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Canon Leamy is on Sick Call this week; Phone No.: 087 – 2524979
PARISH E-MAIL ADDRESS: mitchelstownparishofficechurch@gmail.com
DEADLINE FOR THE NEWSLETTER IS 10AM WEDNESDAY
Office Open: 9 am to 12 noon – Monday to Friday.

Christmas Message

“I was a stranger and you made me welcome” Mt. 25:35

My friends,

Home is everything, without it we are all lost! Home is where we are safe and sound.

So much of our contact and connection is now done by way of technology and it is great in many aspects but it is still less than the real thing.

In the midst of almost full employment so many are without a place to call home. Enormous amounts of money have been directed toward alleviating the housing crisis. It needs to continue but needs to be re-evaluated for its impact.

The plight of asylum seekers and refugees has generated heated debate. Their coming to Ireland is both a challenge and opportunity. As a people we have known both the rejection that emigration brought in some contexts but also the welcome given our forebears across many countries in which they sought a better life.

The Christmas Crib scene is often so sanitised that the harsh reality of the homeless young couple is not evident. The child born to them was destined to change our view of the stranger.

All strangers evoke some anxiety and fear. That is until we begin to meet the stranger and begin to ask ourselves what it is we are afraid of? Many new and strange experiences continually come into our lives. If we fail to welcome them, we are all the poorer.

Great credit is due to so many communities who have conscientiously supported the work of integration. Our schools deserve special recognition for their work in this regard, often without additional resources being provided. Still the challenge remains. We have shown that we have the capacity to do whatever is required.

In a time of great change in society we all can feel a sense of strangeness. Things are not like they were. For older people it can be like a foreign country. For younger people it can be reflected in anxiety about where one fits in or for others a deeper sense of alienation of being outside the flow of society. This too is a form of homelessness, of not feeling secure and welcome. Christmastime often sharpens that experience of being outside the loop of celebration.

Whatever your mood at this time you are welcome. Find your own time and space among our gatherings in prayer. Stillness before the great mystery of these days can be wonderful in coming home to our God gifted selves.

Wishing you Joy and Peace.

+ Wm. Crean - Bishop of Cloyne

Mitchelstown Parish & Community Newsletter

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Office Phone: 025 / 84062 **Open:** Monday to Friday 9 a.m. to 12 noon

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Thought for the Day

Pope Francis has spoken on several occasions about his devotion to St Joseph. St Joseph is his favourite saint, he says, because he shows us how God reveals his plan to us in our times of silence and rest. He keeps a statue of a sleeping St Joseph on his desk, placing prayer requests under it. Speaking on a trip to the Philippines in 2015, he said: ‘I have great love for Saint Joseph, because he is a man of silence and strength ... Joseph’s rest revealed God’s will to him. In this moment of rest in the Lord, as we pause from our many daily obligations and activities, God is also speaking to us. But like St Joseph, once we have heard God’s voice, we must rise from our slumber; we must get up and act.’

Today’s Gospel recalls the central role played by St Joseph in the story of the birth of Jesus. A man of honour from the outset, the goodness of his character is further highlighted by his response to God’s voice. When he wakes up after hearing God’s instructions in a dream, he immediately acts on it and takes Mary into his home. His openness to God’s will is a crucial element in the story that follows: his partnership with and support of Mary, the birth of Jesus, his care for the child ‘who is to save his people’.

Christmas is very near now, and we are busy and preoccupied with our preparations. A good time, perhaps, to pause in silence, to rest with God, and to listen to what he might have to say to us.

DON'T BE LONELY THIS CHRISTMAS - Senior Help Line, Ireland’s only national listening service for older people, will be open every day over Christmas and the New Year from 10 am to 10 pm. We are here to take your call if you are on your own, feeling isolated, worried or would like someone to talk to. Christmas can be a sad time for many people, and in the midst of apparent universal gaiety, some of us can feel very alone. Senior Help Line volunteers are trained older people who understand the ups and downs of life, and are happy to listen, to keep company and to support. **So let us put the companionship into Christmas this year. LoCall 1850 440 444, no call costs more than 30 cents. All calls completely confidential.**

CHRISTMAS CONFESSION TIMES:

**CHRISTMAS MASS TIMES:
PARISH CHURCH**

Tuesday 24th December - Christmas Eve
 Morning Prayer: 8.00am
 Morning Masses: 8.30am & 10.00am
 Vigil of the Nativity: 7.30pm
 Night Mass of Nativity: 10.00pm

Wednesday 25th December - Christmas Day:
 Masses: 8.30am, 10.00am & 11.30am
 (Note the extra 10.00am morning Mass)
N.B.: No Evening Mass on Christmas Day

Weekday Masses from Thursday 26th – 28th December.
 26th December (St. Stephen’s Day) 11.00am
 27th - 28th December at 10.00am.

CHRISTMAS OFFERINGS FOR THE PRIESTS: will be taken up on Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day. The Priests wish to thank all the parishioners for their generosity to their collections.

ST. JOSEPH’S CHURCH, KILLACLUIG:

Wednesday 25th December – Christmas Day: 10.00am

CHURCH OF THE HOLY FAMILY, BALLYGIBLIN:

Tuesday 24th December – Christmas Eve: 6pm

Holy Hour on New Year’s Eve. On 31st December, Fr Pat and the Servant Sisters of the Home of the Mother will be leading a Holy Hour from 11pm with Mass at midnight in the Parish Church to pray at the beginning of 2020. All are welcome.

The Parish Office will be closed for the Christmas Holidays from Friday, 20th December to Tuesday, 7th January 2020. There will be **No Newsletter** the weekend of the, 28th& 29th December. We would like to thank everyone for supporting our Newsletter during 2019 and look forward to dealing with you in 2020. *Wishing you all a very Happy Peaceful Christmas and the very best for 2020.*

A Catechism Study Day for teenagers will take place in **Corrin Events Centre, Rathcormac, on Saturday 4th January.** The day will include catechism study, a short movie, music, testimonies, dinner. 5euro. This is a repeat of a similar event held last year which was well attended. Details on the Cloyne Diocese website or by phoning 086 9972539

Mitchelstown Citizens Information Centre, Marian Hall, Convent Hill, **Will be closed for the Christmas Holidays from Monday, 23rd December** and will **re-open on Thursday, 2nd January 2020** usual hours.

Tel: 0761 07 8030 E-mail: Mitchelstown@citinfo.ie
 Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday: 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
 Monday, Tuesday & Thursday: 1.30p.m. to 4.30p.m.

Society of St. Vincent Paul: Our Society wish to sincerely thank all who subscribed so generously to our Annual Christmas Collection recently. It was very successful and will help us make Christmas a little brighter for so many families and individuals. Our thanks also, to our Clergy, our Sacristans and Collectors, who were so co-operative. We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your support throughout the year, and to wish you all a very happy and peaceful Christmas.

A Christmas Thought

If there had never been a Christmas or the Holy Christ Child’s birth,
 Or angels singing in the sky of promised PEACE on EARTH –
 What would the world be like today with no ETERNAL GOAL,
 What would the temporal body be without a living soul –
 Just what would give us courage to push on when hope is dead
 Except the Christmas message and the words OUR FATHER said –
 ‘In love I send My only Sonto live and die for you,
 And through His resurrection you will gain a new life, too.’

NEWLY BAPTISED: We welcome into our Catholic Community, through the Sacrament of Baptism: Tadhg McCarthy

RECENTLY DECEASED: The sympathy of the Parish Community is extended to the family and friends of –
 William Ryan, *Cloughleafin*
 Martina Murphy (née O’Mahony), *Liam Lynch Park*
 Pat (Pajoe) Heffernan, *formerly of Thomas Street*
 Tommy Gallagher, *formerly O’Neill Crowley Terrace*
 Who died recently. *May They Rest In Peace*