

Information note for Mass this weekend (Draft)

Good morning to you all.

On behalf of the PPA, I want to give you a quick update on recent changes within the parish.

As you may be aware, Fr Garland will be retiring as PP of the parish from the 1st July.

For 41 years, with great enthusiasm and positivity, he administered to the spiritual and pastoral needs of our parish. In his own gently but yet strong way, he never missed an opportunity to encourage and comfort us along our shared journey. His presence, be it at a Mass, baptism, wedding or funeral, always brought a sense of calm reassurance. His ever present sense of support and understanding comes from his own rich spiritual life; from his own relationship with Jesus, and his deep trust in the presence and workings of the Holy Spirit.

Blessed with a great sense of humour, he contributed enormously to all that is good within our parish. His faithful dedication to the word and work of God leaves an indelible mark on many individuals and families in the parish.

We have spoken with Fr Garland about having a function to mark his years of service and his retirement, but he does not want any such occasion at the moment. All he requested is that we pray for him and all the sick of the parish. He said he is very happy to retire and be able to remain in the Parochial House in Clonmellon.

According to Scripture there are three things God wants from us:

**To act justly,
To love tenderly,
And to walk humbly with our God.**
(Micah 6:7-8)

With 70 years of faithful service in the priesthood, Fr Garland truly fulfilled this request.

So, it is with the utmost gratitude and appreciation that we wish Fr Garland a happy, healthy and peaceful retirement.

So what's next?

Fr Padraig McMahon, PP Athboy, has also been appointed PP of Clonmellon/Killallon. So Fr McMahon will be PP of both parishes and will reside in Athboy. Thankfully, Fr Samuel will remain with us in Clonmellon.

Fr McMahon has informed us that while there will be no immediate changes to the current Mass arrangements in our parish, the present work load is unsustainable in the long term. Also, it is almost impossible to get cover if a priest is sick or on holidays, so some Masses may be impacted in the short term over the summer if there is no priest available.

At meeting in Castlepollard last Wednesday night, Bishop Tom Deenihan, made it clear that it is not his intention or desire to close any church but to put in structures that ensure parish life remains very much alive, and that parish communities retain their own identity, when there is no resident priest. The Bishop announced, that due to the declining number of priest in the diocese, new