

Rathdowney Parish Newsletter

25th December 2021

Christmas Day

Parish Office

Darina Ní Cholmáin / Maureen Guilfoyle

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Fr. Martin Delaney 086 2444594

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Christmas Eve

7pm Rathdowney: Tommy & Mary Murphy, Urlingford

9 pm Errill: William Delaney, Rossmore

Christmas Day

9 am Errill: Brendan Walsh, Errill

10.30 am Rathdowney:

Sunday (St Stephen's Day)

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

9 am Errill:

10.30 am Rathdowney:

John Peters, Mooreville

Jack & Frances Flanagan, Tullacommon

Delia, Pat & Kieran Phelan, Donaghmore

Mon to Wednesday No Mass

Thurs & Friday: Mass at 11am

Recent Death: Mick Ryan, Lyrogue

Anniversaries at this time:

Micháel & Máire Ó Colmáin

Jer & Teresa Dowling

Dickie Whelan, Mooreville

Maisie O'Gorman, Errill

Masses Next Weekend

Errill

8.30pm: Jer Campion, Coolkerry

Rathdowney

10.30 am Sally Kennedy Mooreville Months Mind

Oliver Browne, Moore Street

Jean Carthy, Moore Street

Parish Office Closed 27th Dec to 4th January 2022.

Collections Last Weekend

Weekly Envelopes €2,048.50

SAFEGUARDING

Designated Liaison Person

Kathleen Sherry –085 8021633

safeguarding@ossory.ie

Gardaí 1800 555 222

TUSLA – Laois/Offaly 090 648 3106

Parish Representatives

Helen Campion & John Casey

Contact: 0505-46282

We wish you well!

We wish Noeleen Lynam all the best in her retirement. Noeleen has been the Religious Education Teacher in St Fergal's for a long number of years.

Adoration

There will be no Adoration in Errill Church until 29th January 2022 or in Rathdowney until 13th January 2022

Parish Pastoral Council Members

Assumpta Casey; Helen Campion; Josephine Campion;

Fran Doyle; Maureen Guilfoyle;

Oliver Kennedy;

Mary Nolan; Mary O'Dea; Josephine Ryan;

Sr Anita O'Leary; Fr. Martin Delaney

Share Your Light

When a torch grows dim or stops working, do you just throw it away?

Of course not. You change the batteries.

When a person messes up or find themselves in a dark place, do you cast them aside?

Of course not, you help them change their batteries.

Some need AA.. Attention and affection; some need AAA... attention, affection and acceptance;

some need C... compassion;

some need D...direction.

And if they still don't seem to shine...simply sit quietly with them and share your light.

Prayer Before Christmas Dinner

Our Heavenly Father, we give thanks for the birth of your Son and the celebration of His life. We give thanks for our family and friends and for the blessing that you have given us so we can enjoy this Christmas meal together. We thank you for our home, a kitchen, for loving hands and for the abundance of food upon this table. May we remember that there are those who have no families, no place at a table, and no one with whom to share a Christmas dinner. Help us to listen to your voice so we can reach out and help their Christmas be a happy one .We ask that you would bless our time around this Christmas table and we ask you to bless our food. May our hearts and attitudes, our actions and our lives be blessings to you.

Through Jesus Christ, Your Son, we pray.

Amen.

Our Father in Heaven,

For this Christmas meal you have given

We want to say thank you from our hearts.

Bless the ones who prepared it

And Lord as we share it

Will you stay with us

And be our guest of Honour.

God of all gifts, we thank you for the many ways you have blessed us this Christmas time. We are grateful for all who are gathered around this table. We ask you to bless us and our food and to bless those we love who are not with us today. In our gratitude and love, we remember your humble birth into our lives and pray for those who are without enough to eat. We remember the stable in which you were born and pray for those who have no place to live. We remember your challenging message of caring and giving and we pray for peace in families and nations throughout the world.

We give you thanks in your Spirit who brings our hearts to life this Christmas Day and forever.

Amen.

A Christmas word in your ear...

Of all the symbols of this Christmas Season, Light is probably the most evocative. The story of how light triumphs over darkness has so much to do with why we celebrate Christmas on December 25th (at least in the Northern Hemisphere!) The pagan peoples of ancient times saw the world as a great cosmic struggle between light and darkness. At a certain period of the year the darkness seemed to be getting the better of the light as the days became shorter and the dark nights became longer. Each year they feared that darkness would finally overcome the sun and the light and that their world would be destroyed. Then every year without fail something would happen around the 21st of December. The sun would begin to fight back. Ever so gradually the days became a few minutes longer as the sun regained it's strength. It was a cause for celebration and so began the winter festival of lights.

When Christianity came along it was looking for an appropriate time of year to celebrate the birth of Jesus. For Christians Jesus was very much the Light of The World who had overcome the darkness of sin and death. They borrowed the pagan concept of the struggle between light and darkness and light's ultimate triumph after December 21st. Christians settled on the date of December 25th to celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, The Light of the world. Instead of the triumph of the SUN God the Christians changed the vowel and it became the triumph of the SON of God. The Pagan Festival of Lights became the Christian Festival of Christmas.

I am always acutely aware as we gather on Christmas Eve and Christmas morning that there are families and individuals present at Mass who find it very difficult to enter into this festival of light. In fact the plethora of candles and lights only seems to highlight the darkness they are experiencing because loved ones have died, because they have lost a job or a home or because they just can't afford the kind of Christmas their children may expect. The corona virus has once again cast a dark shadow over many aspects of our Christmas celebration and we are all weary of the restrictions and the uncertainty.

However, I am also conscious of the many people who make a special effort at Christmas-time to reach out to those in darkness. These are the Light-Bearers, the ones who seek to roll back the darkness for others. It can also be a time to roll back the darkness in our own lives. How might you reverse or roll back the darkness in your life this Christmastime? Perhaps too late for a card but maybe a text or a call or even a visit to someone where there has been distance and darkness between you. A random act of kindness for someone on the margins not just at Christmas but on every other day of the year as well.

Thank you to all who help to make our parish the best it can be.

Wishing you all a Blessed and light-filled Christmas,

Fr. Martin