



Sunday Envelope Collection

The amount received in
Ferns for the week was **€583.00**
 The amount received for **Ballyduff**
 for the month of November was **€1108.00**
 The amount received from **Cloogue** for the
 month of November was **€265.00**
Thank you for your generosity.

*St. King David
 King and Prophet*

Feast Day December 29th

This king, beloved by God and a man after God's own heart, is one of the prototypes of Christ in the Old Testament. His inspired Psalms are chanted in the Devine Office and in the Little Office of the Blessed Virgin.

Prayer

King David,

*Stout warrior, humble penitent, teach us
 unswerving love of God.
 Amen*

THE HOOK OF FAITH THIS WEEK

Bishop Ger's Christmas Message is top of the bill for this final weekend before Christmas. We have a homily for the Fourth Sunday of Advent and another for Christmas Day. We have an article on coming home for Christmas which has a literal meaning for thousands who will travel this week but also has an important spiritual meaning too. Bishop Robert Barron reflects on how the baby King takes on Caesar and we also include the recent Vatican document on the meaning and offering of a Christian blessing. Finally, a message to all our followers for Christmas, thanking you for your support in 2023 and looking forward to another year of communicating the Joy of the Gospel in 2024. Check out these and other resources available at

www.thehookoffaith.com

ST. AIDAN'S PARISH INFORMATION

Very Rev Paddy Cushen. P.P. Tel: 053-9366152 / Mobile: 087 2387559.

E-mail: frpaddycushen@gmail.com **Eir Code: Y21 N9 W7**

Assistant: Very Rev. Pat Stafford , 086 234 4674

Parish Office: Tel: 053-9366514. E-mail: fernsparish@gmail.com **Eir Code: Y21 X5 W9**

Opening Hours: 9am-1pm & 2pm-4pm Mon-Fri

Weekend Mass Times: Vigil Mass, Saturday 6.15pm Sunday 8.30am & 11.00am

Weekday Mass Times: Monday to Saturday day 9.30am.

Confessions: Every **Saturday** after **9.30am** Mass & First **Thursday** after **9.30am** Mass and on request.

ST. COLUMBA'S CHURCH, BALLYDUFF

Weekend Mass Times: Vigil Mass, Saturday 7.30pm **Eircode: Y21 FD 73**

ST. BRIDGET'S CHURCH, CLOOGUE

Weekend Mass Time: Sunday 9.45am

Eir Code: Y21 CD 96

Reconciliation Services: Lent and Advent. **Baptism:** By appointment.

Marriage: At least three months notice must be given.

Ferns St. Vincent de Paul: Tel: 086 7219303

Safeguarding Officers: Denis Kinsella 087 2465720, Bernidina Roche 087 4455393

Ballyduff: Alan Byrne 086 8135149. Cloogue: Mary Skelton 087 6984703

St. Aidan's Church, Ferns

We have a live Webcam Streaming for all Masses. The camera is focused on the Altar & Sanctuary. You can watch Mass & Services live from St. Aidan's Church by going to YouTube and searching for Ferns Church or on Facebook at Ferns Church Live or on our Parish Website www.fernsparish.ie



Ferns Parish Newsletter



Vol. 18, No. 19

23rd & 24th December 2023

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Message from Bishop Ger Nash.

Dear Friends,

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Christ this year, our hearts are moved by the images of small children that we have seen over the past few months. The terrible tragedy of Israel and Gaza, the ongoing war in Ukraine and the persistent and life-destroying famine in East Africa, are all the more shocking when we see their impact on the lives of children. The terror of hunger, fear or maiming should be far from every child's life and yet we see it daily in our media. It is right to reflect on these matters as we prepare to celebrate the birth of the baby who was God himself. The world into which Jesus was born was as destructive to childhood as ours in many similar ways: hunger, homelessness, seeking and being refused refuge and being the victim of political leaders' power struggles. There was no social media to carry the instant story and yet, the events of Bethlehem and Nazareth have echoed down the years, changing people's hearts from stone to flesh, their lives from hatred to love. As we prepare for Christmas this year, let us pray that the telling of the Christmas story will give us a new impetus to leave aside hatred, jealousy, judgmental attitudes and allow us to see the life-changing effect of letting love in. The Christmas story began with Mary and her acceptance of her place in God's plan. Human, like the rest of us, she could not see all that it would entail of joy and sorrow, but at the moment of the Annunciation she was willing to let God's love work through her. She was truly faithful in the sense that she trusted God and felt that great things could happen if she said yes. As we prepare to celebrate Christmas, the challenge given to us is much smaller but no less significant. Can we say yes over the holiday period to children, to the elderly and to the lonely or recently bereaved? Not just by giving material things but also by giving people our attention – the gift of noticing them and making them feel visible and loved in the world. Throughout his life, Jesus welcomed the outsider, the marginalized and assured them that being included was God's plan for them. We will have plenty of opportunities to do this over Christmas and the year ahead. It is in small things, kind words, a welcoming smile, a helping hand that the Kingdom of God is found and our chance to build God's Kingdom is when we take the opportunities to do that. Throughout the Diocese, the year has been a busy one with many gatherings to plan and to ponder what God is calling us to in these years. These meetings have resulted in a great number of people offering to participate in training and planning for the future. It is truly a sign of God at work in our Diocese at this time and we should take great heart from it. We are at a time of great change in the church – as Pope Francis calls it, a change of era – but we can look forward with hope to God doing great things in all our lives. With that thought in our hearts and minds, let us see in Mary, God's mother, a model for journeying in faith without knowing where the journey will take us. I wish all who see this message the Hope and Joy of Christmas, the confidence to see that God is at work in every person and the courage to fearlessly bring about change in the time and place where we live.

Bishop Ger



Mass Times for Christmas

Ferns

Christmas Eve Vigil 6.15p.m. Christmas Day 8.30a.m. & 11.00a.m.

Ballyduff

Christmas Eve Vigil 7.30p.m. Christmas Day 9.30a.m.

Cloogue

Christmas Eve Vigil 8.00p.m. Christmas Day 9.45a.m.



**Mass Time & Intentions
This Weekend**

23rd & 24th December 2023

FERNS CHURCH

6.15pm: Pat O'Leary, Rosemary Heights,
Ferns

Pat & Kathleen Leacy, Rosario, Ferns

8.30am: People of The Parish

11.00am:

BALLYDUFF CHURCH

7.30pm:

CLOLOGUE CHURCH

9.45 am: Ted Kelly, Clologue

8.00 pm: Maire Gleeson, Ballyfoley

**Mass Time & Intentions
Next Weekend**

30th & 31st December 2023

FERNS CHURCH

6.15 pm: James Carley, Coolroe,
Camolin

Gerard Murphy, Main Street

8.30am: People of The Parish

11.00am: Mary Breslin, Coolbawn

Thomas & Bridget Kearney & their son

Gerard, Bolinadrum, Ferns

BALLYDUFF CHURCH

7.30pm: Maggie Hall, Kiltomas

CLOLOGUE CHURCH

9.45am: John Power, Forties

"At this Christmas when Christ comes,
will He find a warm heart? Mark the
season of Advent by loving and serving
others with God's own love and con-
cern."
Mother Teresa

Parish Office

Will reopen Tuesday 2nd January.
Mass cards can be obtained after
Mass at 9.30a.m. daily or at Centra.

30th & 31st December 2023

Ministers of the Word

6.15pm: Ena Gray

8.30am: Denis Kinsella

11.00am: Eleanor Hawkins

Ministers of Holy Communion

6.15pm: Margaret Maguire & Mary Fortune

8.30am: A Volunteer

11.00am: Ann Swaine & Michael Breen

Irish Catholic

Money is now due for the Irish Catholic. The
Irish Catholic is €3 a week, or €156.00 for the
year. Please pay as soon as possible into the
Parish Office.

If paying by cheque please make payable to
Ferns Parish.

*Happy Christmas and every blessing for
the New Year to all our Parishioners and
to all who worship at our churches.*

**Thought for the Day
Fourth Sunday of Advent
24th December 2023**

Christmas offers the world, of all faiths and
none, in all its diversity, the opportunity to
stop, to renew family relationships and to
exercise the best of our common humanity. It
challenges nations and institutions by its mes-
sage of peace and goodwill for all. Christmas
certainly keeps alive these values of kindness,
care for the poor, and being at peace with the
world, in the hope that we might replicate
them throughout the year. But the Word was
made flesh promises more, being graced with
God's DNA – joy – the joy of being alive, the
joy of being loved, the joy of knowing that
God is the remedy to the struggle of our hu-
man journey.

Fr Brendan Carr CSSp

Sincere Sympathy

Is extended to The Family of Sean
Killeen, Coolbawn, Ferns & to Avril
Doyle & Family on the death of her
mother Geraldine Murphy, Clonegal who
died recently.

R.I.P.

*May the souls of the faithful
departed rest in peace.*

Prayer for those grieving at Christmas
Lord, not everyone feels joyful at this sea-
son. So many have lost loved ones during
the year, and in many places, the winter
cold blows its bitter winds into lonely
hearts. This Christmas we pray for those
who are grieving losses. Memories of hap-
py times with loved ones in the past can
send a rush of tears to those whose arms
ache with emptiness. Lord, dry those tears
with Your sweet words of comfort and
cheer. Turn their sorrow into joy as only
You can do. May the joy of Your birth and
the good news of Your coming to earth as
the Savior of the world cushion their grief
this Christmas and bring peace
to those who need it most.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

A Christmas Prayer

May your family be close and united
as the family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph.
May your home be full of the Joy and
Peace

which filled the manger at Bethlehem.

May St. Joseph protect and guide your
family as he protected and guided his own.

May you remain close to Jesus
each day of the year ahead and
May you be open to God's will in your
life.

**The Meaning and
Importance of the
Nativity Scene**

The presence of the poor and
the lowly in the nativity scene
remind us that God became
man for the sake of those who feel most in
need of his love and who ask him to draw
near to them. Jesus, 'gentle and humble in
heart' (Mt 11:29), was born in poverty and
led a simple life in order to teach us to re-
cognise what is essential and to act accord-
ingly. The nativity scene clearly teaches
that we cannot let ourselves be fooled by
wealth and fleeting promises of happiness.
From the manger, Jesus proclaims, in a
meek yet powerful way, the need for shar-
ing with the poor as the path to a more hu-
man and fraternal world in which no one is
excluded or marginalised.

Pope Francis, Admirabile Signum

Digital Help Hub

We can show you one to one: How to use
a range of devices, How to fill in digital
forms, How to use eGov and access mul-
tiple services, like Mywelfare, the Na-
tional Childcare Scheme, Revenue, SUSI,
How to use a range of literacy resources
and language learning, whatever you
would like to learn!

When and Where:

Enniscorthy Library:

10.30am-2.30pm on 18th January, 1st &
22nd February, 21st March, 18t April &
16th & 30th May 2024.

Wexford Library:

10.30am-2.30pm on 11th & 25th January,
8th & 29th February, 14th March, 11th &
25th April, 9th & 23rd May 2024.

Bunclohy Library:

10.30am-2.30pm on Thursdays: 7th
March & 2nd May 2024.

Envelope Contributions

If you wish, you may set up a standing order
and transfer your contribution periodically to
the parish account. Please put your Sunday
Envelope number on your donation or name.

Ferns Church No. 1 A/ C.

BIC: BOFIE2D

IBAN: IE16 BOFI 9065 6678 0456 47

Ballyduff Church

BIC: BOFIE2D

IBAN: IE32 BOFI 9066 0382 1179 14

Clologue Church

BIC: BOFIE2D

IBAN: IE85 BOFI 9065 8260 5960 10

EVER THOUGHT OF PRIESTHOOD?

'Take the Risk for Christ' is the name given to
this year of prayer and promotion to the dioc-
esan priesthood. 'Taking the Risk for Christ'
underlines the chance Christ asks us to give
him as he leads us to the way of life he creat-
ed us for. Might this way for you be priest-
hood or religious life? If you have thought and
prayed about this possibility, then please
know that help and support is available. Con-
tact Fr Billy Swan, Vocations Director at bil-lyswan68@hotmail.com for a chat and more
information.