

**PORTLAOISE  
PARISH**

**link  
up**

3rd December 2023

**First Sunday of Advent**

*A Blessing Prayer*

*Loving God,*

*let your blessing come upon us  
as we light this wreath.*

*May it be a sign of hope for us  
as we prepare for your coming  
and may it turn our hearts to you  
in the days ahead.*

*Give us and the world your  
peace and love*

*as we wait in joyful hope.*

*We ask this through Christ  
our Lord. Amen.*

*Come, Lord Jesus!*

See on pages 18 & 19 an Advent Bulletin  
from our Diocese

**The Parish Centre 057 8621142**

**E-mail: [info@portlaoiseparish.ie](mailto:info@portlaoiseparish.ie)**

**Parish and Diocesan Websites: [www.portlaoiseparish.ie](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie) [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie)**

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[fb.com/portlaoiselinkup](https://fb.com/portlaoiselinkup)**



# Come, Lord Jesus

## Lord of Hope



### THE WREATH

Today we light the first of our Advent candles. The traditional use of Advent candles originated in eastern Germany prior to the Reformation. There are three purple candles and one pink candle. Purple for the royalty of the coming **King** .... the pink candle is the third candle to be lit on what is call **Gaudate Sunday** and represents '**joy**'. The gradual lighting of the four candles symbolises the coming **Light** into the world. The wreath itself is also symbolic. The circle of evergreen in which the candles are placed represent everlasting life.

### ABOUT ADVENT

The word Advent means "coming" or "arrival." The focus of the season is the celebration of the birth of Jesus the Christ in his First Advent, and the anticipation of the return of Christ the King in his Second Advent. Advent is far more than simply marking a 2,000 year old event in history. It is celebrating a truth about God, the revelation of God in Christ whereby all of creation might be reconciled to God.

**'Stay awake, because you do not know either the day or the hour,' Jesus said to his disciples.**

Today's Gospel; Mark 13

### A Prayer for the First Sunday of Advent

God of light and life,  
Give us hope as we wait  
For your coming again.  
When we are temped  
to be grateful to have found you  
While others are lost,  
Send us out into the darkness  
In search of those who need you most.  
Amen.



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

**Monday to Thursday : 7.30am and 10am**

**Friday**

**(The Immaculate Conception  
of the Blessed Virgin Mary)**

**(Thursday Vigil) 7.30pm**

**(Friday) 8.30am, 10am, 12.30pm & 7.30pm**

**The Heath: 9.30am**

**Ratheniska: 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.**



**Fáilte**

**We welcome into our  
Parish Community**

Luke Forde,  
Shaen.

**Who was baptised last weekend.**

### The Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary December 8th

It is she, Mary herself, who is the Immaculate Conception; the day does not refer to Mary's conception of Jesus but to



the conception of Mary in the womb of her mother, St. Anne. From the very moment of her conception, she was filled with grace by God. The doctrine asserts that Mary, the mother of Jesus, was preserved by God from the stain of original sin at the time of her own conception. The dogma of Mary being conceived without sin was defined by Pope Pius IX in 1854.

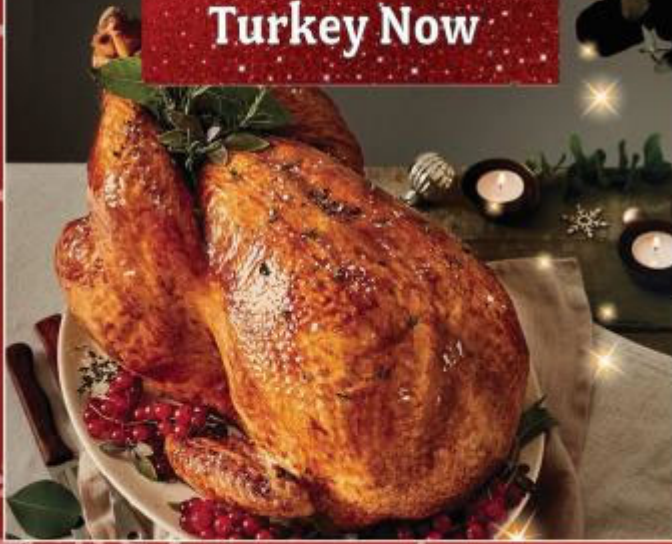




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11am-4pm

Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> Dec. 2pm-4:30pm

Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> to Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> Dec.

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**Closing date for receipt of applications Wed. 6<sup>th</sup> December 2023**

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**Portlaoise Active Retirement** meet every Wednesday in the Parish Centre for an afternoon of friendship, fun and activities at 3pm. New members always welcome.

**Coffee Morning** in the Parish Centre on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December after Mass in aid of Autism, lots of goodies, our choir will be singing carols and there will be some lovely hampers in our raffle. Raffle cards, €2 line, available from any member. Please support this worthy cause.

**13<sup>th</sup> December;** Christmas dinner in the Parish Centre, €20 per member. Wine reception at 12 noon, followed by dinner at 12.30pm and music & dancing upstairs. money to be paid soon. For any further information please contact P.R.O. Sheila at 087-6204617.

**Results of Whist Drive held in Parish Centre on Tuesday, 28<sup>th</sup> November;**

**Top Score:** T. Kearns | **1<sup>st</sup> Lady:** F. Gaynor | **2<sup>nd</sup> Lady:** S. Chester | **1<sup>st</sup> Gent:** A. Kavanagh and L. McCartney  
**1<sup>st</sup> Half:** T. Mulhare | **2<sup>nd</sup> Half:** S. Duff | **Raffle:** 1<sup>st</sup> F. Keenan | 2<sup>nd</sup> N. Delaney | 3<sup>rd</sup> C. Fitzpatrick  
4<sup>th</sup> P.J. Cahill | 5<sup>th</sup> B. Fox



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

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

**Retired HSE Staff Christmas Dinner** at the Killeshin hotel, Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> December at 2pm. All retired staff welcome. Names to M. Costigan 087-6219253 or Charlotte Griffin 087-2068974 before Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> November.

**RELIGIOUS NOTES**

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

**Rosary in the Church of the Assumption, the Heath;** Rosary will be prayed at the Grotto at 8pm on the first Friday of every month. All are welcome to join with us in prayer.

**Totus Tuus Magazine** is a Catholic magazine, full of articles from Irish priests and laity, which aims to highlight the beauty and joy of our faith. It is going into its 7<sup>th</sup> year and is run by donations. If you haven't come across Totus Tuus Magazine and would like a free copy please contact Fiona Kiely on 086-8760058.

**Night Vigil to Knock; 7<sup>th</sup> December,** Leaving Lyster Sq. carpark at 7.30pm. Seats must be booked with €10 deposit to Helena 087-9611331 or Maura 087-1210263.

**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 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023 until 5<sup>th</sup> January 2024.

**Adoration Ballyfin Church;** This Advent, consider spending time in adoration, praying for our bishops and priests through the intercession of Our Lady of Knock. As we offer our rosary and Divine Mercy for them, through our Lady of Knock's intercession, His love flows to us, our families and our parishes. O COME LET US ADORE HIM! Whether it's half an hour or two hours you have to offer, you are most welcome! Each Monday Night 6.45pm to 9pm in St. Fintan's Church, Ballyfin (R32TD61).

**Sponsorship Opportunity - Portlaoise Lions Club Christmas Voucher Initiative;** Dear Businesses of Portlaoise and Co. Laois, this Christmas season let's come together to make a meaningful impact on our community! Portlaoise Lions Club is excited to introduce our Christmas Voucher Initiative, aimed at supporting those in need through the financial challenges of the festive season. We invite businesses to join us as sponsors for this heart-warming initiative. Your sponsorship will contribute to the creation of Christmas vouchers that will be distributed to individuals and families facing financial hardship, ensuring they can enjoy the spirit of the season with dignity. To discuss sponsorship details and how your business can be a part of this initiative, please reach out to **085-7380680** or pm our FB page.



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## **CHRISTMAS MARKET**

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Beer Garden,  
Kilminchy

*Please support local*



## **Are you feeling stressed, low, isolated, or anxious?**

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Market**

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IN AID OF  
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- STORYTELLING

\*The Christmas market will close at 5pm Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup>



We are reaching out to local businesses and community groups to invite them to participate as vendors/performers. Vendor Categories: Food and Drinks Vendors (Art and Craft Stalls) Entertainment and Games (Other please specify). Contribution: A fee of €250 will be payable for all exhibitors/stall holders. Applicants must be located in the County of Laois. Expressions of interest for or and further details including terms and conditions about the event can be found on [www.laois.ie](http://www.laois.ie) or [www.laoistaste.ie](http://www.laoistaste.ie)

VISIT [LAOIS.IE](http://LAOIS.IE) OR [LAOISTASTE.IE](http://LAOISTASTE.IE) FOR MORE INFORMATION



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# COFFEE MORNING

Friday 8<sup>th</sup> December  
In Portlaoise Parish Centre  
10:30am

Organised by Portlaoise Active Retirement Group  
In aid of Autism Charity.

Lots of goodies!! Our choir will sing carols.  
Raffle on the day for some lovely hampers.

Raffle cards  
€2 available  
from any  
member.



est. 1963 [autism.ie](http://autism.ie)  
Irish Society for Autism  
Registered No. 2008529 0175147

Please support this worthy cause!

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Sporting Events and Concerts  
Tours  
Work Events  
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# Christmas Cards

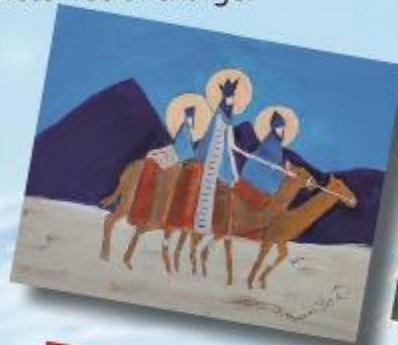


## FOR SALE in aid of THE CUISLE CANCER SUPPORT CENTRE

The Cuisse Cancer Support Centre is a registered charity, offering professional support to people diagnosed with cancer and to their families.

All proceeds from the sale of these cards go directly to the Cuisse Cancer Support Centre and help to continue providing all our services free of charge.

- 8 CARDS PER PACK
- 3 PACKS €20
- 1 PACK €8



Christmas Cards designed by the Cuisse Centre Art Group.



OUR CONTACT NUMBER IS (057) 8681492



# CateKIDS

Portlaoise Parish [www.portlaoiseparish.ie](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie)

HANDING ON  
THE FAITH



## Jesus is coming again!

Christmas is coming soon. It is easy to tell. We see the signs all around us. What are the signs? We see Christmas decorations in the stores and on houses, we hear Christmas songs on the radio, we see ads on television and in the newspapers. What if we didn't have all of these things to remind us that Christmas is coming? How would we know? I guess we would just have to look at the calendar.

Two thousand years ago, there was no television or radio. There were no newspaper ads announcing that a child would be born and that he would be the Saviour of the world. When Jesus was born, very few people even knew about it, but it was an event which God had promised and which had been foretold by prophets many years before. Many people had been looking forward to the coming of the Messiah, they just didn't know exactly when he was coming.

This Sunday marks the beginning of a very special season called Advent.

Do you know what Advent means?

The dictionary says that advent is "the coming of something very important." What is it? Is it Christmas? Yes, we are looking forward to that, but we are also looking forward to the coming of

another very important event. The return of Jesus! Jesus promised to come again. You won't hear much about it on the television or radio and you won't read much about it in the newspapers, but he promised he would return and we believe it! We look forward to it just as people two thousand years ago looked forward the coming Messiah. We don't know exactly when he will come, it isn't marked on the calendar, but we are watching and waiting.

As we look prepare to celebrate the birthday of our Saviour, let's also be sure we are prepared for the day that he will come again.



Dear Father,

we thank you for this special time of year and what it means to us. We thank you for keeping your promise to send a Saviour — and we thank you for the promise that he will come again. In the name of Jesus we pray. Amen.



2023

# DECEMBER



Monday	Tue.Sday	Wedne.Sday	Thur.Sday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<p>4 Be kind to the younger children in the playground.</p> 	<p>5 Is there something you could donate to St. Vincent de Paul?</p> 	<p>6 Invite someone who has been left out, to play with you.</p>	<p>7 Make an ornament for your Christmas</p> 	<p>8 Try and go to Mass today.</p> 	<p>9 Help the Homeless, donate something small to P.A.T.H</p>	<p>10 Light two purple candles on the Advent Wreath.</p> 
<p>11 Smile at everyone, you meet today</p> 	<p>12 Remember to say 'Grace before Meals'.</p> 	<p>13 Have you sent your letter to Santa?</p> 	<p>14 Do something nice for your teacher</p> 	<p>15 Read a Christmas Story</p> 	<p>16 Pray for your grandparents today</p> 	<p>17 Light three purple candles and one pink candle on the Advent</p> 
<p>18 <small>• Lady night</small> Make Christmas Cards for your</p> 	<p>19 Forgive someone who has hurt your feelings.</p> 	<p>20 Sing some Christmas Carols.</p> 	<p>21 Visit the church to see the crib and ask for help to light a candle.</p> 	<p>22 Help, without being asked!</p> 	<p>23 Help Mummy and Daddy to prepare for Christmas.</p> 	<p>24 Say a prayer for all who are expecting a new baby at this time.</p> 
<p>25 Welcome Baby Jesus! A child is born.</p> 	<p>26 Surprise your Mam or Dad by making breakfast for them.</p> 	<p>27 Draw a picture of your crib.</p> 	<p>28 Give someone a hug.</p> 	<p>29 Thank God for all the good things in your life</p> 	<p>30 Compliment Yourself!</p> 	<p>31 Bring the baby Jesus from your crib to Mass this weekend to be blessed.</p> 





# Time to Think!

## Ireland's Lonely

An Irish pub's Christmas video of a lonely, old man has left people in tears. Viewers were "bawling" after watching the heart-wrenching video for Charlie's Bar in Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh, which has gone viral with millions of views on TikTok. The commercial has also gained millions of views on X, formerly Twitter. The moving two-minute clip shows an elderly man bringing a bunch of flowers to a grave and looking heartbroken at the grave remembering loved ones. He then takes a walk through the town, tipping his cap to people passing by - but they walk on, too. Some are too enthralled in conversation, while others pretend not to notice him. The man arrives at Charlie's Bar on Church Street at the same time as a young couple with a little dog and they all go inside for a pint. As he sits down by the fire to drink his pint of Guinness by himself, the little dog comes over to greet him. This prompts the young couple to join the man at his table as they "cheers" to a new friendship. The heart-warming story concludes with a quote from Irish poet WB Yeats: "There are no strangers here, only friends you haven't yet met". Posting the advert on their Facebook page, Charlie's Bar wrote: "Christmas can be such a joyful time for some and painfully hard for others". "One thing is for sure - you'll always receive a warm welcome when you walk through our doors. We will be open on Christmas Day, so if you are alone this festive season, drop in for a chat." People flocked to share their thoughts on the magical scene, with some saying it perfectly captured the true spirit of Christmas. One social media user commented: "Far better than all the nonsense that assumes everyone has a huge family, bank account and social circle who meet up to eat vast amounts of food, play board games and pretend to embrace the nonsensical 'magic of Christmas'."

Ireland has the highest levels of loneliness in Europe according to a new survey. The survey was carried out as part of a European Parliament pilot project by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) in collaboration with the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion (DG EMPL). Data on more than 20,000 Europeans was collected at the end of 2022 from an online consumer panel. It provides a detailed overview of loneliness in the European Union. Findings show that on average, 13% of respondents reported feeling lonely most or all of the time in 2022, while 35% reported being lonely at least some of the time. Loneliness prevalence differs across countries, this can be explained by cultural differences but also by demographic differences and, possibly, sampling differences.

According to the survey, loneliness is most prevalent in Ireland as over 20% of respondents reported feeling lonely. Luxemburg, Bulgaria, Greece followed behind while the lowest levels, all below 10%, are observed in the Netherlands, Czech Republic, Croatia and Austria.



**CHARLIE'S BAR**

There are no  
strangers here,  
Only friends you  
haven't yet met.

W.B. Yeats

A similar geographical pattern was already observed for data collected during the pandemic. The prevalence of loneliness decreased with increased age, income, and education. Having several meaningful relationships is associated with lower loneliness levels, but the frequency of contact also matters.

People experiencing major life events such as separation, job loss or finishing their studies are more often lonely. Evidence is also mixed on whether men or women are more likely to report being lonely. On average, women are more likely to be lonely, but when looking at gender differences by age, these differences are not statistically significant, according to the survey. Apart from age and gender, several other individual characteristics are found to be associated with loneliness. Previous studies found that the share of people who reported being lonely varied greatly by income level and work status. Richer respondents are less likely to be lonely than those in lower income areas and loneliness is more prevalent among the unemployed and students than among those who work. Education also matters, with higher education being negatively correlated with loneliness. Being in a relationship is associated with lower loneliness if individuals are happy in their relationship. Those in unhappy relationships are more likely to be lonely than single people. Consistently, individuals living with another adult are less likely to report loneliness compared to those living alone. Having a close relationship with several friends and family members not in the same household is also linked to a substantially lower risk of loneliness compared to having just one close contact or none. The frequency of contact with family members and friends also matters. Individuals who meet family members and friends at least once a week are less likely to be lonely. At least for family members, this also applies to exchanges via phone, the internet or social media. In this Season of good will, may we all make special effort to spend time with others.

*Fr. Paddy invites you to follow him on Twitter @frpaddybyrne, now over 31,200 followers or @AbbeyleixP or leave a comment on his blog on our parish website; [www.portlaoiseparish.ie/articles](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie/articles)*





Society of St. Vincent de Paul

*Ozanam House, No 1 Dublin Road Portlaoise Co Laois*

St. Vincent de Paul Portlaoise are preparing for an extremely busy period in the run up to Christmas.

Our volunteers will be working with people who strive to make Christmas a happy and joyful time for their families. However, some families are finding it very difficult to cope with rising energy costs accompanied with increases in the cost of food, heat, rent, education, and clothing. Our team has been working with families all year who struggle weekly and we assist, encourage and guide families in a confidential manner.

Our Portlaoise Conference consists of 9 volunteers, who give their time generously and free each week of the year, to assist this charity continue to support families and Individuals. We aim to try and alleviate poverty in the Portlaoise area for families, who through no fault of their own find themselves in very difficult and stressful times in their lives.

Our primary objective is to assist people in our community with food, heat, clothing, and education, however we listen to every individual case and assess the assistance required based on the information given.

This year we have spent €25,000 on education in our local community, this amount is made up from assisting our local primary and secondary schools where the principals have identified a need for support. As always, we assist our families who have children going into 3<sup>rd</sup> level education and the cost of accommodation and travel is hugely expensive. Any student who has not been successful in their SUSI application is welcome to contact us to discuss where we may be able to assist them.

We also work very closely with several local services in Portlaoise. We maintain a very good relationship with MABS, Treo Nua family Recourse Centre, Domestic Abuse Service, Bridge Street Community Mental Health Services, and the Parish Centre. We also assist several other services available to people in our community who may just need some help on an ad hoc basis.

By donating to St. Vincent de Paul Portlaoise, you are guaranteed that your donation is going to be put back into families in Portlaoise.

We cannot express enough how much we appreciate your continued support; without your assistance our work would not be impossible. Your donation will be vital in helping us succeed and will make an incredible difference to people's lives.

**Our upcoming St Vincent de Paul Church collection is on:**

***Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December***

***Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> and Sunday 17<sup>th</sup> December***

Thank you for taking the time to read this notice and we wish you good health and happiness as we all prepare for Christmas 2023.

***Confidential helpline: 087 765 5793***

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Billy Fitzpatrick', is enclosed in a white rectangular box. The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

---

Billy Fitzpatrick  
Chairperson – Portlaoise St Vincent de Paul



# Waiting in Hope Longing for Peace

An Advent bulletin for home and parish  
Week One 2023

## The Prayer of Advent: Come, Lord Jesus

'Come, Lord Jesus' is the prayer and the cry of God's people in Advent. If we pause and look around our world, we know that this is a prayer that needs to be prayed. In this year we are praying especially across the diocese that the peace and light of the Lord Jesus, the Prince of Peace, will overcome the darkest depths of conflict in our world and that all people will come to know and live in peace, as is the will of God.

Bishop Denis and the Diocesan Commission for Liturgical Formation invite people across the diocese to pray the Advent Household Prayer throughout Advent.

As we undertake our Advent waiting, we do so in hope, for we know that Jesus is our peace, our salvation, the One for whom we long and the One who is already with us. In a world of conflict and division, how will you let the Prince of Peace into those corners of your life where he is most needed? As a new Church year begins, we pray, 'Come, Lord Jesus' - the One who was, who is and who is to come. For through Him *hope* overcomes despair, *peace* overcomes division, *joy* overcomes desolation, *love* overcomes hatred. ***Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus!***

## Feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

On Friday, December 8, we celebrate this feast day of Mary, remembering that from the first moment of her existence in the womb of her mother Anne, Mary was preserved free from Original Sin, she was full of grace. See

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqeUpvMXLk8&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bqeUpvMXLk8&feature=emb_logo) for a short video on the meaning of this feast.

## Advent Scripture Study Video Series

Parishioners across the diocese are invited to access these short weekly videos during Advent, from Fr Seán Maher, P.P. Balyna parish, on the Balyna Parish Youtube channel via [Balynaparish.ie](http://Balynaparish.ie).

Fr Seán is a scripture scholar, and we are delighted that he is making these study videos available to a wide audience. Why not treat yourself to some time out to go deeper into the scriptures this Advent!

## An Advent Tradition for Church and Home:



### THE ADVENT WREATH

We invite you to continue or start the tradition of having an Advent wreath in the home. The advent wreath has a rich meaning. The **circle** of the wreath, with no beginning or end, symbolises the eternity of God. The **evergreen** reminds us of the everlasting life we have in Christ while any pine cones or pods in the wreath represent new life and resurrection. The **four candles** represent the four Sundays of Advent. **Purple** is traditionally a colour of penance and prayer while the **rose pink** candle that is lit on the Third Sunday (Gaudete/Rejoice Sunday) marks our joy as we move ever closer to Christmas.

As you light a candle on your Advent wreath for the first time, pray this prayer of blessing and take a moment talk to God about how you will journey through Advent this year alone or as a household. Finish your time of prayer, again, with the Advent prayer: Come, Lord Jesus!

### A Blessing Prayer

Loving God,  
let your blessing come upon us  
as we light this wreath.  
May it be a sign of hope for us  
as we prepare for your coming  
& may it turn our hearts to you  
in the days ahead.

Give us & the world your peace and love  
as we wait in joyful hope.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!



## Weekly Advent Gospel Link

The First Sunday of Advent marks the start of Year B in the three-year cycle of Sunday readings in the Church. For the next year, on a Sunday we will hear mainly from the Gospel of Mark.

Today, as we step into the season of Advent, Mark's gospel urges us to 'Be on your guard, stay awake'. (Chapter 13, Verse 33)

This passage is a strong reminder to us to ready ourselves for the coming of the Lord, to be attentive for God at work in our world and in our lives, to take time to pray to God who in love will give us the strength to face our lives in confidence. With hope in the Lord, we believe that Jesus is coming to us all the time. While in our Mass we pray, 'we await the blessed hope and the coming of our Saviour, Jesus Christ' we must be ready and prepared to welcome Him into our lives today. *Are we ready to do this? Are we prepared to let Jesus into the 'stuff' of our lives, into all those corners where he can bring us the hope that comes from Him alone? What would that mean? What might that look like?*

### **Why not spend time reflecting on the Sunday Scriptures this Advent.**

*See [kandle.ie](http://kandle.ie) for our weekly Scripture Sharing Reflections on the Advent Sunday readings and look out for a local scripture sharing group. If there isn't one, why not create one yourself and invite others to it. This year, the reflections are taken from homilies preached by the late Fr John Cummins and found in the recently published book, 'My Life In Your Hands, Year B & Year C'*



Society of St. Vincent de Paul Please remember and support the work of the Society of St Vincent de Paul this Advent



## An Advent hymn to think about...

### **O Come, O Come, Emmanuel**

In many parishes the first sound of Advent is the singing of this traditional hymn. The text for the verses comes from what are known as the 'O antiphons' that are sung at Evening Prayer on the last days of Advent.

Sometime around the year 1100 an unknown author took these antiphons and turned them into a metrical Latin poem. Eventually, an Anglican priest named John Mason Neale translated the Latin text into English. It was published in an 1853 hymnal by Thomas Helmore, using a 15<sup>th</sup> century French melody. From these origins we now have one of the most popular and well known Advent hymns.

The verses convey a plaintive mood of longing and yearning for God with each verse giving a name for Jesus that is full of hope. Notice how the petition of the verse is met by the joyful promise of the refrain – 'O Come, O come, Emmanuel...Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel shall come to you, O Israel'. In this Advent season we can call on God to come to us, knowing in faith, hope and joy that God answers us.

## An Advent Household Prayer

*We invite you take a moment each day in Advent to light your Advent wreath/ candle, to thank God for your Advent Day and to pray this prayer in union with the rest of our diocesan family, praying for peace in our world and in our 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.





# THE PARISH SHOP



**CALL IN AND BROWSE  
OUR LARGE SELECTION  
OF;**

- Cribs/Nativity Sets
- Christmas Ornaments and Gifts
- Cards for all occasions
- Diaries and Calendars
- Bibles and Books
- **Christmas Mass Bouquets €3**

*Christmas Blessings*



**Christmas Opening Hours**

Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Saturdays 2<sup>nd</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> Dec. 10am-1pm





## **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:  
Portlaoise, Abbeyleix, Ballyroan, Ballinacill, Spink and Raheen*

**Tel: 05786 62851**



*Congratulations to the "Two Amigos" from  
Abbeyleix Parish, who scooped the €17,000  
Jackpot this week in the K&L Lotto.*

*Pictured Left; Msgr. John  
presenting the cheque to  
Frances O'Leary.  
Also in the picture,  
Nora Tobin, sacristan  
Abbeyleix Parish*





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



**Tom Scully**  
Ballyfin Road  
Portlaoise



**Teresa Shortall**  
née Nevin  
Springmount  
Shanahoe



**Sonya Brannigan**  
**Campion**  
Mountrath

*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 THEY REST IN PEACE**  
*Our sympathy to their families.*

A message of sympathy may be left for the family by logging on to  
the death notice at [www.portlaoiseparish.ie/deathnotices](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie/deathnotices)

*In Loving Memory of*  
**MICHAEL KERRY**

*7 Cois na hAbhainn, Portlaoise.*  
**1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary occurs 6<sup>th</sup> December '23**



Anniversary Mass will be  
celebrated in  
Sts. Peter & Paul's  
Parish Church, this  
**Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December**  
**at 12.30pm.**

*Missing you always  
You never said I'm leaving,  
You never said goodbye,  
You were gone before we  
knew it,  
And only God knows why.*

*In life I loved you dearly, in death I love you still,  
In my heart I hold a place, that only you can fill.  
It broke my heart to lose you, but you did not go  
alone, a part of me went with you,  
the day God took you home.*

**Sadly missed by your heartbroken wife Tina x**

*Time slips by and life goes on,  
But from our hearts you are never gone,  
We think about you always,  
We talk about you too,  
We share so many memories,  
But we wish we still had you.*

**Sadly missed by his loving daughter Rebecca,  
Ciaran and grandkids Eoghan and Ava x**

*They say there is a reason,  
They say that time will heal,  
But neither time or reason, will change the  
way we feel,  
For no one knows the heartache that lies beyond  
our smiles, no one knows how many times we've  
broken down and cried.*

**Sadly missed by his loving son Declan,  
daughter-in-law Caitriona, grandkids  
Leah, Alanna and Hannah x**

*Rest in Peace Michael*



**In Loving Memory of  
MARGARET DRENNAN**

Ratheniska House, Stradbally, Portlaoise.  
Died 4<sup>th</sup> December 2019



4<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in the Church hall in Ratheniska (beside Church), on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 10am.

*Sadly missed and always remembered by your husband Arthur, son Diarmaid, daughter-in-law Anne, grandsons Sean and Padraig and your extended family, relatives and friends.*

*May Margaret Rest in Peace*

**In Loving Memory of  
MARGARET BERGIN**

Millhouse, Boley, Abbeyleix.  
1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary occurs 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in St. Brigid's Church, Shanahoe on **Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 12 noon.**

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

*Sadly missed, loved and remembered by her loving husband Jimmy, sons James, John and Owen, extended family and friends.*

*Rest in Peace Margaret*

**In Loving Memory of  
ELEANOR WALSH**

Capoley Lane, Portlaoise.  
11<sup>th</sup> Anniversary occurs 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2023.



"The best way to feel better is to make someone else feel good"  
- Eleanor Walsh

*Dearly missed by all her loving family and friends.*

*Rest in Peace Eleanor*

**In Loving Memory of  
NOREEN CONROY**

11 Roselawn, Portlaoise.  
12<sup>th</sup> Anniversary occurred 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church, this **Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 6.30pm.**

**Remembering also at this time** Noreen's father Michael and Mother Hannah, and also Stephen Conroy, Marian Avenue, his sister Sheila and her husband Noel Graham from Arles.

**From John, Kathy, Jennifer and Jack Conroy and Hazel and grandchildren Robyn & J. J**

James O' Donovan, Oola, Limerick (27<sup>th</sup> November) His wife Kathleen and Kathleen's sister Bríd Herbert and her brother Bob Nash.

**From Kathy, John, James, Margaret and Willie.**

Also remembering all the staff at HEART Ambulance. Keep them all safe and protect them and our patients and ambulances each day on their journeys to and from hospitals.

*May They Rest in Peace*

**In Loving Memory of  
KEVIN YOUNG**

34 St. Brigid's Place, Portlaoise and formerly Derreen, Cloneygowan, Co. Offaly.  
5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary occurred 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023.



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church, this Saturday, **2<sup>nd</sup> December at 6:30pm.**

Five years have passed since you left us in November,

Treasured memories still fill our hearts,  
Fond times we all remember.

Five years away from home you are, and missed dearly every day, to have one last minute to sit with you, "I love you", I would say.

*Thinking of you always, from Pamela, Roger, Rosie, Melanie, Aaron, Chloe, Hannah, Nicole and all your grandchildren.*

*Rest in Peace Kevin*

**In Loving Memory of  
WILLIAM (Willard) DOWNEY**  
Formerly 8 Triogue Place, Portlaoise.

6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary occurs  
4<sup>th</sup> December 2023

*Will those who think of  
Willard today,  
A little prayer to Jesus say.*

*Thinking of you always,  
your good friend Andy.*



*Rest in Peace Bill*



**In Loving Memory of**  
**DENIS CAHILL**

Kylevalley, Stradbally, Laois.



7<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Mass will be celebrated  
in Holy Cross Church, Ratheniska, this  
Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December at 10am.

*"Sometimes when I close my eyes,  
I can imagine things just as they used to  
be.....It only lasts a moment but that  
moment, is magic"*

*Sadly missed by Mam, Dad and Lily xoxo*

*May Denis Rest in Peace*

**In Loving Memory of**  
**MARY ELLEN CAHILL**

Kylevalley, Stradbally, Laois.

1<sup>st</sup> Anniversary occurs 1<sup>st</sup> December 2023



Anniversary Mass will be  
celebrated in Holy Cross Church,  
Ratheniska, this Sunday  
3<sup>rd</sup> December at 10am.

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

*Sadly missed, loved and  
remembered by her loving family.*

*Rest in Peace Mary*

**In Loving Memory of**  
**SEAN PHELAN**

Fisherstown

Months Mind Mass Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> December.



*Will those who think of Sean  
today,*

*A little prayer to Jesus say.*

*Sadly missed by his loving family.*

*Rest in Peace Sean*

**In Loving Memory of**  
**LILY REID**

Colliers Lane, Portlaoise.

13<sup>th</sup> Anniversary occurs 10<sup>th</sup> December 2023



Anniversary Mass will be celebrated  
in Sts. Peter & Paul's Parish Church,  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> December at 11.15am.

*My Angel in the Sky  
Each day I look to Heaven,  
Each day I call your name,  
Each day just feels so different,  
It hasn't been the same.*

*Each day I always question, I often wonder why?  
You had to go away from me, my Angel in the sky.  
I keep you in my memories, since we've been apart,  
And I'll always have a part of you, locked safely in my heart.*

*Always loved and remembered by her loving husband  
and family, extended family and friends.*

*May Lily Rest in Peace*

Hope

The First  
Sunday of  
Advent

The people walking in  
darkness have seen a great  
light; on those living in the  
land of deep darkness a  
light has dawned.  
ISAIAH 9:1-5



We are currently accepting Christmas  
Remembrances for our Christmas edition.

**The final deadline for receipt of  
Christmas Remembrances will be  
12 noon Friday 15<sup>th</sup> December.**

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

**In Loving Memory of**  
**A Special Mum and Gran**  
**ALICE HILLIARD**

63 Marian Avenue Portlaoise. 10<sup>th</sup> year away from home.

And her Husband **JIMMY HILLIARD**

On his 4<sup>th</sup> Birthday away from home.



*Our love is forever and  
although we are apart,  
Our love only grows stronger,  
deep within our hearts.*

Sadly missed by her son  
Noel, daughter Elizabeth,  
son-in-law Diarmuid, grandchildren Faith, Lauren, Brooke,  
Jennifer, Nicole, Bernard, Rebecca and their partners,  
great-grandchildren and Alice's brother Andrew.

*May They Rest in Peace*



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Contact Matthew  
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David **087-2369887**

**HENRY RANKIN**  
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**Stay awake**

Matthew 24:42





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***You may also join the parish lotto online at***

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## Portlaoise Parish



Results for  
30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

03

09

21

24

No €16,000 Jackpot Winner

### WINNERS

Eileen Brennan  
Barney  
Caroline  
Marie Dollard  
Adrian Gray  
Peter Holohan  
Mary Delaney  
Willie Rowe  
The Dunne Family  
Kathleen Kelly  
Marian Carton  
Muireann McCann  
Christina Troy  
Declan Ryan  
Frank Morrissey  
Noel Duggan  
Kathleen McEvoy  
David Curran  
Pam Killeen  
Annemarie Sydes  
Declan Carroll  
Celine Cripps  
Sadie Cuddy  
Sr Helen

MATCH 3s €1,000



Play PARISH



[www.portlaoiseparish.ie](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie)

### PROMOTER

Kathleen Brown  
Julie Conroy  
Peter Ryan  
Online Lotto  
Parish Centre  
Nora Walsh  
Mary Delaney  
Kathleen Dunne  
Geraldine O'Neill  
Brigid Lalor  
Anne Brennan  
Browns Shop  
Parish Centre  
Eileen Preston  
Anthony Preston  
Peter Ryan  
Peter Ryan  
Veronica Curran  
Pam Killeen  
Jerry Dooley  
Betty O'Rourke  
Celine Cripps  
Betty Phelan  
Bernie Phelan

Next Week's Jackpot is €17,000

### First Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 63:16-17, 64:1, 3-8 | Responsorial Psalm: 79:2-3, 15-16, 18-19  
1 Corinthians 1:3-9 | Mark 13:33-37

## 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 be viewed on our website and our Church Porches.  
Diocesan Designated Liaison Person  
Kathleen Sherry [safeguarding@kandle.ie](mailto:safeguarding@kandle.ie)

## Parish Centre



Office Hours Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Phone: 057-8621142 / 057-8660722

E-mail: [info@portlaoiseparish.ie](mailto:info@portlaoiseparish.ie)

Twitter: @portlaoiseparis

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](http://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](mailto:linkup@portlaoiseparish.ie)

PARISH SHOP

057 8621142 - Claire Scully





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