGBTQ+ Issues, Culture, Belonging, Family, Ecumenism, Covid-19.

The gatherings that are taking place during these days will lead towards October where representatives from across the Church will pray and reflect on the themes and seek to discern ways in how they can be integrated into Church structures and practices. The October 2025 gathering will be a key moment in the Irish Synodal Pathway as it will bring together three years of listening and reflecting. It will provide an opportunity to take meaningful steps towards renewal. By walking together and discerning the Holy Spirit on this synodal pathway we hope to discover, "What does God want from the Church in Ireland today?"

In Ossory Diocese we will gather on Tuesday, 29th April 2025 for our spring session and the feedback from this meeting will be returned to the National Synod Team. If you have been involved in the Synodal Journey in Ossory over the past three years we would like to invite you to be part of this gathering. Please contact [afd@ossory.ie](mailto:afd@ossory.ie) to reserve a place. For more information see at [www.ossory.ie](http://www.ossory.ie) and [www.synod.ie](http://www.synod.ie)

Let the Nissan moon give light to the feasts that celebrates  
God's saving action among us.



## The dating of Easter

*Liam Bergin*

In 2025 Orthodox and Catholic Churches celebrate Easter on the same date, Sunday April 20. This coincidence last occurred in 2017 and will next happen in 2028. Both Churches follow the same guiding principle to calculate the date that was established at the Council of Nicaea in 325 AD. It decreed that Easter be observed on "the first Sunday, after the first full moon, after the Spring equinox." This dating was influenced by Jewish Feast of Passover which begins on the fifteenth day of the month of Nissan. Since Nissan is the first month of the Hebrew year and the calendar is lunar, Passover falls on the night of the first full moon after the Spring equinox. This year Passover began on Saturday, April 12.

The Spring equinox – equal hours of day and night – falls on March 20 or 21,

depending on leap years. So, if the Spring equinox falls on Friday March 20, followed by a full moon on Saturday March 21, the earliest possible date for Easter is on Sunday March 22. This last happened in 1818 and will occur again in 2285. The latest date for Easter is Sunday April 25. This last happened in 1943 and will occur again in 2048. So, if both Churches follow the same basic rule, why the difference?

The Orthodox Church calculates the date based on the Julian Calendar, proposed by Julius Caesar in 44 BC, while the Catholic Church computes the date based on the Gregorian Calendar, reformed by Pope Gregory XIII in 1572. How did this come about?

By 1800 BC the Babylonians had already deciphered the lunar cycle where the moon orbits the earth in 29.5 days and

the solar cycle as the earth orbits the sun in 365.2425 days. Their calendar had a 30-day month with a 12-months year, adding up to a 360-day year. A thirteenth month was added periodically to keep the lunar calendar synchronized with the solar year. This was implemented by duplicating the twelfth month, Adar, creating Adar II. (Some traditions associate this extra month with bad luck as it was reportedly marked by the sacrifice of every firstborn person and animal born during that period, giving rise to understandable fear of the number 13 or triskaidekaphobia.) The Babylonians also had a seven-day week with the seventh day considered to be holy. Contemporary biblical scholarship dates the composition Genesis 1 with its account of creation in 7 days to the period of Babylonian exile around in the sixth century BC.

To eliminate the thirteenth month and to account for the solar year at 365.2425 days, Julius Caesar promulgated a revised calendar with three years of 365 days and a leap year of 366, falling every fourth year. July, the seventh month of the new calendar he named after himself, a precedent repeated by his successor Caesar Augustus who named the eighth month in his own honor. While this calendar was a significant improvement, it was still 11 minutes off each year, which added up to an extra day every 129 years, and a significant 10-day discrepancy in 1,500 years.

In 1582, the Spring equinox had fallen on March 11. To correct this anomaly, Pope Gregory XIII proposed that 10 full days be skipped so Thursday October 4 was followed by Friday October 15, 1582. This correction would bring the spring equinox back to its proper date, in keeping with the decree of the Council of Nicaea.

This reform was accepted immediately by Catholic countries and their overseas colonies while many Protestant countries and their possessions were reluctant to implement this papal reform. Boston, as London, made the correction 170 years later when it was necessary to correct by 11 days so that Wednesday September

2 was followed by Thursday September 14, 1752. Over the centuries Orthodox countries gradually moved to the Gregorian calendar for civic purposes (Greece was the last European country to adopt the reforms in 1923) but continued to compute religious festivals according to the older Julian way.

The principal reform of the Gregorian calendar is how it handles leap years. The Julian calendar adds a leap year every four years, leading to an average year length of 365.25 days. The Gregorian calendar tweaks the calculation by removing three leap years every 400 years, making the average year length 365.2425 days. This difference results in a current difference of 13 days between the two calendars. That is why Orthodox Churches celebrate Christmas on January 6 based on the Julian calendar, twelve days after the Gregorian calculation of December 25.

In an appendix to Sacrosanctum Concilium, its Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy (1963), Vatican II noted that it "would not object if the feast of Easter were assigned to a particular Sunday of the Gregorian Calendar, provided that those whom it may concern, especially the brethren who are not in communion with the Apostolic See, give their assent."

A common date is to be recommended as it would have significant ecumenical advantages permitting all Christian Churches, Catholic, Orthodox and Protestant to celebrate the Paschal Mystery at the same time. However, an "assigned date" is less attractive. Passover and Easter celebrate the gratuitous saving actions of God. Their annual celebration directed by the lunar cycle reminds us that both are divine gift to be graciously received beyond human power and control. As we mark the 1,700th anniversary of the Council of Nicaea this year, let us work towards an agreed lunar-given date not a fixed date, like the third Sunday of April as has been suggested. Let the Nissan moon give light to the feasts that celebrates God's saving action among us.

...his profound ability to listen, his dynamic personality, and his keen awareness of the socio-political and pastoral context of the Church in Ethiopia.

## Loving Memory of the Visit in the Eparchy of Adigrat of His Grace Archbishop Thomas A. White, former Apostolic Nuncio to Ethiopia 1983-1989

**+ Abune Tesfaselassie Medhin**  
***Bishop of Adigrat Eparchy, Tigray – Ethiopia***

Among the many esteemed leaders of the Church, His Grace Archbishop Thomas White is remembered with deep affection and reverence, especially by those who encountered his humble, wise, and pastoral spirit during his mission years as Apostolic Nuncio to Ethiopia. More than a diplomatic envoy of the Holy See, Archbishop White embodied the heart of a true shepherd who cared deeply for the people and the mission of the Church in Ethiopia.

His visit in the Eparchy of Adigrat stands out as one of the memorable moments in the life of the local Church. It was a visit marked not by grandeur or protocol, but by sincerity, warmth, and deep pastoral care. From the moment he

arrived, his presence was felt not just as a high-ranking Church official, but as a fatherly figure whose heart was open to everyone—from the Bishop and clergy to the religious, seminarians, and lay faithful.

Among the most cherished qualities of Archbishop White were his profound ability to listen, his dynamic personality, and his keen awareness of the socio-political and pastoral context of the Church in Ethiopia. He engaged people with genuine interest, always giving his full attention whether in official meetings or informal encounters. His humility allowed others to feel at ease in his presence, while his insight made him a source of wisdom and encouragement to all.

A man of deep prayer, Archbishop White constantly emphasized the importance of spirituality in sustaining the Church's mission. He urged priests, religious, and laypeople alike to seek moments of stillness and intimacy with God.

"In the quiet of the heart, God speaks most profoundly," he often said. This message was particularly comforting for those serving in difficult and remote missions, and it remains a lasting inspiration.

One of the most powerful moments of his visit to Adigrat was the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. Though from a Roman Rite background, Archbishop White embraced the Ge'ez Rite with reverence and appreciation. His homily focused on the unity of the Church in diversity, reminding all present that the universal Church, though rich in different expressions, is one Body in Christ. His words resonated with a love for the Church's traditions and a sincere desire for communion.

At the diocesan Major Seminary, Archbishop White spent time with the seminarians, encouraging them in their vocations. He spoke openly about the trials and joys of priestly life, always pointing them to Christ as their strength.

The seminarians were moved by his personal attention and the paternal care he showed. Likewise, he met with the religious congregations working in the Eparchy, thanking them for their invaluable services in education, healthcare, and evangelization.

Archbishop White's compassion was especially visible in his concern for the suffering. At the time of his visit, the region faced significant challenges, including food insecurity and displacement. Rather than limiting his engagement to ceremonial duties, he visited local communities affected by hardship.

He met mothers and children, blessed the sick, and assured them of the Holy Father's prayers and solidarity. His presence

among the poor was not symbolic—it was heartfelt and deeply human.

The climax of his visit came during his final address in the courtyard of the cathedral, where thousands had gathered. With characteristic gentleness and conviction, he expressed admiration for the faith of the people of Adigrat and encouraged them to remain strong in their witness to Christ.

Archbishop Thomas White's legacy from the visits in Adigrat was pastoral more than diplomatic. He brought encouragement, unity, and a renewed sense of belonging to the wider Church. His visit was an occasion of grace and inspiration. His humility, faith, and loving presence remain deeply imprinted in the hearts of those who met him.

He is remembered as a remarkable Church personality who walked with the people of God in Ethiopia with the love of Christ. Our local Church, particularly the Catholic Eparchy of Adigrat, remain truly grateful to the Irish Church, whose Missionary daughters and sons have lovingly served in our country.

Fr Keving O'Mahoney M.Afr., author of many books, who was my formator in Philosophy and Theology years in the Major Seminary of Adigrat, wherein I also joined in later years as staff member for many years, and after my episcopal consecration as Bishop's secretary for some years.

After over 40 years of his memorable priestly missionary service in this Eparchy he remains buried here in Adigrat as per his living will to which we are grateful.

May they rest in peace whom they have faithfully loved and served.



# Jubilee Year of Hope

## Diocese of Ossory

29th December 2024  
5.30 p.m.

**Opening Celebration of the *Jubilee Year of Hope* in the Diocese of Ossory.**  
**Theme: *Pilgrims of Hope*.**

**'Christ Jesus Our Hope' (1 Timothy 1:1).**

Most Rev. Niall Coll will celebrate Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

29th January 2025  
1.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope for Religious: Theme: Pilgrims and Sowers of Hope.***  
**'He called those whom he desired and they came to him' (Mark 3,13).**

Bishop Niall will celebrate Mass in St Fiacre's Church, Loughboy, Kilkenny.

17th March 2025  
1.30 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope St Patrick's Day Parade: Theme: Pilgrims of Hope.***  
**'The Lord sent me to bring Good News to the Poor' (Luke: 4:18).**

18th April 2025  
7.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope Annual Taizé Good Friday Walk.***  
**Theme: *The Cross, A Sign of Hope*.**

**'Take up your Cross and follow Me' (Matthew 16:24).**

St John's Church to Capuchin Friary, Kilkenny.

6th May 2025  
7.30 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope: Pilgrimage for Mass to Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice Centre, Westcourt, Callan, Co. Kilkenny.***

**Theme: *Edmund Rice, A Man of Hope*.**

**"Cast all your cares into the arms of Divine Providence"**  
**(Blessed Edmund Ignatius Rice).**

We gather as a Diocese with Bishop Niall who will lead us in the celebration of Mass as we journey together as Pilgrims of Hope.

19th – 24th May 2025

***Jubilee Year of Hope Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes.***

**Theme: *Pilgrims of Hope for the Sick*.**

**'He laid His hands on every one of them and healed them' (Luke 4:40).**

30th May/1st June 2025

***Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage to Lough Derg led by Young Adults.***

**Theme: *Finding Our Way in the Wilderness*.**

**'Led by the Spirit into the wilderness' (Matthew: 4:1).**

5th June 2025  
2.00 p.m.- 6.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrims of Priesthood.***

**Theme: 'Faithful witnesses of grace and peace' (Apocalypse 1:5).**

A Gathering for priests of our Diocese to both pray and reflect together in thanksgiving for the gift of Priesthood.

St Patrick's Pastoral Centre, Loughboy, Kilkenny.

### PILGRIMAGES

Bishop Niall has designated each church in the Diocese of Ossory as a place of personal pilgrimage as we embrace this *Jubilee Year of Hope*. In addition, Bishop Niall suggests the following

Seir Kieran - St Mary's Cathedral - Dominick's

Pope Francis has underlined that these Pilgrimages during the *Jubilee Year*

# Year of Hope 2025

## - Pilgrims of Hope



22nd June 2025  
3.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope Annual Corpus Christi Procession.***

***'I am the Bread of Life' (John 6:51).***

Station 1: Capuchin Friary, Kilkenny.

Station 2: Statue of Our Lady, James's Green, Kilkenny.

Station 3: Dominican Black Abbey: 800 years of presence in Kilkenny.

Station 4: St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny, concluding with Benediction.

Bishop Niall will lead us in our Corpus Christi Procession.

15th August 2025  
3.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope Pilgrimage to Ladywell, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny.***

***Theme: Mary, Mother of Hope.***

***'Happy those who hear the Word of God and Keep it' (Luke: 11:28).***

Bishop Niall will celebrate Mass to commence the Ladywell Season to include the Annual Novena to Our Lady in this Holy Year of Hope.

8th – 15th October 2025

***Jubilee Year of Hope Diocesan Pilgrimage to Fatima.***

***Theme: Pilgrims of Hope for all People.***

***'Sing a new song unto the Lord' (Psalm 97:1).***

25th October 2025  
10.00 a.m.- 2.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope in a Missionary and Multicultural Church.***

***'Go out to the whole world' (Matthew: 28: 1-20).***

St Patrick's Pastoral Centre, Loughboy, Kilkenny.

Bishop Niall will lead us in the celebration of Mass to acknowledge and welcome all who have made Ossory their home and who live and worship among us.

6th November 2025  
7.30 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope Mass for deceased Bishops, Priests and Religious of the Diocese of Ossory.***

***'The life and death of each of us has its influence on others' (Romans 14:7).***

Bishop Niall will celebrate Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

6th December 2025  
10.00 a.m. – 2.00 p.m.

***Jubilee Year of Hope Advent Reflection Day Theme: From Brokenness to Hope.***

***'The time is coming you must wake up now' (Romans 13:11).***

St Patrick's Pastoral Centre, Loughboy, Kilkenny.

6th January 2026  
5.30 p.m.

***Closing Celebration of the Jubilee Year of Hope in the Diocese of Ossory:***

***Theme: Anchored in Hope.***

***'Hope in the Lord' (Psalm: 27:14).***

Bishop Niall will celebrate Mass in St Mary's Cathedral, Kilkenny.

### GO TO THE HOLY SITES

During this Holy Year and, as Pilgrims of Hope, encourages each of us to visit our local church and Holy Sites in the Diocese of Ossory as places of personal pilgrimage for this Holy Year.

Dominican Black Abbey - Kilmery High Cross

Pilgrims of Hope provide us with the opportunity to gain in plenary indulgences.

It is encouraging that our Church is contributing a Christian perspective to the ongoing debate regarding artificial intelligence.

# Ancient and New Intelligence

*Albert McDonnell*



CHURCH MATTERS

Artificial intelligence (AI) is the fruit of a great leap forward in technology that has occurred in recent decades. Some see it as the most significant scientific development since the discovery of electricity. We already see lots of examples of AI in daily life. If you drive a new car there are many safety features such as emergency breaking and lane-keeping which are possible due to artificial intelligence. These systems react faster than humans and thereby prevent accidents.

What is artificial intelligence? 'Artificial' tells us that it is mechanical and therefore

not human. But it resembles human intelligence in that it allows computerised machines to do many things that previously only humans could do. 'Intelligence' refers to the vast amount of information that AI collects and manages. Pope Francis has described AI as a new and significant phase in humanity's engagement with technology.

This new technology will impact on almost every area of our lives. AI brings numerous benefits. Due to the vast amount of information that it will store and the speed with which it will process it, diagnosis of illness will be quicker and

more accurate. Weather forecasting will become more reliable and faster. AI will search video recordings for a police suspect in a fraction of the time that it currently takes manually. Many of the repetitive, mundane tasks and jobs that exist today will be taken over by AI.

Paul Tighe is an Irish bishop who works in the Vatican. He was the lead author of a document on AI approved by Pope Francis that was published recently. It is a valuable contribution to the current debate on AI. The document acknowledges and praises the practical benefits of artificial intelligence but also reminds us that progress comes at a price. AI and the hardware required to support it consumes vast amounts of energy and water. It may operate in the cloud but as the Vatican document points out the cloud is not an 'ethereal domain separate from the physical world .... It relies on physical machines, cables and energy.' The proliferation of data centres and their impact on the environment is part of the price we pay for the benefits of AI.

Artificial intelligence can never replace human genius and brilliance. It brings extraordinary benefits in areas that rely on data and computing. However, machines are incapable of computing the defining features of humanity. No computer can integrate love, hope, delight, spirituality, poetry, truth, dignity, music, forgiveness, beauty, lived experience, authentic human relationships, moral discernment, ethics and many other non-quantifiable human realities into its algorithms and operation. AI, the Vatican document reminds us, is not an artificial form of human intelligence but a product of human intelligence.

Like every other product of human creativity, artificial intelligence can be used in a positive or negative way. It could further increase inequality in our world. Control of this new and extremely powerful technology could be confined to a few countries or even companies or

individuals thereby disempowering the rest of the world. AI could accelerate the trend towards human relationships being conducted on a virtual level which will never fully satisfy the human heart. While it could make education more readily available across the globe, the lack of real human contact between teacher and student could undermine the role of teacher as mentor.

The document from the Holy See also draws attention to the risk of AI manipulating content and generating false information. 'Deepfake' images of celebrities are increasingly commonplace and are often difficult to distinguish from reality. This in turn could be used to manipulate markets and elections and thereby frustrate the democratic will of the people. The extraordinary ability of AI to store and analyse data has major implications for our privacy. So much of what we do today involves the generation of data. Our 'phones literally record every step we take. Therefore, the people who have access to this data know almost every detail of our lives.

On an even more serious level, the Holy See document discusses the 'weaponisation of artificial intelligence'. Lethal Autonomous Weapon Systems are capable of identifying and striking targets without direct human intervention. The potential for global disaster is terrifying.

It is encouraging that our Church is contributing a Christian perspective to the ongoing debate regarding artificial intelligence. Human dignity can never be reduced to the collection and management of data. Advances in technology can bring astonishing, positive innovations especially in healthcare. However, it is only by rediscovering the wisdom of the heart that we can integrate this wonderful new technology into decisions and actions that cherish all humanity. Technological progress is part of God's plan for humanity, but we need the grace of the Holy Spirit to utilise it for the good of all people.



I pray that through the many initiatives of this Jubilee Year, our world can once again become a place of genuine hope, peace, and understanding.

# From Kilkenny City to Vatican City

## A Soldier-Priest's Journey to Rome for the Jubilee of the Armed Forces

David Murphy

For many, Rome is a city of history, art and faith. For me, it represents a full circle, a returning to roots both personal and spiritual. My recent trip to Rome for the Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police, and Security Personnel as a deeply meaningful experience, one that connected my early days as a soldier in Kilkenny Barracks with my present ministry as a Defence Forces Chaplain.

My connection with faith and service began decades ago. I vividly remember the profound impact of Saint Pope John Paul II's visit to Ireland in 1979. As a young soldier stationed in Kilkenny, I had the distinct honour of representing the youth of the Diocese of Ossory at the Papal Youth Mass in Ballybrit Racecourse. Presenting the Pope with an oak sapling, a symbol of growth and resilience, remains a cherished memory. After six years of service in the Defence Forces in Kilkenny, I felt a calling to a different kind of service, leading me to enter Saint Peter's Seminary in Wexford. Ordained in 1991 for ministry in the Diocese of Ferns, my path eventually led me back to

where it all began. In 2016, I rejoined the Defence Forces, this time as a Chaplain, a role I find incredibly fulfilling, especially being back in Kilkenny Barracks, where my army career began.

This recent Jubilee trip wasn't my first encounter with the Eternal City. Back in 1981, shortly after the attempt on Pope John Paul II's life, I participated in a pilgrimage called "The Return Visit," organised for young Irish people to express gratitude for his visit to Ireland. That trip, filled with prayer and shared faith, left an indelible mark. I remember the warmth of the Pope's words, "Young people of Ireland, I love you," a message that resonated deeply with us.

This year's journey, however, was different. Seven of us Irish Defence Force Chaplains had the privilege to concelebrate Mass with Pope Francis during the Jubilee of the Armed Forces, Police and Security Personnel. It was an immensely powerful experience to stand alongside fellow chaplains from armies around the world, united in prayer and service.



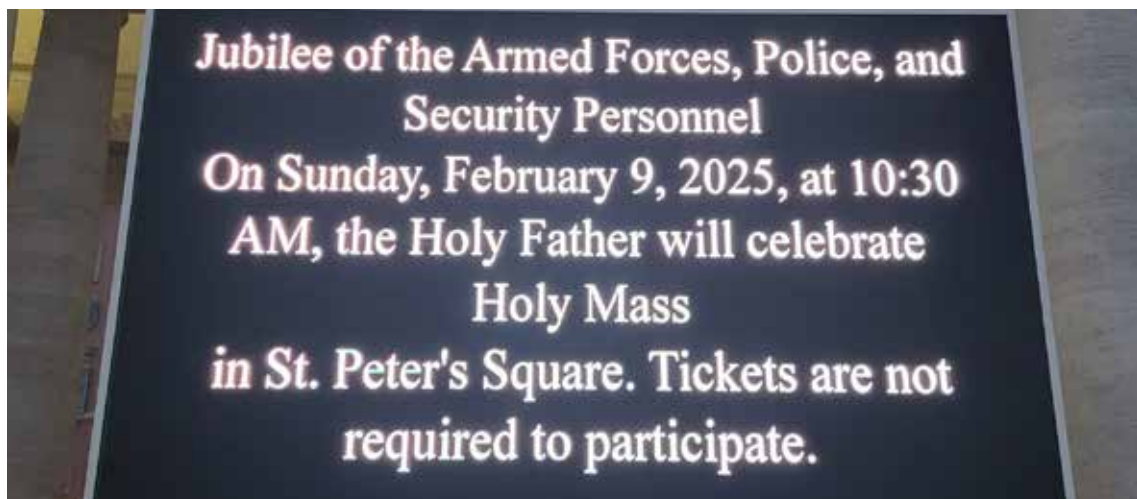


Beyond the formal events, we had the opportunity to explore the breathtaking city of Rome, immersing ourselves in its history and beauty. We also had the pleasure of meeting Ms Frances Collins, the Irish Ambassador to the Holy See, at her residence in Rome. Adding to the unique experience, all the Irish Chaplains stayed at Domus Sanctae Marthae, the Vatican hotel, where Pope Francis resides, creating a sense of proximity to the heart of the Catholic Church. The entire trip was marked by prayer, reflection, and a profound sense of unity.

However, the trip concluded with a stark reminder of fragility. On the very day we were departing, 14th February, news broke that Pope Francis had been

admitted to the Gemelli Polyclinic in Rome. My prayers continue to be with him for a swift and full recovery.

This trip to Rome was undoubtedly a highlight of the Jubilee Year of Hope for me. I pray that through the many initiatives of this Jubilee Year, our world can once again become a place of genuine hope, peace, and understanding. From my days as a young soldier in Kilkenny Barracks to serving as a Chaplain and meeting with Pope Francis in Rome, my journey has been one of faith, service, and a deep belief in the power of hope. And as I return to my ministry in the Defence Forces, I carry with me the renewed inspiration and strength gained from this extraordinary experience.



# Give me a crash course in ... Violence and Hate Crime



MORALITY MATTERS

Michael Shortall

As always, a lot happens between the editions of the *Ossory Times*.

**I've been hearing a lot of the "hate crime" on the news lately. What exactly is it?**

Good question! Simply put, hate crime happens when someone is harmed not just because of what they've done, but because of who they are. Their gender, race, religion, sexuality, disability, or background. It's not just an attack on a person. It sends a frightening message to everyone else like them: you're not safe.

**That's awful. But haven't we always had laws against violence?**

We have the ordinary laws cover crimes like assault or harassment in general. But hate crimes recognise something deeper. When someone is targeted because

of their identity, it's not just personal – it poisons the whole community. And up until recently, Ireland didn't have any specific hate crime laws.

**Really? No laws at all?**

Surprisingly, no. Ireland had a very old law from 1989 about "incitement to hatred," but it barely worked in practice. It didn't even mention things like gender or disability. And it was written long before anyone imagined social media. So campaigners and human rights groups had been calling for proper hate crime legislation for years.

**So has anything changed now?**

Yes! Big news here. At the end of 2024, Ireland passed the Criminal Justice (Hate Offences) Act. For the first time, if

someone commits a crime like assault or harassment and it's proven they were motivated by hatred – because of the person's race, religion, gender, sexuality, or disability, for example – it becomes an aggravated offence. That means tougher sentences and a formal recognition of hate motivation in court records.

### **That sounds like a real step forward.**

It is. Victims' groups say it finally acknowledges the trauma that hate crimes cause, not just to individuals but to whole communities. But it wasn't an easy process getting there.

### **Why? I'd have thought everyone would support it.**

Initially, it did have broad support. But the original bill sparked a lot of controversy. Some people worried that the definitions were too vague and that people might be punished just for expressing opinions that others found offensive. It was a real concern. Some even feared it could lead to censorship.

### **So what happened in the end?**

The government decided to drop the hate speech part of the bill to save the rest of it. Now, the law only covers hate crimes – acts like violence or harassment with a hateful motive. Any changes to hate speech laws have been postponed for future discussion.

### **And what does the Church say about all this?**

The Church is very clear: all violence is wrong, but violence rooted in hatred for who someone is? That's especially destructive. Catholic Social Teaching insists on the dignity of every person, with no exceptions. "Every form of social or cultural discrimination in fundamental personal rights... must be curbed and eradicated as incompatible with God's design" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, para. 1935).

### **So racism, misogyny, attacks on minorities—they're not just crimes, they're sins?**

Exactly. Pope Francis is blunt about this. On the high rates of crimes against women, he said "Violence against women cannot be treated as 'normal,' maintaining a culture of machismo ..." (24th January, 2018) Later on the death of George Floyd in the US, he said: "We cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life." (June 3, 2020)

### **Does the Church do more than just talk?**

It must. Our words need to be backed by action: creating safe spaces in our parishes, supporting victims, educating people – especially young people – about respect and dignity.

### **So, how do we respond as Christians?**

I would suggest four things, really.

- Clarity: We name the problem. No excuses.
- Compassion: We listen to victims and help them heal.
- Courage: We speak up, even when it's uncomfortable.
- Conviction: We live out the Gospel. Think of the Good Samaritan – it wasn't just roadside assistance; it was a radical act of neighbourly love.

### **That's a lot to take in. But it makes sense.**

And there's one more thing to remember, especially at Easter. At the heart of Easter is, in a way, a hate crime. Jesus was crucified not simply because of what he had done, but because of who he was and claimed to be. Yet the story doesn't end in violence. Easter is God's answer to hatred: the resurrection is an act of salvation for all, and an act of solidarity with anyone who has ever suffered violence or exclusion. Easter declares, once and for all, that hatred never has the final word.

### **That's a powerful way to see it.**

It is. Easter reminds us that even in the face of hatred, life and love will triumph. Happy Easter to all the readers of the *Ossory Times*.

Danesfort's old church records date back to 1401. The castle or fort of Danesfort was built by James the Third, Earl of Ormond between 1392 and 1405.

# Saint Michael's Church Baptismal Font

## Danesfort, Co. Kilkenny

*Donal Sheridan*

The Baptismal font was repositioned in the church and blessed by the Most Reverend Bishop Niall Coll, Bishop of Ossary, on Sunday, 12 January 2025.

Danesfort Church was built in 1812. It replaced the old church of Saint Michael the Archangel, which stood in the townland of Ballyda. The ruin of that church can be seen down the road from Danesfort crossroads in the Ennisnag direction.

The baptismal font and the holy water font at the side door entrance are believed to come from the old church. The front and the pedestal had a lot of damage done to them, which may date back to the Reformation. Danesfort's old church records date back to 1401. The castle or fort of Danesfort was built by James the Third, Earl of Ormond between 1392 and 1405. Both buildings were constructed near each other. The present holy water font that is now positioned at the side door has a strong resemblance to the baptismal font. It was discovered in the church wall approximately 20 years ago when the doorway was reopened.

The baptismal font is limestone, and when the church was built, it was positioned just inside the main door under the stairs, as this was customary at that time. Vatican 2 changed a lot, such as removing altar rails, repositioning the altar, priest to face the congregation, Latin Mass to English. From the 1970s, children were baptised near the altar, so the old font was abandoned. Now, it is getting its place of honor by the Very-Reverend Mark Condon, PP of Danesfort. It is now positioned in the right transept. The font was hewn out of a very fine block of Kilkenny limestone. It was chisel cut and unpolished in two components. The base sits on a pedestal. The overall height is 102cm. The pedestal is 76 cm high by 35 cm wide, and the depth is 36 cm. The pedestal's corners change from square to bevelled chamfer and then rounded to the floor. The font is rectangular in shape, 75 cm by 57 cm by 27 cm deep. The basin is oval, 60cm by 41cm, set in two components. The larger basin is 35 cm by 41 cm by 17cm deep (which is to hold the holy water). The smaller basin is 20 cm by 38 cm by 13 cm deep. The baptism takes place over the



smaller basin. This has a drainer in it to the consecrated ground under the church floor. The holy water from the larger base is used for the baptism.

The font had some repair work done on it years ago, such as the bottom right-hand corner and the top left. There are also two small wells that are filled with small pieces of limestone. These small openings were most likely used to place the vessels called stocks, which held the holy oil of catechumens and the sacred chrism oil.

From 1942, Danesfort, along with other parishes, didn't have many baptisms taking place. St Luke's, the county hospital, was built in 1942, and they started to baptise children that were born there, this continued until the 1970s when baptisms went back to their parishes. The

baptismal font that was used in St Luke's was a black marble polished limestone in the shape of a barrel with brass bands around it. The font was transferred to Saint Mary's Cathedral and placed near the altar on the right-hand side. It was moved again during the latest renovations to the cathedral, and it's now placed back against the wall on the left transept.

#### Sources:

The Rev. William Canon Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, 1905.

Rev. James B. Leslie, *Church of Ireland, Ossory, Clergy & Parishes*, 1933.

Danesfort Parish Records.

We are it seems messengers of hope in real and tangible ways in the world today. Our church and the many people it brings together is making a difference.

# Preparation for the Jubilee of Hope

*Dermot Ryan*



Each year the Ossory Adult Faith Development Group offer to our parishes and Pastoral Areas various timely, and hopefully topical, faith based reflections. These are intended to help us all to depend our understanding of the faith and in so doing come closer to God. It is a lofty aspiration but surely one worthy of pursuit.

This Lent, given the year that is in it, the Group continue to offer moments of preparation for the Jubilee of Hope. Over these past weeks two key reflections were offered: one with Ms Julianne Moran, General Secretary of the Synodal Pathway in Ireland, and Ms Caoimhe de Barra, CEO of Trócaire. Both evenings were intended to invite us to reflect on the ways hope is found in our world today by a people of faith.

In leading a packed Chapter House Julianne Moran wove for us the tapestry that is the journey so far for the Irish, and universal, synodal pathways. Following the theme "For a Synodal Church: Communion, Participation, Mission" she

outlined the many local, then national, and finally universal meetings which strove to bring the voice of all in our church together. She outlined how successes, and failures, had been part of the journey both here in Ireland and elsewhere in the world but how, thanks to patience with sometimes difficult conversations and thanks to trusting in the Spirit that the fruit of that time spent together has started to emerge. She noted that this synodal journey is not intended as one with a particular destination but rather how it is that Pope Francis is calling us to the journey itself. Our Church is a Synodal Church one in which we must live with all our varying hopes and aspirations. She reflected on how even in the document which emerged from the synodal gathering in Rome the voice of the Irish Church, and those many meetings here, was so evident.

Then in the second gathering with Caoimhe de Barra she led us in a reflection on the joys and difficulties of the work of so many people with Trócaire throughout the world - work that brings



hope to places of real darkness. She reflected on their work in Malawi bringing women to the fore, this work in Myanmar - shockingly we had this conversation just one week before the earthquake that was to bring such pain and destruction to a place already forgotten by the successes of our world. She spoke too of the pain of witnessing child soldiers returned to their families in South Sudan knowing the burdens that these young children now carry. Inspiringly, her reflection of these incredibly dark places was one of real hope and joy. It was evident to see her deep conviction of

how it was that this work was making a difference - how it was that small gestures bring hope and new opportunities to a people that so evidently need it. How it is that the generosity of the Irish people, which makes this work possible, is so inspiring and encouraging.

We are it seems messengers of hope in real and tangible ways in the world today. Our church and the many people it brings together is making a difference. It is shining a light of hope in such many and varied ways. *Spes non Confundit* - Hope Does Not Disappoint.



# Vocations in Ossory

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

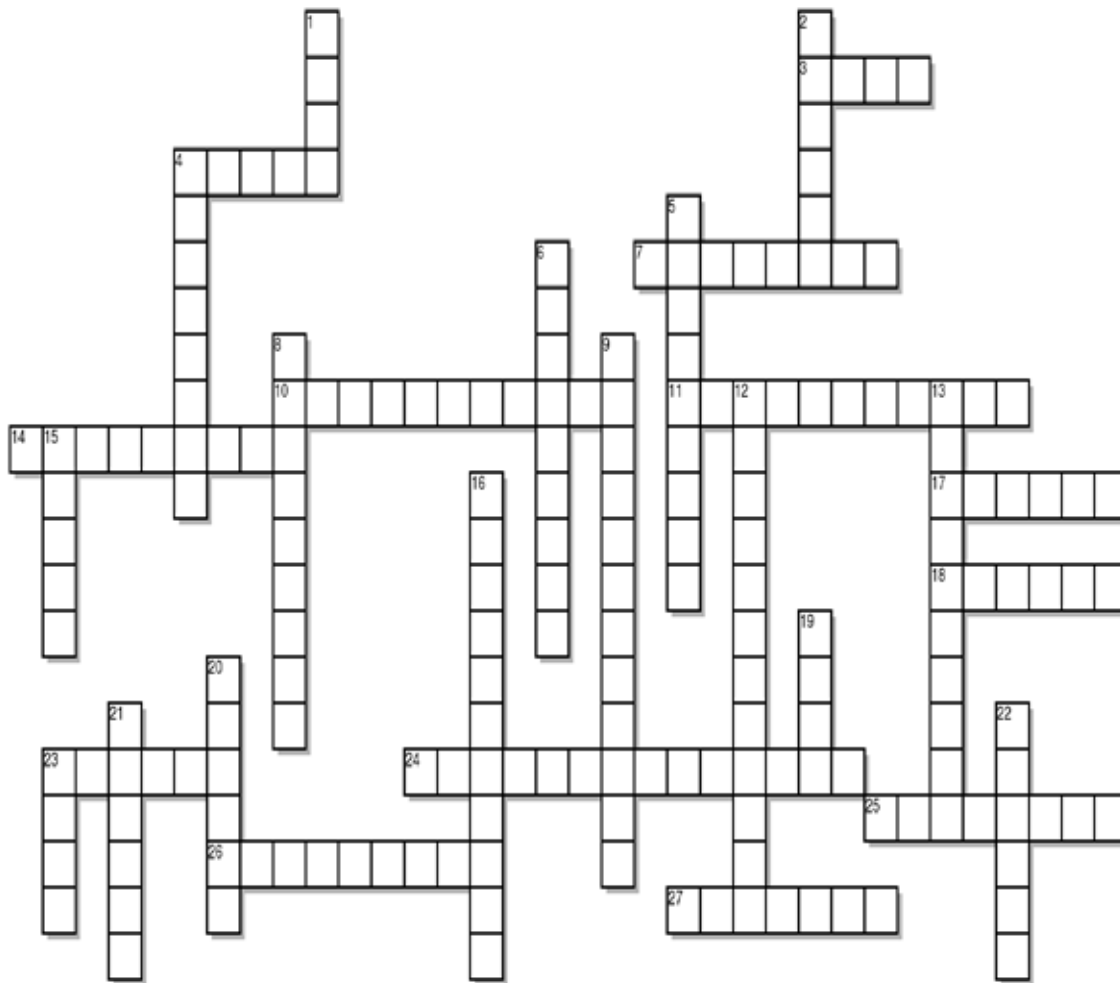
How do I know what life path  
I should take?

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



Contact  
**FR MARK CONDON**  
**VOCATIONS DIRECTOR**  
[vocations@ossory.ie](mailto:vocations@ossory.ie)

# CROSSWORD



## ACROSS

- 3 First shepherd
- 4 What Judas was in charge of
- 7 Return of Our Lord
- 10 Military
- 11 The Word made flesh
- 14 Palm Sunday destination
- 17 Mount to which Abraham took Isaac
- 18 Mass of oils
- 23 Ancient fortress in Israel
- 24 Sacrament
- 25 Making the sign of the Cross
- 26 The great prayer of thanksgiving
- 27 This journey together

## DOWN

- 1 Third Gospel
- 2 Jesus healed his daughter
- 4 These areas are our future together
- 5 These waters wash clean
- 6 Greek rite
- 8 of Saints
- 9 Distinct religious body within Christianity
- 12 Bishop Niall is celebrating this Sacrament in these weeks
- 13 Heart of Mary
- 15 Biblical measure
- 16 This young man soon to be a saint
- 19 Lectern
- 20 and fishes
- 21 Diocese
- 22 King of Judah - successor of Amon
- 23 Sometimes we abstain from this - think Friday

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 July 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**

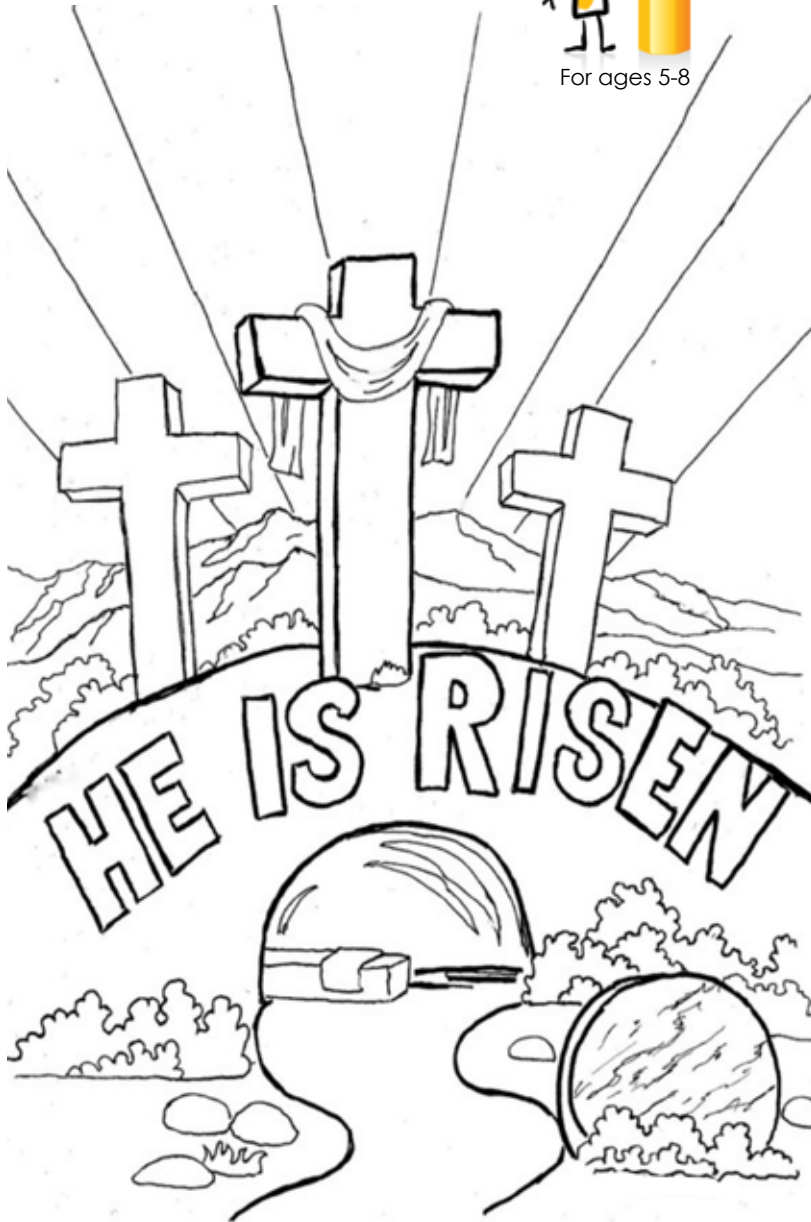
*Congrats to the winners  
from the Ossory Times  
Issue 35 competitions:*

**Adult Crossword:**  
Margaret Power

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

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

# Colouring Competition



# Wordsearch Competition



## - WORDSEARCH -

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

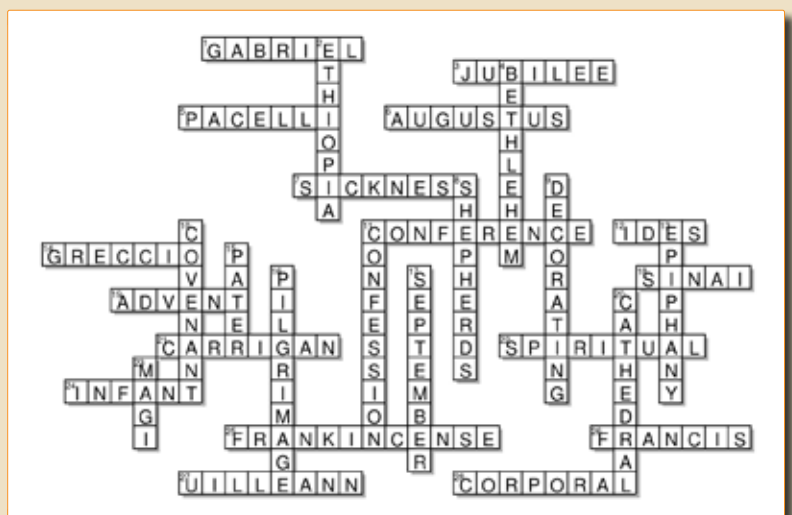
## WORD LIST

|            |             |              |          |
|------------|-------------|--------------|----------|
| APOSTLES   | GLORY       | PEACE        | SHEEP    |
| BAPTISM    | GOODNESS    | PRAYER       | SHEPHERD |
| DISCIPLE   | HOLY SPIRIT | RESURRECTION | SPIRIT   |
| FELLOWSHIP | KINGDOM     | SAVIOR       | TEMPLE   |
| GIFT       | MIRACLE     | SCRIPTURE    | WISDOM   |

## Answers to Ossory Times Issue 37



## Answers to Ossory Times Issue 37



# OSSORY DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE TO LOURDES 2025

19th-25th May

## **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](mailto:info@joewalshtours.ie)**





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