

### Covid-19: Please Take Care

We welcome all who join in our liturgies during the Christmas Season. It is more important than ever that those who attend church behave in a responsible way and look out for each other in these times. Please do not endanger others by coming to church if you feel unwell or display any symptoms of Covid-19. It is vital that you follow all guidelines in our parish churches. Everyone needs to take extra and careful steps to keep the pandemic under control. You can help by:-

- following the advice of our volunteer ushers who will seat as many people as permitted;
- wearing our face masks;
- following the instructions for coming forward to receive Holy Communion;
- receiving Holy Communion in the hand only;
- making sure that indoor spaces are well ventilated;
- maintaining adequate social distancing inside and outside the church;
- taking any material (e.g. Newsletters, Mass leaflets) you handled home with you;
- covering your coughs and sneezes and
- keeping your hands virus free by using sanitizers.

### Christmas Offering Envelopes and Weekly/Yearly Envelopes for 2022

Most of the Christmas Offering envelopes and, either the weekly envelope boxes, or your annual envelopes have been distributed at this stage. The "Weekly/Yearly/Standing Order" contributions go in their entirety to capital expenditure and maintenance of the three parish churches and buildings, as well as all the running costs of the Parish.

The "Christmas Offering Collection" goes towards the salaries of the priests of the parish. Frs. Dan, Lorcan and Raymond thank you sincerely for your generosity to the parish and towards the collections which make up their income. Even in these difficult times parishioners have been very generous and we appreciate your thoughtfulness and kindness.

### Volunteer Envelope Distributors

We are very dependent on our volunteer envelope distributors who drop the collection envelopes to homes in their areas. Please contact the Parish Office if you would like to contribute and have not yet received your envelopes.

**Address:** St John's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Kilkenny. **Email:** stjohns@ossory.ie

**Website:** www.stjohnskilkenny.com

**Office:** 056 772 1072; **Secretary:** Áine Butler; **Office Hours:** Mon-Fri 9.30 a.m. - 2.00 p.m.

**Newsletter Deadline:** Thursdays 12.00 noon **SVP Help Line:** 086 895 1239

Fr Dan Carroll: 087 907 7769; Fr Lorcan Moran: 086 855 0521;

Fr Raymond Dempsey: 089 497 1924;

### PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL:

**Fergal Brennan; Mary Brennan; Alan Burke; Fr Dan Carroll; Fr Raymond Dempsey;  
Fr Lorcan Moran; Iris O'Flynn; Karena Phelan.**

### IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN CONTACT

The Diocesan Designated Liaison Person, Ms. Kathleen Sherry, 085 802 1633 - dlp@ossory.ie

### OUR PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES ARE:

Mary Weadick; Máirín Bergin; Brenda Whitely; Marian Eardly.

### Counselling Services - Towards Healing Confidential Helpline

1800 313 316 - [www.towardshealing.ie](http://www.towardshealing.ie)

**Roman Catholic Diocese and Parishes of Ossory - Registered Charity No. 20015831**

# PARISH OF SAINT JOHN THE EVANGELIST

*incorporating | St John's | Dunmore | Johnswell | church areas*

### MASS TIMES

**St John's – Sundays & Holy Days:** Vigil: 6.00pm; Sun: 8.00am, 11.30am & 7.00pm.

**Polish Mass:** 2<sup>nd</sup> Sat. Monthly, 7.00pm; **Weekdays:** 8.00am, 10.30am. (Sat. 10.30am only).

**Johnswell - Sunday 10.00am**

**Dunmore - Sunday 11.00am**

### Christmas Day - 25<sup>th</sup> December 2021

### Christmas Message From Bishop Denis Nulty

Christmas introduces us to strange places like Bethlehem. And into peculiar buildings like stables, sheds, outhouses. The prophet Micah pinpoints with precise accuracy "*and you Bethlehem Ephrathah, the least of the clans of Judah, out of you will be born for me the one who is to rule over Israel*". Scripture scholars remind us that Ephrathah is also called Bethlehem. Bethlehem means '*house of bread*'. Pope Emeritus Benedict in his beautiful work '*The Infancy Narratives*' reminds us that from the moment of his birth, Jesus belongs outside the realm of what is important and powerful in worldly terms. It is this unimportant and powerless child that proves to be the truly powerful one, the one on whom ultimately everything depends.

We forget that too easily. The very birth of Christ helps to realign our values, our priorities, our concerns. Maybe the Covid pandemic has also helped us somewhat to readjust our lives, living in a huge time of uncertainty. The pandemic has robbed us of loved ones whom we have lost in death; it has robbed us of the usual gatherings and encounters that are so life giving and it has robbed us of normality, of having some sense of control on what's happening around us. We are living indeed in times of profound change and uncertainty. And this change and uncertainty were also part of the world that Christ was born into 2,000 years ago.

Today it's into this uncertainty that God comes to us and is born in our stables, sheds and outhouses. But we must make room for him and not lose sight of what Christmas is really about. The pandemic has made us experts at using apps like Facetime, let's take time to look on the face of Christ. In that face we see a reflection of ourselves, our world, our insecurities, our uncertainties. Christmas is not about sending cards, receiving presents, visiting friends and yes we will nonetheless do all three; essentially Christmas is about looking on the face of Christ, and allowing that face to profoundly change us. Let us go to be nourished in the 'house of bread', in Bethlehem.

I conclude with the translated version of Mairtín O'Direáin's poem '*Cuireadh do Mhuire*':

*"Do you know Mary  
Where you'll go this year  
To look for shelter  
For your Holy Child  
While every door  
Is shut in His face  
By the hatred and pride  
Of the human race?"*

*Deign to accept our invitation  
To this island by the sea  
In the ancient West.  
Bright candles will be  
Lit in our church windows  
And turf fires kindled  
On the snowy heath".*

I pray that each of you will be blessed and enriched as you look on the face Jesus at Bethlehem and that 2022 will bring you abundant blessings.

### Bereavements

**Recently Deceased:** Paddy Moynihan, Greenshill. Arrangements later.

Eileen Purcell, Butts Green. Requiem Mass at St. Canice's Church at 11am on Tuesday.  
Enrico Pacitti, Italy. Jim Tyrell, Dominic Street.  
Dennis Murphy, The Sycamores. Cecelia Doyle, Connolly Street.

**Anniversaries:** George Byrne; Angela, Martin & John Delaney; Michael, Katie & Shauna Joyce; Mary Theresa Butler; Mai Loftus; Maura Mealy; James & Josephine Foley; Micéal Downey; Breda Carey; Danny Leahy; Eily & John P. Francis; Helen O'Neill; Declan Lanigan; Sarah Long; Martin & Peggy Brett; John & Billy Hanaphy; Josephine Pigott; Roseanna Smyth; Peggy Blanchfield; Jim Carroll; Jack, Peg, Breda & Aaron Molloy; Edward Taylor; Patrick & Rose Wixted; Mary Dowling (nee Wixted); Margaret Coleman; Mickey & Johanna Kelly; Liam & Mary Ryan; Tom Cantwell; Maura Hearne; Stephen Cantwell; Seamus, Milo & Ann Fry; Patrick & Sally Burke.

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

### Mass Intentions for week beginning 27<sup>th</sup> December

Monday: Eily & John P. Francis (10.30am).  
Tuesday: Helen O'Neill (10.30am).  
Wednesday: Special Intention (10.30am).  
Thursday: Declan Lanigan (10.30am).  
Friday: Sarah Long (10.30am).  
Saturday: Micéal Downey (10.30am).  
Eileen Owens (6.00pm)  
Sunday: John Holmes (10.00am)  
Ned Brennan, Ann Shanley & Margaret Pearson (11.00am).  
Mary Murphy (11.30am).  
Frank O'Neill (7.00pm).

*Those we love don't go away,  
they walk beside us every day.  
Unseen, unheard, but always near!  
still loved, still missed and very dear.*

### Home for Christmas?

You may like to know that all Masses and services at St. John's Church are broadcast on our webcam at stjohnskilkenny.com, and our Parish Radio Service on 106.8 FM.

**Weekdays**  
**8.00am and 10.30am.**  
**Saturdays**  
**10.30am and 6.00pm.**  
**Sundays**  
**8.00am, 11.30am & 7.00pm.**  
**All welcome!**  
**You can stay in touch with your parish when the holiday is over.**

### Readers for Next Weekend 2nd January

6.00pm Claire Coogan  
8.00am Martin Blake  
10.00am Elaine Bennett  
11.00am Stephanie Butler & Roger Curran  
11.30am James Connelly  
7.00pm Anne Marie Grace

### Weekly Envelope Collection

Last week's envelope collection: €920. Thanks to all who contribute weekly, monthly and annually, as well as those who pay by Standing Order.  
Your support is greatly appreciated.

### St. John's Parish Christmas Arrangements

There will be no 8.00am Mass on the weekdays following Christmas. Mass will be celebrated at St. John's Church at 10.30am each day, Monday to Saturday. The Parish Office will remain closed that week but the priests may be contacted on their mobile number given on the back page of this bulletin.

### Virtual Display of Family and Parish Cribs

Send an image to [afd@ossory.ie](mailto:afd@ossory.ie) of the crib in your home, parish, school or club to take part in our virtual display of cribs. Let us celebrate together "Christ with us!"

### Ossory Times

The Christmas edition of *Ossory Times* - our diocesan magazine - is available in the church porches and on the web at [www.ossory.ie](http://www.ossory.ie).

### The Annual Kilkenny City Churches Camino Crib Walk

The Annual Kilkenny Churches Christmas Crib Walk will take place on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> January beginning at the Capuchin Friary Church at 11.00am. This year we join Santiago de Compostella for Crib Day on Saturday, 8<sup>th</sup> January. The walk will be led by Fr. Willie Purcell.

### Calling All Men

*Exodus 90* is a spiritual exercise for men, with over 50,000 who have completed it so far. It's a challenging 90-day period (17<sup>th</sup> January to Easter Sunday 2022) of prayer and asceticism, supported by a weekly fraternal gathering. Today *Exodus 90* is renewing the Church by transforming men. See [www.exodus90.com](http://www.exodus90.com) to learn more. Zoom information event with testimonies on Thursday, 6<sup>th</sup> January at 8,00pm. Meeting ID: 494 625 9738 passcode: 997298.

### Support for Older People

ALONE manage a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to Covid-19. Please call the National Support and Referral Line on 0818 222 024 from 8.00am – 8.00pm, seven days a week. ALONE operates 365 days a year so they will be there to take your call when you need them most.

### Santa's Christmas Prayer

On Christmas Eve the other night,  
I saw the most amazing sight.  
For there beneath the Christmas tree  
was Santa kneeling on his knee.  
His countenance was different than  
that all-familiar, jolly grin;  
His head was bowed, with hand to breast,  
and slightly tucked into his vest.  
For there in a Nativity was  
Jesus and His family.  
And as I heard him start to pray  
I listened close to what he'd say...  
"Lord, You know that You're the reason  
I take pleasure in this season.  
I don't want to take Your place,  
but just reflect Your wondrous grace.  
I hope You'll help them understand  
I'm just an ordinary man,  
who found a way to do Your will  
by finding kids with needs to fill.  
But all those centuries ago,  
there was no way for me to know  
that they would make so much of me,  
and all the gifts beneath the tree.



They think I have some hidden power  
granted at the midnight hour,  
but it is my love for You  
inspiring all the things I do.  
And so when they begin to open gifts  
for which they have been hoping,  
may they give You all the glory,  
for You're the One True Christmas Story.  
(Author: Alda Monteschio)

### Happy Christmas Everyone

Frs. Dan, Lorcan, Raymond, the Parish Pastoral Council and all involved in the administration of St. John's Parish wish all connected to our community a very happy, holy and safe Christmas. Thanks to all who worked and volunteered in the parish during the past year; thanks to those who attended our services in person and online and to those who supported the parish community in any way. We welcome those who have come home for Christmas and we hope you have a wonderful and safe time with your families. Happy Christmas everyone!!