

**PORTLAOISE
PARISH**
**link
up**
10th December 2023

**Second Sunday
of Advent**



Portlaoise Parish Carol Service
O Come let us Adore

Join us, Wednesday 20th December, 7.30pm
In St. Peter and Paul's Church, Portlaoise

Available live on the Parish Webcam, Radio
and Shalom World TV.

**Over 90 people rehearsing
for our Carol Service.
See page 21.**



**The Parish Centre 057 8621142
E-mail: info@portlaoiseparish.ie**

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Parish and Diocesan Websites: www.portlaoiseparish.ie www.kandle.ie

Come, Lord Jesus

Lord of Peace



Finding 'You' Time

How prepared are you? Have you ordered all the presents and put up the tree? Preparation is one of the most important parts of Christmas, but Advent was never supposed to be about fixing the fairy lights. Advent is about spiritual preparation. In all the whirlwind preparations for the

Christmas celebrations, we need to prepare a way for the Lord, and this preparation begins with a call from an eccentric man living alone in the desert over two thousand years ago.

John the Baptist appeared in the desert proclaiming a baptism of repentance. Today we might easily dismiss the rantings of a strange man who dressed in camel hair and fed on locusts, but interestingly, people travelled miles into the desert to be baptised by him, so charismatic a man was he, and so important his message. Two thousand years later, his message is just as relevant to those of us who want greater meaning in our lives. The repentance that John teaches means so much more than being sorry for our sins. Repentance means changing the direction of our lives away from poor and ungodly choices. Was the direction of our life decided by what exams we did or didn't pass at the age of seventeen? Has the direction of our life been determined by arbitrary decisions and random circumstances? Advent is a time to decide what sort of a person we would really like to be, and in what direction we would really like to be heading.

"Prepare the way of the Lord," John tells us, "make straight his paths." To allow God into our lives, we are asked to remove any obstacles in God's path. How can we open our minds to God's will if our time is consumed in filling the freezer and making Christmas puddings? Advent is an opportunity for us to make some quiet time to contemplate and prioritise. What is it exactly that is preventing God's work in our lives?

"One mightier than I is coming after me," John tells us, "I have baptised you with water, he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit." In the desert of commercialism, we are reminded that the reason for the season is not turkeys and baubles. Preparation is a time of reflection; a little 'You' time.

Mass times for the coming week
(Parish Church or otherwise stated)

Monday to Friday: 7.30am & 10am

Saturday: 10am

Sunday

Vigil 6.30pm (Saturday)

8.30am, 10am, 11.15am & 12.30pm

CHURCH OF THE ASSUMPTION, THE HEATH

Sunday: 9.30am

CHURCH OF THE HOLY CROSS, RATHENISKA

Sunday: 10am

CONFESSIONS

Saturday: After 10am Mass & after 6.30pm Mass.



**We welcome into our
Parish Community**

Evie Ruth Prior,
Lake Avenue

Tadhg Dunne,
The Hermitage

Chanelle Kimora Mushonga,
Montague Hotel

Rosie Bridget Byrne
Clonroosk Abbey

Who were baptised last weekend

'Someone is following me, someone who is more powerful than I am..... I have baptised you with water, but he will baptise you with the Holy Spirit.'

(Sunday's Gospel, Mark 1:7-8)

WELCOME



Today we welcome Bishop Denis, and wish him a Happy Christmas. Celebrant of our 11.15am in the Parish Church.



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- ✓ By sharing your experiences, you can make the road easier for others setting out on their return journey.
- ✓ Been there, done that ... Share your Story!



Saturday 9th December 2023 - 2pm to 4pm
Portlaoise Parish Centre, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
Refreshments will be provided

FOR MORE INFO/REGISTRATION
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Please return Enrolment forms to the office along with a copy of your Child's Birth Certificate.

Closing date for applications is 19th January 2024



Cllr. Caroline Dwane Stanley

- Peace Commissioner
- Chair of Laois County Council Housing Committee

*I am available to meet Constituents by arrangement from the following areas:
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Christmas and best wishes for the New Year



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*The Christmas market will close at 5pm Saturday 23rd

We are reaching out to local businesses and community groups to invite them to participate as vendor/sponsors.
Vendor Categories: Food and Drinks Vendors, Art and Craft, Stalls, Entertainment and Games (Other than
arcade), Contributions. A fee of €250 will be payable for all exhibitors/stall holders. Applicants must be located in the
County of Laois. Expression of interest form and further details including terms and conditions about the event can
be found on www.laois.ie or www.laoistaste.ie

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Portlaoise Active Retirement meet every Wednesday afternoon at 3pm in the Parish centre for an afternoon of friendship, fun and activities.

Monday 11th December; Bowls in St. Marys Sports hall at 3pm. New members always welcome, tuition given.

Wednesday 13th December; Christmas dinner in the Parish Centre. Wine reception at 12 noon and dinner 12.30pm, afterwards song and dance and fun upstairs in the John Paul room until 6pm approx. Hope everyone has a good time.

Thursday 14th December; Cards in Sue Ryder Centre, Kilminchy at 3pm, new members always welcome, tuition given. For further information please contact P.R.O. Sheila 087-6204617.

Results of Whist Drive held in Parish Centre on Tuesday, 5th December;

Top Score: Sheila Duff | **1st Lady:** Paraic Dowling | **2nd Lady:** Kit Farrell | **1st Gent:** Christy Fitzpatrick
2nd Gent: Austin Kavanagh | **1st Half:** Mary Gowing | **2nd Half:** Leslie Hunter

Raffle: 1st Sadie Chester | 2nd Molly O'Brien | 3rd Liam McCartney | 4th Sadie Chester | 5th Liam McCartney
6th Catherine Galvin | 7th Ann Marie Farrell | 8th Tom Kearns.



Thanks to everyone for their support. Whist continues every Tuesday night at 7.30pm in the Parish Centre.

P.A.T.H.; Portlaoise Action to Homelessness Church gate collection 16th /17th December. Your generosity would be very much appreciated.

Thank You; Portlaoise AFC would like to thank all those who generously contributed to our recent church gate collection on 18th/19th November. Together we raised €1,250 which was fantastic and we are very grateful.

Fourth Wall Laois Theatre Group Table Quiz; Thursday 14th December in Doogue's Pub Raheen at 8:30pm. Table of 4 €40. All support greatly appreciated.

RELIGIOUS NOTES

Divine Mercy Chaplet 3pm every Sunday in the Parish Church.

Rosary in the Church of the Assumption, the Heath; Daily 2pm (Monday-Saturday) and Sunday 3pm (Adoration).

Lourdes Parish Pilgrimage 2024 Sponsorship Application; The Portlaoise Parish Lourdes Committee would like to advise that a box will be available in the Parish Church on the right hand side of Our Lady statue, for anyone wishing to apply for full or partial sponsorship on our 2024 pilgrimage. If your application is for medical reasons, a doctors clearance for you to travel must accompany your application. If you are nominating another person please make the person aware before you place their name in the box. All applications must include a name and current telephone number. This box will remain open for applications from 1st December 2023 until 5th January 2024.

Thank you to Fr. Paddy and everyone who attended our Evening of Prayer for peace in the Holy Land and throughout our troubled world, in St. Brigid's Church, Shanahoe last Sunday week. May peace reign in every heart this Advent Season as we prepare our hearts to greet Jesus. "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ". Cor: 1:3



December 12th marks the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe; In 1531 Our Lady appeared to a man named Juan Diego 5 times between 9th and 12th December. Our Lady of Guadalupe is the patroness of the Pro-life movement and in America is sometimes referred to as the Empress of the America's. The shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe is the most visited Marian shrine in the world. Pro-life Rosary will be prayed in the Parish Church on Tuesday 12th December at 7pm in honour of Our Lady of Guadalupe.



Katie Taylor, undisputed Lightweight and super Lightweight World Champion, with Msgr. John, on her visit to Portlaoise Boxing Club last Saturday. What a great honour (and coup) for the Boxing Club to have her visit just a week after her epic bout. Well done!



**End of Year Rosary
At The Grotto
New Years Eve
Dec. 31st at 8pm**

Have a Blessed Candle lit and displayed at the grotto for the sick, deceased, your intentions or in thanks giving. **Your Candle will be lit from 5pm on Dec. 31st until after midnight. (Rosary 8pm).**

Candle bookings can be made through the shop in the Parish Centre, or contact any of the following;

Mary Byrne	086-3653168
Paddy Connolly	087-2117174
John Egan	087-1254841
Kitty Timmons	087-9506634
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A Mass will also be offered for your intentions in Portlaoise and Medjugorje



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Patricia 087-9440396

The Fatima Candle will be lit at 10am Mass in the Parish Church, **Wednesday 13th December** in honour of Our Lady of Fatima and for the intentions of all parishioners. Rosary will be prayed at the Grotto at 8pm. All are welcome.

I Missa em Português em Laois

A Comunidade Católica em Laois convida para a
Primeira Missa em português.

Dia 17/12/2023 - Domingo

Horário: 16h

Local: St Peter & Paul's Catholic
Church, Portlaoise - R32R684

Ação Social: Ofertório na missa com itens para doações à SVP -

The Society of St. Vincent de Paul/Laois.

Apoio: LABRAS.



CONCERN PORTLAOISE worldwide CONCERN GROUP

Concern once again asked the people of Portlaoise and surrounding areas to help countries who are stricken with hunger and climate change.

The one day collection on November 24th raised €55,025 to date. Concern wishes to thank all collectors who helped on the day and to people who worked late into the evening counting the money collected.

Helen Corbett - Portlaoise Concern Group.

CHRISTMAS TRACTOR RUN

The Heath N.S. Parents Council will host a Christmas Tractor Run on Sunday 17th December at 5pm. Registration in the hall beside the Church from 4pm on the day. €20 per tractor. All funds raised going to The Heath N.S. There will be a children's tractor run at 4.30pm.

CateKIDS

Portlaoise Parish www.portlaoiseparish.ie

HANDING ON
THE FAITH



John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus

Before the days of printed newspapers, town criers walked through the streets ringing a bell. Then they shouted out the news from every street corner announcing the time of town meetings and other items of interest to the people. Even after printed newspapers came along, you could walk the streets of a city and hear the voice of a newspaper boy crying out, "Extra! Extra! Read all about it!" Then he would shout out the day's headlines, hoping to get the attention of those who were passing by so that they would buy a newspaper.

Today, people get the news in many different ways. Think for a moment about how your family gets the news. Some rely on the newspaper and they read it from cover to cover, some get the news from the Internet, others get the news by listening to the radio. Probably the main way that people get the news today is by watching television. No matter how you get the news, it is important to know what is going on in the world around us.

Long before Jesus was born, God spoke through the prophet Isaiah to tell how He would spread the news of the coming of the Messiah. This is what God said through Isaiah, "I will send my messenger to prepare the way. He will be a voice of one crying in the desert, 'Prepare the way for the coming of the Lord! Clear the road for him.'"

John the Baptist was the messenger that God chose to bring this good news to His people. John was a very unusual man who wore clothes made of camel hair with a leather belt around his waist. His favourite food was locusts and wild honey. Everyone has something unique or unusual about themselves. What's that for you? John travelled around in the desert preaching that people should repent of their sins and turn to God. Repent means to tell God when you know you have done wrong and stop doing those wrong things. When people listening to John the Baptist confessed their sins, he baptised them in the Jordan River.

John the Baptist was very popular and had a great following, but he always told the people about Jesus. "Someone is coming soon who is greater than I am," he said. "He is so much greater that I am not even worthy to stoop down and untie the straps on His sandals." Yes, John was faithful in bringing the news to the people.

It's been 2,000 years since God sent His Son, but God still needs messengers to spread the news. This year, as we celebrate our Saviour's birth, won't you be God's messenger to share the good news with others?



In Advent the priest wears purple, the colour of royalty.

This reminds us that we are waiting to welcome Christ, the King.

Dear Father, we thank You for this very special time of year when we celebrate the birth of Jesus. There are many who don't know about Jesus. Help us be Your messengers and share the good news. Amen.



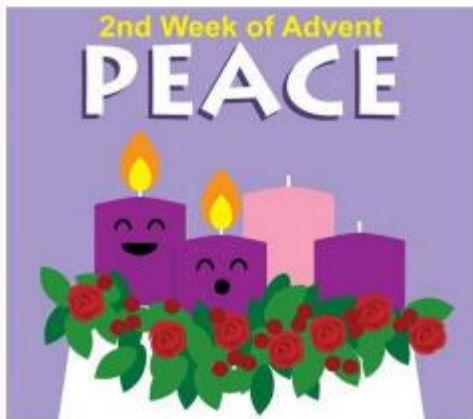


JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY FOR JESUS



The Second Sunday of Advent

Two purple candles are now lit for the first and second Sundays in Advent.
The *Candle of Peace* is lit this Sunday on the second Sunday of Advent.



Prayer for the Second Week of Advent

Loving God, On this Advent day
we turn to you in prayer.

As we wait the coming of your Son,
we ask your blessing on each of us.

Bring your healing upon us.

And help us to welcome your light into our lives,
a light that gives us the gift of peace.

May your peace guard our heart,
our mind and our home.

We ask this through our Lord. Amen.



A Voice in the Wilderness

Fill in the blanks

The _____ tells us that in the days before _____ began his ministry, a man called _____ began _____ and telling the people to _____ for the coming _____.

When told _____ people to prepare for the King, he didn't mean that they should go _____ and _____ the floor, pick up their _____, and make their _____ . He meant that they should prepare their _____.

How? By _____ of their _____ and turning toward _____.

When they did this, John would _____ them in the _____.

That is how _____ got the name, " _____ "



WORD BOX



- | | | | | |
|-------|---------|---------|------------------|--------------|
| Bible | hearts | God | sweep | Jordan River |
| John | toys | prepare | King | preaching |
| Jesus | baptise | John | repenting | |
| Beds | sins | home | John the Baptist | |



Time to Think!

Visiting the Crib

I love visiting the cribs in various churches this time of year. Many of you, have by now placed your crib, in a sacred place at home. Saint Francis of Assisi, was the first to introduce visually displaying the crib. He did so in a deliberate portrayal of the deep poverty and yet great love, the Christ child, was born into. A young mother and father, placing a tiny little baby in a manger, wrapped in swaddling clothes. There was no room for this baby in the inn, his birth was extra dramatic where eventually Mary and Joseph, found shelter in a lowly stable. The first to be made aware of this tremendous new life were the outsiders. Shepherds, by their very nature lived on the outside. Their lives were nomadic and hardship was the norm. I have no doubt, that when the angels appeared, with the melody of hope, their hearts were instantly lifted. When they went to examine and validate what they had been told, their immediate response was one of wonder and awe, in the presence of Emmanuel "God among us". Their silence, was a prayer filled by God's grace. The birth of Jesus Christ surrounded by cattle and sheep, was and continues to be such a powerful encounter, God became one of us. "The word became flesh and dwelt amongst us".

Christmas comes at the darkest most tender moments of the year. We yearn and long for the light, even in the winter soil, the first glimpse of green shoots remind us "When winter comes can spring be far behind". We all carry within us a vulnerable nature. It is in this space where God's grace yearns to be born again. Yet another year, 2023, has quickly passed. Yet, the Christmas message remains timeless. 'The Word became flesh and lived among us.' God is with us. Jesus Christ is the light who shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not put out that light. More than that, in a time of so many threats to our humanity and our well-being, War in Europe and the Holy Land, poverty, famine, migration on a massive scale, homelessness; the Christmas Message speaks pointedly and timelessly once more into these and many other situations too.

The image of the baby Jesus in the crib, is a most cherished one, but also can be very challenging. A God, who appears as a defenceless child, is not the angry, arrogant and judgmental God. A God who appears as a defenceless child breaks out from the categories of those who think only in cold rationality. We may be able rationally to come to accept the existence of God, but human rationality will not lead us to the God who appears in the birth of Jesus Christ. A God who appears as a defenceless child is not a useless fairy tale: a God who appears as a defenceless child is a powerful advocate for us: not a God who above all claims personal prerogatives. It is not just that we can identify this God as one like us in all our challenges, but a God who identifies himself with us and brings us into his own life of grace and truth and salvation.

We live in an Ireland which is becoming increasingly ambiguous in its understanding of God. Alongside men and women of deep faith and commitment there are those who wish to build their future and the future of our society by removing God from the public square. There are those who are too busy to pay much more than lip service and outward cultural adherence to God. There are those who struggle with the very idea of God, because of the harshness of the world



we live in and the mystery of evil. There are those who are angry with God and with the Church or indeed are angry with God because of the Church. How many times do I hear the phrase: "I am just hanging in there by the tips of my fingers".

Why are people afraid of or unsettled by a God who appears as a defenceless child? What is it with a defenceless child that upsets? Some would wish to banish the God who appears in a crib off our streets? Others, believers, would feel happier with a warrior God who builds ramparts of defence. We have to ask ourselves as believers how a God who appears as a defenceless child challenges us about how we live our lives. The God who rejects conventional defences challenges us also to be there for all those who are wounded and alone and burdened and troubled. We are called to be with them unconditionally, not building up within us defence mechanisms based on prestige, security or self-centeredness.

Christmas calls us to change our lives. It is not about pointing to others. We know well how much self-centredness remains in each of our own hearts. We know how much we believers, just as any other, are infected with the same sense of superficiality which can easily be proliferated in our world. Where do we look for true security? The scripture tells us that God "makes us secure in justice and integrity". Justice and integrity cannot be achieved simply by laws and good policies. Justice is attained by men and women who live justly. Integrity is attained by men and women who live integrity, whatever the cost, not for fame or recognition, but because integrity belongs to being truly human. We celebrate the birth of Jesus and we regain at this celebration something of the wonder we experienced as children. But wonder is not something for children alone. We all have to rediscover that sense of wonder in the face of what goodness and honesty, justice and integrity can attain.

I pray this Christmas may be a space where we learn selflessness after the Jesus who came to give himself for our salvation without any pretentiousness. Pretentiousness divides; mercy and compassion heal and reconcile. The message of the birth of Jesus in simplicity and defencelessness helps us to understand that such dreaming and idealism are possible. May the birth of Christ bring health and healing to us all.

Fr. Paddy invites you to follow him on Twitter @frpaddybyrne, now over 31,300 followers or @AbbeyleixP or leave a comment on his blog on our parish website; www.portlaoiseparish.ie/articles



PORTLAOISE PARISH
Christmas Arrangements 2023



CHRISTMAS NOVENA
MONDAY 18th TO SATURDAY 23rd DECEMBER
Mass at 7am

PARISH CAROL SERVICE
Wednesday 20th December - Parish Church 7.30pm

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION (PENITENTIAL SERVICE)
Monday 18th December - Parish Church 7.30pm

CONFESSIONS
Friday 22nd December - Parish Church after 10am Mass to 1pm & 6pm to 7pm
Saturday 23rd December - Parish Church after 10am Mass to 1pm

CHRISTMAS EVE MASS TIMES
Portlaoise Parish Church Children's Mass
(mainly aimed at those who have not yet received 1st Holy Communion) 4pm
& Children's Mass 6pm
Parish Church Midnight Mass 9pm
Parish Church Polish Mass 10.30pm

CHRISTMAS DAY MASS TIMES
Parish Church 8.30am, 10am, 11.15am and 12.30pm
The Heath 9.30am Ratheniska 10am

TUESDAY 26th DECEMBER TO SATURDAY 30th DECEMBER
Parish Church 10am

SUNDAY 31st DECEMBER
Parish Church 6.30pm (Vigil Mass on Sat.), 8.30am, 10am, 11.15am and 12.30pm
The Heath 9.30am Ratheniska 10am


MONDAY 1st JANUARY (MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD)
Parish Church 10am

TUESDAY 2nd JANUARY to FRIDAY 5th JANUARY
Parish Church 10am
Parish Church Polish Mass 2pm

SATURDAY 6th JANUARY (THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD)
Parish Church 7.30pm (Vigil Mass on Friday), 8.30am, 10am & 12.30pm
The Heath: 9.30am Ratheniska: 10am

MASSES WILL RESUME AS NORMAL FROM MONDAY 8th JANUARY

All our up-to-date Mass times can be accessed on our website www.portlaoiseparish.ie



Waiting in Hope Longing for Peace

An Advent bulletin for home and parish
Week Two 2023

A Central Figure of Advent: John the Baptist

Over the weeks of Advent we encounter a number of key characters in the unfolding story of our salvation. In the Gospel this Sunday we are introduced to John the Baptist. An older cousin of Jesus, he was a prophet sent by God to prepare people for the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. His life was one of continually pointing to Jesus. When his mother, Elizabeth, was pregnant with John, she was visited by Mary, and John leapt in her womb. This revealed to Elizabeth that the child Mary carried was the Son of God.

John's desert ministry was all about calling people to be ready for Jesus and the change he would bring to their lives. John's call to repentance is not mere fire and brimstone, scare tactics, but is a call rooted in the belief that God is coming to His people and we need to be ready. John's message provokes us into action, calling us to turn back to God and to ready ourselves for Christ to come into our lives. Crucially, this personal readying involves looking beyond ourselves, to how we treat others and live with others. As followers of Jesus, it calls us to lives of justice and right relationship with one another; it calls us to acts of kindness and charity to neighbour and stranger.

**For the desert places in which we walk,
the streets we roam, the paths we cross,
guide our feet, take us to places where You would go.
Give us words that You would use
that in this Advent season of promise and preparation
we might point the way with John the Baptist
to the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!**

~ written by John Birch

Looking ahead to the Third Sunday of Advent

St John Paul II began a tradition in Rome that continues today. On this Sunday, children and their families from across Rome come to St Peter's Square, bringing with them the figure of the infant Jesus from their crib. After the Angelus, the children raise up the figures and the Pope blesses them. The day is now also known affectionally as *Bambinelli* Sunday, the Italian for babies. In many places the blessed figure is wrapped and placed under the family Christmas tree to be unwrapped and finally placed in the crib at Christmas – reminding us of the first and most important gift of Christmas. Many of our parishes have introduced this practice so look out for an invitation in your local parish!

An Advent Tradition

While the Christmas tree is very much part of the Christmas season, over the course of Advent the tree will begin to appear in more and more homes, signalling that we are getting closer to the feast of Christmas.

In the midst of winter, the evergreen tree, dressed with lights, reminds us of the life and light that comes to us through Christ. The colourful decorations of the tree are a reminder of the paradise tree of the garden of Eden, hung with the bright colour of fruit.

*Families are invited
to say the following prayer
together
when they put up the
Christmas tree
in their home*



A Blessing Prayer

Lord God,
let your blessing come upon us
as we gather around this tree.
May its light
and the cheer it gives us
be a sign of the joy
that fills our hearts.
As we delight in this tree
may we come to
the knowledge and joy
of the Christmas gift
of salvation and peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
R. Amen.
Come, Lord Jesus.



An Advent hymn to think about.... O Comfort My People

People will recognise the traditional Irish setting of this Advent hymn as *Bi íosa im chroíse* (*Jesus, be in my heart*). The words are based on the bible text of Isaiah 40 and were adapted and put to music by the late American Trappist monk, Chrysogonus Waddell.

The soothing melody carries a strong proclamation of hope on our Advent journey. In Isaiah 40, the prophet is looking ahead to a time of great pain when the People of God will experience exile from their homeland. His message from God to the people answers the questions they will have in the midst of their shock and suffering – Does God want to deliver us? Can God deliver us? Will God do it? God's response is yes; I have not forsaken you; I have not abandoned you; I am with you. These words come to us today in the midst of a world where there is terrible conflict, and millions are displaced from their homes and land. Isaiah's message from God, for all people, still holds true.

And comfort is not just about being soothed. It is about being fortified, strengthened, encouraged. This Advent, God is coming to us to bring us comfort, strength and encouragement, to speak to our hearts with the good news

An Advent Household Prayer

This week we invite you take a moment to light your Advent wreath /candle, to thank God for your Advent Day & to pray this prayer in union with the rest of our diocesan family, praying for peace in our world & lives.

Loving God,

as your light grows in the dark of winter,
bring its strength and its hope

to the people of the Holy Land and to all people
who suffer through war and conflict.

Just as you sent the star of Bethlehem
to lead the way to your Son,
guide all people - leaders and citizens –
to follow your ways of peace and justice.

As we remember the difficult journey of Mary and Joseph, may the Holy Family be a source of courage for each of us, helping us to reach out in friendship to the oppressed and displaced of this world.

Help us to see in the Christ-child we welcome this

Christmas,

the one who came to bring an end to all divisions.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

And may the Lord bless us and keep us safe
this Advent day and always.

Amen.

Come, Lord Jesus, Prince of Peace



Weekly Advent Gospel Link

*Prepare the way of the Lord,
make straight his paths.*

On the second Sunday of Advent we hear again from Mark's Gospel. We are now in Year B of the three year cycle of Sunday readings named Year A, B and C. Today, the text we hear comes from the start of Mark's writing and he opens with a very direct message. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, is **the** Good News, the gospel. Mark's whole Gospel is about revealing for us who Jesus is.

Every day we listen out for the news of the day. But the Gospel of Jesus is the news of our salvation. And the message of John the Baptist points firmly to Jesus as the source of our salvation. The challenging figure of John the Baptist continues to call us, even today, to examine ourselves as we prepare to welcome Jesus into our lives once more. John reminds us that we are a baptised, forgiven people. We can be grateful for this forgiveness but we can also choose to be a better person as a result of it. And we can choose to share forgiveness with others in our lives. A key part of our Advent preparation is about figuring out this question: *what would it mean for me to be a better person, to be a forgiven and forgiving person, straightening the path for Jesus to take root in my life?*

See kandle.ie for weekly Scripture Sharing reflections on the Advent Sunday readings from homilies of the late Fr John Cummins & visit [Balyna parish Youtube channel](#) on the parish website for Fr Seán Maher's short weekly Advent Scripture Study series



This Christmas, you can help children around the world with Trocaire's selection of

sustainable and ethical gifts. A full list of possibilities are available at: <https://www.trocaire.org/news/help-children-around-the-world-with-trocaires-christmas-gifts/>

Christmas Preparation Masses

Join us at 7am from the 18th-23rd of December
as we celebrate Mass by Candlelight.

This way of celebrating Mass is an old Advent practice called a
Rorate Mass.

It helps us to focus our thoughts on the coming of the light of the world,
Jesus Christ.



Portlaoise
PARISH

Portlaoise Parish Carol Service

O Come let us Adore



**Join us, Wednesday 20th December, 7.30pm
In St. Peter and Paul's Church, Portlaoise**

**Available live on the Parish Webcam, Radio
and Shalom World TV.**



**OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR
THOSE WHO DIED RECENTLY ;**



Anthony Walsh
The Heath
Portlaoise

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I fear no evil; for you are with me; Your rod and your staff - they comfort me.

MAY HE REST IN PEACE
Our sympathy to his family.

A message of sympathy may be left for the family by logging on to the death notice at www.portlaoiseparish.ie/deathnotices

We are currently accepting Christmas Remembrances for our Christmas edition.

The final deadline for receipt of Christmas Remembrances will be 12 noon Friday 15th December.

Owing to print deadlines we will be unable to accept notices after this deadline.

**In Loving Memory of
CARMEL CROKE**

Pallas, Portlaoise.

2nd Anniversary occurs 11th December 2023

Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in St. Fintan's Church, Ballyfin this **Saturday 9th December at 8pm**

*No matter how life changes,
No matter what we do,
A special place within our hearts,
Is always kept for you.*

Sadly missed, loved and remembered by her loving family.

Rest in Peace Carmel



**In Loving Memory of
DAN RAFTER**

Ballymacken, Portlaoise.

Months Mind Mass will be celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church, on **Sunday 17th December, 10am.**



*Those we love don't go away,
They walk beside us everyday,
Unseen, unheard, but always near,
Still loved, still missed and very dear.*

Sadly missed by your loving wife Annette, daughter Mary, son Daniel, son-in-law Brian and daughter-in-law Kathy.

Rest in Peace Dan

**In Loving Memory of
ELIZABETH FLANAGAN**

née Wright. Late of Green Rd. Portlaoise.
2nd Anniversary occurs 12th December 2023



*For each cloud there's a rainbow,
For each shadow; the sun,
For each parting; memories,
So our loved ones are never truly gone.*

Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church, on Tuesday 12th December at 10am and Sunday 17th December at 12.30pm.

Sadly missed and always remembered by your loving husband Tony, daughter Sinead, sons Trevor, Kevin, Tony Jnr. and Matthew Jnr. grandchildren, relatives and friends.

Rest in Peace Elizabeth



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In Loving Memory of
Our Brother
JOE KERRY

Late of 48 O' Moore Place, Portlaoise.
5th Anniversary occurs
12th December 2023



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in
Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church on
Tuesday 12th December at 10am.

Also remembering Our Nephew
JOHN-PAUL MITCHELL
Whose Anniversary occurs at this time.



We wish we could see you one more time,
come walking through the door, but we
know that is impossible, we will hear your
voices no more.

We know you can feel our tears, and you don't want us to cry,
yet our hearts are broken because we don't understand why
you had to die.

We pray that God will give us strength and somehow get us
through, as we struggle with the heartache, that came when
we lost you.

*Always loved and remembered by all their loving
family and friends.*

May They Rest in Peace

In Loving Memory of
RICHARD BOOTH

Killeen, Mountmellick.

4th Anniversary occurs 11th December 2023



Also remembering his sister
JACINTA MOORE
née Booth
Australia and Ballyduff,
Stradbally
whose 3rd Anniversary
occurred 5th December.



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in the Church of
the Assumption, the Heath, this
Sunday 10th December at 9:30am.

Always in our thoughts, forever in our hearts.

May They Rest in Peace

In Loving Memory of
PATRICIA & THOMAS
TERRITT

34 Cherrygarth, Portlaoise.

2nd Anniversary of Patricia & 36th Anniversary of Thomas.
Mass will be celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church
This Sunday 10th
December at 12.30pm.



*Our thoughts are ever with
you both, though you have
passed away, and those
who loved you dearly,
are thinking of you today.*

Always in our thoughts, forever in our hearts.

Loved and missed by all your family & friends.

May Patricia & Thomas Rest in Peace

In Loving Memory of
JIMMY RAFTER

Coolnacart, Mountrath. Died 14th December 1957.
66th Anniversary occurs at this time.



*Deep in our hearts your memory is kept,
To love, to cherish and never forget,
In Heaven you rest, no worries or pain,
In God's own time, we will meet again.*

*Always remembered by his
loving family.*

May Jimmy Rest in Peace

In Loving Memory of
ROBERT O' CONNOR

Liogard and Forest Park, Portlaoise.
17th Anniversary occurs at this time.



Anniversary Mass will be
celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's
Parish this Sunday
10th December at 12.30pm.

*Time may hide a sadness, like a
smile can hide a tear,
But memories will last forever,
Of one we loved so dear,
Not just a memory or part of
the past, but ours to remember
as long as life lasts.*

*Sadly missed by Mammy, Daddy, Mark, Adrian, Liz
& family, Lorraine, Bernard & family.*

May Robert Rest in Peace

In Loving Memory of
JAMES O' REILLY

Marian House, Dublin Rd., Portlaoise.
44th Anniversary occurs 10th December 2023



A sudden call from God on high,
We had no chance to say goodbye,
Without farewell you fell asleep,
But memories of you, we will always keep.

*From his loving sons Martin and Jas, daughter
Eileen, daughters-in-law, sons-in-law,
grandchildren and great-grandchildren.*

May James Rest in Peace

**In Loving Memory of
DENIS (Dinny)
FITZPATRICK**

46 Liogard, Portlaoise.

15th Anniversary occurs 13th December 2023



We miss you from your
fireside chair,
Your loving smile and
gentle air,
Your vacant place, no one
can fill,
We miss you Daddy and
always will.
He was a husband so very
rare, content in his home
and always there,

On Earth he toiled, in Heaven he rests,
God bless you Din, you were one of the best.

*Lovingly remembered by your wife Doreen,
children Ann, Tina, John and Dor, sons-in-law,
daughter-in-law and grandchildren.*

May the Lord lay his gentle hand upon him

**In Loving Memory of
WILLIAM (BILLY) FARRELL**

Hillview Drive and formerly of St. John's Sq.

10th Anniversary occurs 8th December 2023

Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's
Parish Church this Sunday 10th December at 12.30pm.



*When you feel a little lonely
and all you want is me, just place
a hand upon your heart and you
know that's where I'll be.
I know how much you're hurting
but remember me and smile.
I know we are apart right now
but it's only for a while.
Take comfort that I'm happy
where the skies are always blue.
I'll be waiting at the rainbow bridge where Heaven
calls for you.*

*We love and miss you always, from your loving wife
Ann, children Christine, Jessica and William,
grandsons James and Tadhg and son-in-law James.*

May William Rest in Peace

**In Loving Memory of
JOHN and MARY ROCHE**

Mountrath Rd., Portlaoise.

John's 5th Anniversary occurs 18th December 2023
Mary's 2nd Anniversary occurs 9th January 2024



Anniversary Mass will be
celebrated in Sts. Peter &
Paul's Parish Church, on
**Saturday 16th December
at 6.30pm.**



I hide my tears when I say
your name,

But the pain in my heart is still the same,
Though I smile and seem carefree,
There is no one who misses you more than me.
Your presence I miss, your memory I treasure,
Loving you always, forgetting you never.

Sadly missed and always remembered by their sons,
daughters, grandchildren, sons-in-laws, daughters-in-law,
great-grandchildren and extended family.

May They Rest in Peace

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

**In Loving Memory of
ANGELA CLEARY née Colbert**

37 Lakeglen, Portlaoise.

6th Birthday away from home occurs 11th December 2023.



*To a loving Wife, cherished
Mother and adored Nanny*

*We think of you in silence,
We often speak your name,
But all we have are memories and
your picture in a frame.
Your resting place we visit and put
flowers there with care,
But no one knows the heartache,
As we turn and leave you there.*

Sadly missed by your loving husband Tom, daughters
Stephanie, Tracey and Paula, grandchildren Craig, Ben,
Ryan, Roisin and Willow and great-granddaughter Grace.

Always in our hearts.

Rest in Peace Mam

**In Loving Memory of
JOHN ARRIGAN**

Newpark, Portlaoise.

10th Anniversary occurred 8th December 2023



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in
Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church, on
Sunday 10th December, 12.30pm.

*Sadly missed by all his loving
family and friends.*

Rest in Peace John

**In Loving Memory of
JOSEPH & BRIDGET
CLEAR**

Whose Anniversaries occur at this time.



Will those who think of them
today,
A little prayer to Jesus say.
*Always remembered by your
loving family.*

May Joseph and Bridget Rest in Peace

**In Loving Memory of
MICHAEL & BRIDGET RYAN**
KILMURRAY, STRADBALLY

Whose 10th and 5th Anniversaries occur at this time.

Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in the Church of
the Assumption, the Heath, this Sunday 10th December
at 9:30am.



*To your resting place
we visit, place flowers
there with care,
But no one knows our
heartache, when we
turn and leave you
there.*



*Sadly missed by their loving family, extended family
and friends.*

May They Rest in Peace

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
In Loving Memory of
CARMEL McENERY (née O'Connell)
Cloncollane, Ballyroan.



We, Carmel's family, wish to
express our deepest gratitude
to all who supported us and
sympathised with us, both
online, and in person, at the
time of her departure from this
life. We would like to thank
those who stood on the road,
those at the cemetery and
everyone who sent Mass cards

and words of comfort.

A special thanks to Mr. Flemming and all the staff at
Portlaoise hospital.

Thanks to Abbyleix Community Nursing Unit and Day
Care Unit. Special thanks to Rita, Deirdre and Serena.
Sincere thanks to Laois Palliative Care, especially Anna
Morris who looked after Carmel with kind and
professional care.

Many thanks to Keegan Funeral Directors for their
professional service and to Ashling Rohan for the
beautiful music. Many thanks to the gravediggers at
Portlaoise cemetery.

We would like to thank Fr. Paddy for a beautiful funeral
Mass and all who contributed to both the Mass and
removal. We would especially like to thank Betty Delaney
for her many years of kindness and care to Carmel.

As it would be impossible to thank everyone individually,
please accept this acknowledgement as an expression of
our deepest gratitude. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has
been offered for your intentions.

Rest in Peace Carmel

**In Loving Memory of
FRANK DUNNE**

Ballyfin and formerly St. Brigid's Place, Portlaoise.
8th Anniversary occurs 9th December 2023



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated
in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church,
Sunday 10th December at 12:30pm.

*There is a corner in our hearts you
visit everyday,
A special place that is yours alone,
and there you always stay.*

*Loved and remembered by your loving wife
Kathleen and family.*

Rest in Peace Frank

**In Loving Memory of
DENIS BOWE**

7 Ashley Gardens, Portlaoise.

7th Anniversary occurs 16th December 2023



Anniversary Mass will be
celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's
Parish Church on Saturday
16th December at 6.30pm.

*Your life was love and labour,
Your love for your family true,
You did your very best for all of us,
We will always remember you.*

*Sadly missed by your loving wife Margaret,
daughter Yvonne, sons Denis and David and
extended family.*

May Denis Rest in Peace



Prepare a way
for the
Lord

Luke 34

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✉️ james@mckeonmemorials.ie ✉️ sales@mckeonmemorials.ie

🌐 www.mckeonmemorials.ie

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057-8620567
PAUL; 087-2562137
NIALL;
086-2770095



**In Loving Memory of
ETHNA DUNNE**

Clonad, Portlaoise.

3rd Anniversary occurs 15th December 2023



*Three years have passed since you left
us in December,
Treasured memories still fill our hearts,
fond times we all remember.*

Also remembering her 90th Birthday
which occurred 9th November 2023
90th Birthday wishes Mam sent to
Heaven

*Your presence we miss, your memory we treasure,
Loving you always, forgetting you never.*

From your loving family.

Also remembering our Dad Anthony at this time.
Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in Raheen Church
on Saturday 16th December at 7pm.

Rest in Peace Ethna



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A voice cries in the wilderness

Mark 1:3

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Portlaoise Parish



Results for
7th December 2023

10

24

29

31

No €17,000 Jackpot Winner

WINNERS

Louise Cosgrave
Cheryl and Brendan Dowling
Teresa Timmons
Cathal O'Neill
Tom Colohan
Rita Herwelling
Sinead Murphy

MATCH 3s €1,000

PROMOTER

On Line Lotto
Barbara Dowling
Anne Ging
Cathal O'Neill
Tom Colohan
Pacelli Walsh
Mai Murphy

7
Match
3s
Receive
€143
each

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We're **OPEN**
SATURDAY

The Parish Shop is open Saturdays for the month of
December; 9th, 16th and 23rd from 10am to 1pm

Second Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11 | Responsorial Psalm: 84:9-14
2 Peter 3:8-14 | Mark 1:1-8

Support for the Parish

We have traditionally depended on the passing of collection baskets at Sunday Masses for support. *Thank you* to the many who have found new ways of continuing to support the Parish. The generosity of so many means we **continue** to be well supported. Please find your way to contribute.

- * Making your offering in the boxes at the entrances
- * Using the Envelope boxes for regular donations - boxes available at Church porches and Parish Centre
 - * Direct payment by cheque or cash
 - * Cashless Point at the back of the Parish Church
 - * Donation facility on our website
- * Standing Order forms available at the Parish Centre
 - * Or Transfer directly to our Account

Portlaoise Parish Account: IBAN: IE53AIBK93327916658045

Portlaoise Parish Clergy Fund Account:

IBAN: IE12AIBK93327916658201

(The BIC for both accounts is AIBKIE2D)

THANK YOU

Clergy of the Parish



Msgr. John Byrne P.P.V.G.
Tel: 057 8621142



Fr. Ciprian Matei C.C.
Tel: 057 8600122



Fr. Simon Jin
Tel: 057 8661605



Fr. Adriano de Oliveira
Tel: 057 8600121



Deacon Eugene Keyes
Tel: 057 8621142

To contact the Priest on Duty:
Parish Centre during office hours
Tel: 057 8621142
Outside office hours
in emergency only
Tel: 057 8621364

Safeguarding

All safeguarding statements and policies can
viewed on our website and our Church Porches.
Diocesan Designated Liaison Person
Kathleen Sherry safeguarding@kandle.ie

Parish Centre



Office Hours Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Phone: 057-8621142 / 057-8660722

E-mail: info@portlaoiseparish.ie

Twitter: @portlaoiseparish

MANAGER Declan Kelly

Parish Secretaries Michelle Bartley

Agnieszka Kaczmarek

Accounts Michelle Conroy

Sacristans Parish Church

Sr. Sybil and Sr. Julie

All Masses and services from the Parish Church and
the Heath Church are live streamed
www.portlaoiseparish.ie

(Sacristy phone attended prior to Mass times
057 8600119)



Secretary: Julie Conroy

Monday to Thursday

11am to 1pm & 2.15pm to 5pm

057-8692154

Advertising deadline: 12 noon Wednesday

Subject to availability of space

E-mail: linkup@portlaoiseparish.ie

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