

Admirabile Signum

During a visit to the Italian town of Greccio on 1st December 2019 Pope Francis signed an Apostolic Letter, *Admirabile Signum*, on the meaning and importance of the Christmas crib.

"Dear brothers and sisters, the Christmas Crib is part of the precious yet demanding process of passing on the faith. Beginning in childhood, and at every stage of our lives, it teaches us to contemplate Jesus, to experience God's love for us, to feel and believe that God is with us and that we are with him, his children, brothers and sisters all, thanks to that Child who is the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin Mary. And to realize that in that knowledge we find true happiness. Like Saint Francis, may we open our hearts to this simple grace, so that from our wonderment a humble prayer may arise: a prayer of thanksgiving to God, who wished to share with us his all, and thus never to leave us alone."

It is well worth reading the Pope's full letter on www.vatican.va. Search for "Admirabile signum".

Parish Calendars

St. John's Parish Calendars are available this weekend. Once again we thank Johnston's Funeral Directors for their sponsorship.

Happy New Year

The priests and members of the Parish Pastoral Council join in wishing all our parishioners a very happy and peaceful New Year. May the coming year be filled with God's blessings of joy, happiness and good health.

God Sent Us a Saviour...

If our greatest need had been information, God would have sent us an educator; If our greatest need had been technology, God would have sent us a scientist; If our greatest need had been money, God would have sent us an economist; If our greatest need had been pleasure, God would have sent us an entertainer; but our greatest need was forgiveness, so God sent us a Saviour!

Alliance Française

French Classes: Alliance Française in Kilkenny will be enrolling students for the new term on Tuesday 9th January from 7.00 to 8.30pm in the Club House Hotel.

The Alliance offers French classes to all levels from beginners, improvers and advanced and classes are available in person (Club House Hotel) or online via Zoom. There are daytime and evening classes for adults and for students doing the Leaving Certificate. afkilkenny.org or info@afkilkenny.org or 087 253 9734.

Address: St John's Presbytery, Dublin Road, Kilkenny. R95 ND2W

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 Raymond Dempsey: 089 497 1924.
Monsignor Michael Ryan (Retired)

PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL

**Fergal Brennan; Mary Brennan; Jo Browne; Alan Burke; Fr Dan Carroll;
Claire Coogan; Fr Raymond Dempsey; Luke Leydon; Iris O'Flynn; Karena Phelan.**

IF YOU HAVE A SAFEGUARDING CONCERN CONTACT

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

OUR PARISH SAFEGUARDING REPRESENTATIVES ARE:

Brenda Whitely; Marian Eardly.

Counselling Services - Towards Healing Confidential Helpline
1800 313 316 - 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: 6.00pm (Vigil); Sun: 8.00am, 11.30am & 7.00pm.

Holy Days: 6.00pm (Vigil); 8.00am, 10.30am & 7.00pm.

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

Johnswell - Sunday 10.00am

Dunmore - Sunday 11.00am

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph - 31st December 2023

Pope Francis' Christmas Message

In his "urbi et orbi" (to the city and the world) message on Christmas Day, Pope Francis called for an end to war in the Holy Land and throughout the world as well as the arms trade that fuels it. Speaking from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis contrasted the "endless peace" that Christ brings with the work of the "prince of this world," who "sows the seeds of death" and "plots against the Lord."

"So saying 'yes' to the Prince of Peace means saying 'no' to war, and this with courage: saying no to every war, to the very mindset of war, an aimless voyage, a defeat without victors, madness without excuses." The Pope reflected on Isaiah's prophecy about a day "when a nation shall not lift up sword against nation" but instead "beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks."

"With God's help, let us make every effort to work for the coming of that day!" Pope Francis said. He continued by saying the coming of Christ gave mankind "the hope of being born for heaven" and lit "an undying flame" that is even still detectable "amid the deep shadows" of war covering the Holy Land today. "Rejoice, you who have abandoned all hope, for God offers you his outstretched hand," the Pope said. "He does not point a finger at you but offers you his little baby hand in order to set you free from your fears, to relieve you of your burdens, and to show you that, in his eyes, you are more valuable than anything else."

The Pope also said: "May we remember the those who have no voice, especially children who suffer from lack of food and water, the unemployed, those forced to migrate and risking their lives who are often prey to unscrupulous traffickers." (Full text on www.vatican.va)

Feast of the Epiphany

Saturday, 6th January is the Feast of the Epiphany. It is a holy day of obligation and our parish Masses will be at the following times: Friday, vigil Mass at 6.00pm; Saturday, feast day Masses at 8.00am and 10.30am (not 11.30am) The 6.00pm Mass on Saturday will be the vigil Mass for Sunday. Please note there are no Masses in Dunmore or Johnswell on Saturday.

First Friday of January

Friday, 5th January is the first Friday of the month. Sick and housebound parishioners are offered the Sacraments at home. Please contact the Parish office if you know of any sick or housebound parishioners who would like to receive the Sacraments at home.

O'Loughlin Gaels

Thanks to the members of the senior hurling team who attended the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve. Thanks, also, for bringing the County and Provincial trophies along with you. We all enjoyed seeing the cups and we look forward to your continued success. All in the parish wish the panel, management and club officials all the best as they prepare for the All Ireland Club Championship Final in Croke Park on Sunday, 21st January 2024.

Remembering Our Loved Ones Who Have Died

Recently Deceased: Seán Casey, Old Callan Road, Kilkenny. Requiem Mass at St. Mary's Cathedral at 11.00am on Monday followed by burial in St. Kieran's Cemetery.

Anniversaries: Helen & Ned O'Neill (6.00pm); John Hanaphy (8.00am); Matt & Catherine Walsh & John & Mary Butler (11.00am); James & Josephine Foley (11.30am); Peggy Comerford (7.00pm); Micéal Downey; Liam Kelly; Ned Byrne & Eddie Byrne Jnr; Margaret Coleman; Mary (Maura) Murphy; Agnes Murphy; Bernie Comerford; Tom Cantwell; Liam & Mary Ryan; Stephen Cantwell; Maura Hearne; Christine Hogan.

Anniversary Masses

It has become increasingly difficult to accommodate in the parish Mass schedule the number of anniversary Masses requested by parishioners. This has led to disappointment when people cannot book an anniversary or months mind Mass near the desired date.

From 1st January - as is the practice in other parishes - more than one anniversary remembrance may be assigned to all Masses. Please note, we also reserve the right to transfer a previously booked anniversary Mass on the occasion of a funeral.

Readers for Next Weekend

| | |
|---------|------------------------------------|
| 6.00pm | Máirín Bergin |
| 8.00am | Mary Elliot |
| 10.00am | Seán Colgan |
| 11.00am | Esther Comerford & Tom Comerford |
| 11.30am | Bobbie Lahart & Rosemary McPhilips |
| 7.00pm | Linda O'Leary |



Christmas Eve/Day Attendance/Collections

| Envelope Collection: | | €1810.00 |
|----------------------|------------|----------|
| Mass | Attendance | Baskets |
| 6.00pm St. John's | 627 | 1581.00 |
| 7.00pm Johnswell | 137 | 540.00 |
| 8.00pm Dunmore | 186 | 473.00 |
| 9.00pm St. John's | 266 | 1000.00 |
| 8.00am St. John's | 180 | 683.00 |
| 10.00am Johnswell | 52 | 262.00 |
| 11.00am Dunmore | 121 | 245.00 |
| 11.30am St. John's | 380 | 1051.00 |

Scripture Reflection Group

The St John's Parish Scripture Group hope to continue their meetings in the New Year. Those who attend find the sessions worthwhile, informative and prayerful. The group will meet again on Thursday, 18th January at 7.30pm. This group is suitable for all interested in deepening their knowledge of the Bible and should prove very interesting for those who read at Masses. All welcome. Watch this space and we will let you know the return date.

Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

Thanks to those who spend some time in prayer before the Blessed Sacrament on Wednesdays. Exposition will not take place on this Wednesday. Following our return on 10th January you are invited to join us at St. John's Church every Wednesday between 11.00am and 1.00pm for some quiet time before the Blessed Sacrament.

Ossory Pilgrimage to Lourdes

The annual Ossory Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes 2024 is now available to book! The departure will take place on 22nd May 2024 from Cork flying direct to Lourdes with accommodation available in the hotels La Solitude, Padoue or Agena.

With capacity being limited this year, it is strongly advised that pilgrims wishing to travel to Lourdes book as soon as possible. Should you require any additional information on the pilgrimage, please do not hesitate to contact us on 01 241 0800 or info@joewalshstours.ie. Assisted Pilgrims should contact Fr. Anthony O'Connor on 087 251 7766 or by email on maoc50@me.com.

Recovery Ireland - Better - Mental - Health

Recovery Group meets every Tuesday at 7.00pm at St. Patrick's Parish Centre, Loughboy. For further details please call 01 626 0775 or visit www.recoveryireland.ie.

Mass Intentions for Week Beginning 1st January

| | | |
|-----------|---------|----------------------------------|
| Monday: | 10.30am | Christine Hogan |
| Wednesday | 8.00am | B.R. Rosemaire Moyne |
| | 10.30am | Micéal Downey |
| Thursday: | 10.30am | Liam Kelly |
| Saturday: | 10.30am | Ned and Eddie Jnr Byrne |
| | 6.00pm | Eileen Owens |
| | | Bernadette Egan |
| Sunday: | 8.00am | John and Patricia Dinneen |
| | 11.00am | Ned Brennan, Ann and Joe Shanley |
| | | Margaret Pearson |
| | 11.30am | Ann Larkin |
| | 7.00pm | Mary and Liam Kelly |

Please note we may transfer an anniversary Mass on the occasion of a funeral.

May their souls through the mercy of God rest in peace.

Parish Webcam

Masses and Services in St. John's Church are broadcast on stjohnskilkenny.com and on 106.8FM. Inform those who are unable to attend.

Weekdays

8.00am and 10.30am.

Saturdays

10.30am and 6.00pm.

Sundays

8.00am, 11.30am 7.00pm.

Holy Days

6.00pm (Eve) 8.00am, 10.30am 7.00pm

Praying Out the Old and Welcoming the New Year

A group of parishioners will gather in Dunmore Church around midnight on New Year's Eve to say a farewell to 2023 and welcome the New Year in prayer.

All are welcome to join in scripture readings, prayer and songs between 11.00pm and 00.15am as we welcome the New Year.



Mass Times This Week

On New Year's Day the only Mass at St. John's Church will be at 10.30am. Mass will be at 8.00am and 10.30am on Tuesday to Saturday inclusive. Because it is a holy day there will be a Mass at 8.00am on next Saturday morning.

Thank You

Frs. Dan, Raymond and Michael and the members of the Parish Pastoral Council offer our sincere thanks to all who worked so hard to make our Christmas celebrations in St. John's Parish a wonderful and prayerful success. To one and all we say "Thank You" and well done.

Silent Night

Two hundred and five years ago "Silent Night" was first heard by Austrian villagers attending Christmas Eve mass in St. Nicholas Church in Oberndorf.

The beautiful hymn is about a calm and bright silent night, and the wonder of a tender and mild newborn child, and was written in 1816 by a young priest Joseph Mohr.

The backstory is that the priest went for a walk before he wrote it, and as he looked out over a very quiet, winter-laden town - he was inspired... the town was at peace - this was the time of the Napoleonic Wars.

On Christmas Eve, 1818, the now-famous carol was first performed as Stille Nacht Heilige Nacht. Joseph Mohr played the guitar and sang along with Franz Xaver Gruber, the choir director who had written the melody.

An organ builder and repair man working at the church took a copy of the six-verse song to his home village. There, it was picked up and spread by two families of traveling folk singers, who performed around northern Europe. In 1834, the Strasser family performed it for the King of Prussia. In 1839, the Rainer family of singers debuted the carol outside Trinity Church in New York City. The composition evolved and was translated into over 300 languages with many different arrangements for various voices and ensembles.

Over the years, the carol's mystique grew with its popularity. After the original manuscript was lost, for decades, some speculated that the music had been written by Haydn, Mozart or Beethoven. In 1994, an original manuscript was found in Mohr's handwriting, with Gruber named as composer.