



# Cathedral of the Assumption

Sunday, 24th December 2023.

**Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Parish Facebook... Carlow cathedral parish  
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Newsletter

## God coming home!

In his Gospel, St. John does not describe the scene of the stable at Bethlehem, neither the visits of the Shepherds nor the Magi, nor the singing of the angels. St. John cuts to the chase and sums it up in one phrase. "The Word was made flesh and lived among us". St. John's Gospel was written in Greek and he would literally have written, the Word, the Logos, pitched his tent among us! **God made his home among us!**



At Christmas, we are very conscious of our homes. We decorate them. We prepare our homes for those who gather and those who will visit. We await those who are coming home. The table becomes the centre of our homes, hospitality. We are conscious of those who are away from home, we connect with them, cards and letters, by phone, text, email, WhatsApp or perhaps even Viber. We reach out to those who are homeless. We are conscious of those who don't have a home, who can't provide for families and loved ones at their table. Many of us partner with St. Vincent de Paul and so many other charities to feed and to shelter. With heavy hearts, we recall those who had a place at our table and are no longer with us, we pray for them, remember them at Mass, we light candles, place wreaths or flowers on their places of rest, we believe they are at God's table in heaven. At home with God!

In the first reading at our Masses on this, the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Lord asks David to build a house where he can dwell, a house worthy of God. God calls on all of us to build a world, a society, a community, to build homes and parishes where he can dwell, where he can be at home, find a space. There was no room at the Inn!

As we listen to the reading this weekend from St. Paul to the Romans, we are encouraged to rejoice in God's ability to work in and through us. We open ourselves to God's will, God's desire, openness to build what God wants, God's dream that all peoples know God's love. Like Mary in the Gospel, we can be overwhelmed by what is requested of us. "But how can this come about?" The voice of an angel, the Holy Spirit will come upon us, it is not our doing, we are but conduits, instruments, builders, labours in God's plan to build a home, to dwell, to pitch tent among us. Mary is our mother and model. What it takes is our openness, our cooperation, for us to say from the home of our hearts, I am the servant of the Lord, let it be done to me. In and through us, may God pitch his tent, build his dwelling place in our world at this time.

As we prepare our homes and tables, as we celebrate and enable others to celebrate Christmas - God among us, may our hearts, our families, our brothers and sisters who struggle with war and turmoil, who struggle with poverty and addiction, who struggle with loneliness and rejection, hear afresh the Good News of Love. May the request of Jesus, "love one another," find a home in us, and may all find a home in God!

*Christmas Blessings to all. May Christ make his Home in you!*

*Deacon David, Fr. Theo, Fr. Yanbo and Fr. Tom*

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## SCHEDULE MASSES FOR CHRISTMAS AT THE CATHEDRAL

Vigil Mass for children 24th December at 6:15pm

The Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ—Midnight Mass (12 o'clock)

Christmas Day Masses 8.30am; 10.30am; 12.30pm

Daily Mass Tuesday to Saturday 26th – 30th December at 11:00am

Weekend 30th and 31st, 6.15pm, 8.30am, 10.30am, 12.30pm, and 7pm.

New Year's Day 12 Noon

## Kildare & Leighlin Christmas Message

There is something about a baby that captures all our attention. It's magnetic. Even the most stubborn heart softens in the presence of a new born baby. I saw it recently on a visit to bless a school extension, in the staff room later when their colleague on maternity leave, called in with her new bundle of joy, everyone just wanted to see the baby. The adult in us becomes the child again, cooing and making all sorts of funny faces! Babies make people smile and that's such a good thing.

Christmas is about smiling, it takes much less face muscles to smile than it does to frown. We adults complicate matters. In the words of Pope Francis "*Jesus is God's smile ... when we look down at the nativity scene; when we look at Baby Jesus, we can feel God smiling at us*". It all began in Bethlehem, in the simplicity of a stable. This is the essence of what we celebrate at Christmas. God becoming a baby. God stooping down to be like one of us.

We are all conscious of the turmoil in the world at present. War in Ukraine and absolute terror in Gaza and Israel, the Holy Land, the place of that Bethlehem stable. Sadly too many babies and children are caught up in conflicts.

My prayer and hope to all is that you will feel God smile on you this Christmas. Also that you might smile, as you thank God for those around you, family, friends and colleagues.

And next time you see a new born baby, remember that as you smile, God is smiling on you. We need to realise this, this year more than ever, in our war-weary and broken world. Into it a fragile baby is born, a baby whose smile has the capacity to soften the hardest of adult hearts.

Every blessing for Christmas and 2024,

✠ Denis Nulty  
Bishop of Kildare & Leighlin



### A Prayer before your Family Christmas Meal

Loving God, on this Christmas day we give thanks that Jesus, your Son, has come into our world bringing us gifts of peace and joy. Bless us as we sit down together at this table for our Christmas meal.

Bless the food we share and help us to remember those who are hungry. Be with our neighbours and our friends, those who are lonely, sick or away from home. We pray that our departed loved ones may sit now at your table in heaven. May the joy of this feast give us strength and light, now and in the days ahead. **Amen.**

### We remember in our prayer

John Clerkin

John Sturley

*May they rest in peace*

*May their loved ones*

*and all who mourn be comforted*

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### Christmas Collection

Bishop Denis, Fr. Tom, Fr. Yanbo and Fr. Theo are very grateful to all the Parishioners of the Cathedral who generously support the four Clergy Collections each year. The Christmas Collection will be taken up at all Christmas Masses. There are envelopes for this collection in the Envelope Boxes. There are also envelopes specifically for this collection at the entrances of the Cathedral.

Many thanks for your continued support.

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### Cathedral Collections

Last Weekend

Offertory € 1262.08

Development € 1783.03

**Your generosity is greatly appreciated.**

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### 2024 Cathedral Parish Envelopes

Many thanks to all the members of the Parish who support the Parish through their generosity. The **2024 Envelopes** are available at the entrances to the Cathedral. You are invited to take a box. **The importance of your name and Envelope Number.** You are requested to write your name on the first few envelopes used. This will enable the Parish to record your number. Each year, because of your generosity, the Parish benefits as a Charity from the Tax Back scheme from Revenue. Accurate Parish records are essential to make claims to Revenue.

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### Pioneer Association 125th Anniversary

Pioneers around the world are invited to attend Mass next Wednesday 27th December and to prayerfully mark the 125th anniversary of the foundation of the Association in 1898. Mass and prayers will be live-streamed on that day at 10am (Irish time) around the world via [www.pioneerassociation.org](http://www.pioneerassociation.org)

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### Bob's Your Uncle Lotto

**Sunday 17th December 2023**

**€20,000 Jackpot**

**7-12-23-25**

**No Jackpot Winner.**

**6 Match 3 Winner's share €500.**