

Pastoral Message for the communities of the Clonakilty Family of Parishes

Read at all Masses on the weekend of May 10/11th, 2025.

On this weekend, the Catholic Church celebrates Good Shepherd Sunday which is also known as Vocations Sunday.

We see from the scripture readings at Mass why this might be the theme.

It is also appropriate this year that on the Sunday after Pope Leo became our chief shepherd and successor of St. Peter, that we would give thanks.

Of course, Vocations Sunday, has also been for many years a time to reflect on and to pray for more vocations to priesthood and religious life – a prayer which we continue.

At a series of meetings held in each family of parishes of our diocese this year, parishioners and priests have also reflected on how to deepen our understanding of the vocation of each baptised person and each person's call to know the Lord better and to be an active disciple of the Lord. A report on these meetings will be published by Bishop Fintan at the start of the summer.

In this context, and at this time in the life of our local parishes, there is a tension between the amount of change that's happening — which causes us worry and uncertainty — and the hope which we are called to have as believers in the Risen Lord. The most pressing changes include the falling number of priests and religious in Ireland and the reduction in the numbers of people attending Mass regularly.

In recent years, in our family of parishes, we have had a schedule of Masses during the summer which is different from the rest of the year. It's necessary because when one priest is absent, it's difficult to sustain the schedule while also ministering at funerals and the other sacraments, including baptisms and marriages.

After careful reflection and discussion in recent weeks, we the six priests ministering in this family of parishes have developed a new summer timetable. It's different from last years.

- Sunday Masses will be celebrated mostly in the parish churches.
- Masses will not rotate because this causes confusion and breaks up communities.
- The timetable of Masses at the Hospital, nursing homes and the convent is unchanged.
- The summer schedule will commence on June 7th/8th (a week after the June bank holiday.)

The times for this parish are

All the Mass times are on the family of parishes website from Sunday afternoon at onefaith.ie

Naturally, we know that some people will find these changes difficult, as we do also. We pray that we will together journey towards a renewed community of faith in which we will all support one another with the “hope which His call holds for us”.

*Fr Ted Collins, Fr. Tom Hayes, Canon John Kingston, Canon Martin O'Driscoll,
Fr Fergus Ryan and Fr Fergus Touhy.*