



# Ennis Parish Link

December 2014

Issue 54



# Cuan an Chláir



In 2007 the Diocese of Killaloe allocated 15.5 acres of land in Cahercalla (adjacent to Cahercalla Community Hospital) to facilitate the building of a Day Care Centre for 60 people and the construction of 12 individual housing units, phase 1 of the development. The name of the new facility is Cuan an Chláir (Cuan is the Irish for harbour). Over the past 18 months, Pat Keogh Construction has been building this dream into reality. The 12 Housing Units and Day Care facility are ready for occupancy at the end of January. The Day Care Centre will be managed by Clarecare staff. Their current facilities at the Community Centre in Chapel Lane will be incorporated into the new Centre. Cuan an Chláir is currently allocating the houses for occupancy.

Sincere thanks to the people of Ennis and its environs for the tremendous generosity to the fund raising over the past seven years. Mile Buiochas to local businesses, the various voluntary groups and organisations who have fundraised for the project and especially the generosity of people for their support.



# The Joy of the Gospel

It's been just over a year since Pope Francis gave us the document *Evangelii Gaudium*, (The Joy of the Gospel). As Church documents go it was far more readable than many of those that had come before but equally it was challenging to every individual and to the Church as a community. The document's overall message is that Catholics should be unafraid of new ways of proclaiming the Gospel and new ways of thinking about the church. In fact, such new ways are essential if we are to spread the Gospel at all. The opening line is so beautiful: "The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew." Francis' zeal for the faith is so infectious, his call to us all is hard to avoid or intellectualize. Over and over, Pope Francis takes aim against the roadblocks to growth in faith such as as "complacency," "excessive clericalism," and even Catholics who act like "sourpusses." He says that there are Christians whose lives are like "Lent without

Easter." Nor does Pope Francis have patience for people who are "tempted to find excuses and complain." This writing is a hope-filled, positive and energetic view of the church actively engaged with the world. Inspired by Jesus' poverty and concern for the dispossessed during his earthly ministry, Pope Francis calls for a "church which is poor and for the poor." The poor "have much to teach us," he writes. "We are called to find Christ in them, to lend our voices to their causes, but also to be their friends, to listen to them, to speak for them and to embrace the mysterious wisdom which God wishes to share with us through them." As he has done in a number of his homilies and public statements, the pope stresses the importance of mercy, particularly with regard to the church's moral teaching. While lamenting "moral relativism" that paints the church's teaching on sexuality as unjustly discriminatory, he also warns against overemphasizing certain teachings out of the context of more essential Christian truths. Pope Francis writes that "pastoral ministry in a missionary style is not obsessed with the disjointed transmission of a multitude of

doctrines to be insistently imposed," lest they distract from the Gospel's primary invitation to "respond to the God of love who saves us." Everything in "*Evangelii Gaudium*" revolves around the Pope's passionate desire to foster a joy-filled encounter with the crucified and risen Jesus Christ. Without the anchor who is Jesus Christ, would-be disciples and evangelizers quickly become unmoored and begin to drift. All of what Pope Francis says in this writing merits close and prayerful consideration on the part of all of us.



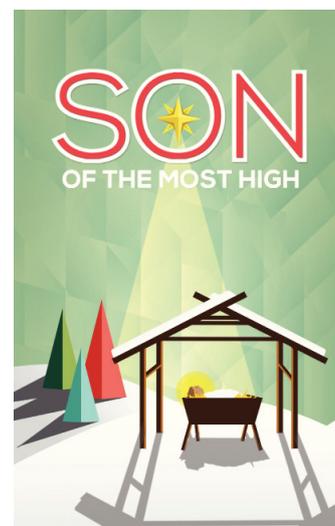
# Friary Christmas Message

This year, as usual, Aidan Keane and David Kileen will work on building the Christmas Crib at the Friary. It is a task that takes quite a while, but it is a labour of love and a continuation of a tradition of crib-building that reaches back through the generations. Back almost 800 years to the time when St Francis of Assisi made the first Christmas crib in a little place called Greccio in central Italy. As the various parts of the Friary Crib come together, the year just past is recalled and lots of people, events and traditions come to mind. For around the last 15 years a prayer has been placed next to the Friary Crib and it will be there again this year. This prayer means a lot to me and I feel it contains within it some great truths. Here it is, and I invite you to read it slowly .....

O God we need a star  
By which to set our journey through the world.  
Help us to see  
In the baby born at Bethlehem  
The eternal star which will lead us  
To the place  
Where truth and love and mercy meet.  
So we may kneel  
With the shepherds and the kings  
And find heart's joy and heart's peace  
In Jesus Christ. Amen

Praying this prayer makes me aware of the need we all have for a star by which we can guide our life's journey – and Jesus Christ is that star. We can lose our way in the darkness very easily, but Jesus is the bright, constant and steadfast star that shows us the way back home. He is the eternal light which shines even when all around is dark – indeed, the story of Christmas reminds us that Jesus was born into a time of warfare and turbulence and he continues to be born today in our turbulent and violent world. The darkness cannot conquer the light. The prayer then goes on to speak of "the place where truth and love and mercy meet". Each of these wonderful qualities needs the others. Speaking the truth without love can be harsh and cruel; love without truthfulness can be an illusion; loving without mercy can be demanding and manipulative; mercy without love can be superficial and patronising; and mercy without truth can be unjust or self-indulgent. Jesus Christ teaches us how to live in a life-giving and harmonious combination of truth and love and mercy. And so having been led to the presence of Jesus in whom there is truth and love and mercy, we kneel with the shepherds and the kings; it is essential for us to get off our high horses and have the humility to kneel!

We are not the centre of the Universe and God is not at our beck and call. We are creatures who bow down and worship the God who has shown such great love for human beings that the Divine entered into human history as a tiny child. So also we trust and believe that God too enters into our tiny lives, bringing "heart's joy and heart's peace".  
*From all of us at the Friary - May you be blessed with joy and peace this Christmas and in the year ahead!*



## *The Forgotten Saint - Conall of Drumcliffe*

St. Conall of Drumcliffe is the forgotten Saint of the Parish of Ennis. According to the annals Conall was the son of Domhall and established a monastic community at Drumcliff in the 5th Century, under the rule and guidance of St. Columba. St. Conall was remembered in the older name of a bridge across the Fergus near the old Friary, which we know today as the Club Bridge. The maps of the 18th century town of Ennis show the bridge as St. Conall's Bridge.

Local Artist Noreen Flynn has painted a reflective portrait of St. Conall. Her painting hangs in the Cathedral under the gallery of the Presbytery side aisle. She depicts St. Conall with the darkness of aetheim behind him and the new dawn of Christianity in front. The Round Tower and Church were built several hundred years after Conall's time. The wattle and mud settlement is indicative of the type of building of Conall's time in the early 5th Century.

The Church window behind Conall's arm is a window from the ruined Church of Teampall Dubh between Ennis and Ruan, another Monastic settlement linked with Conall.

There is an altar vessel to the right of the painting as well as a bell, the type of which would be used in Conall's time - there is a long tradition that when the Monastery was raided by the Vikings or other Marauders, the bell was thrown into the lake where it still rests - this small lake or Tourlough is known in the tradition as 'Poll na Clog'.

The symbols on the stone, the bottom of the crucifix and the crucifix itself are all depicted on the Altar furniture in the Cathedral.

Local artist and sculptor Shane Gilmore, has depicted St. Conall and Drumcliff in two limestone carvings which are in-corporated into the gable of the New Parish Centre, 'Garran na Coille' in the Cathedral grounds.

June 2nd is traditionally the Feast Day of St. Conall of Drumcliff.



## *New Parish Office*



The parish office has relocated to the New Parish Centre "Garran na Coille" (The Church garden centre) in the lower car park of the Cathedral grounds. The Parish Centre consists of three small meeting/consultation rooms; the new parish office; a large meeting room/hall, Maria Assumpta Hall and a room for Sacramental preparation. Dermot Custy Construction, Darragh was the main contractor for the project under the supervision of Joe Hanrahan of P. Coleman and Associates. The project was completed in the time schedule and within budget. The Parish Pastoral Council hopes the new facilities will be an additional support to the parish team and office staff in their work of service to the people of the parish.



# Message from *Poor Clares*

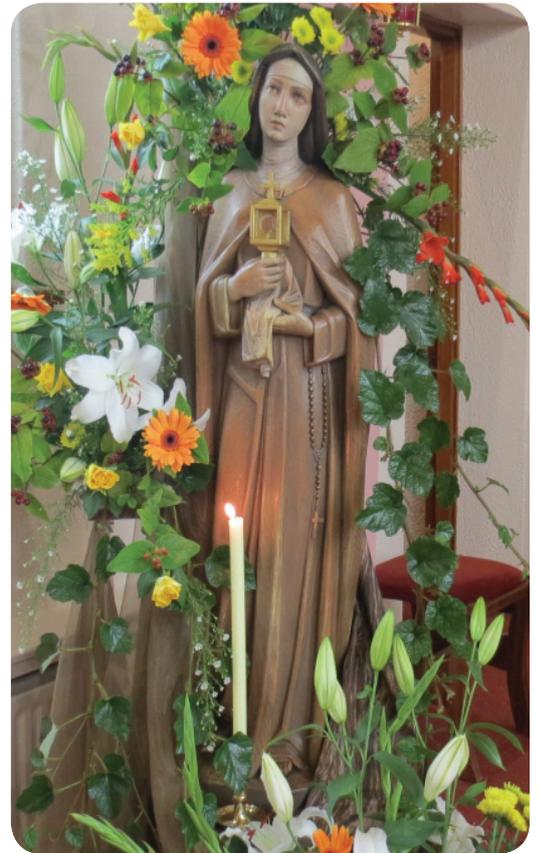
## ***The joy and blessing of 'Good News'***

For most people, Christmas is a busy, frantic and full-on time. Because of this, it can be a challenge to prepare spiritually, to find time to consider the 'things that REALLY matter'. Advent and Christmastide is a wonderful time to discover the joy of sharing our faith because at the heart of Christmas is the proclamation of the Good News. The Gospel is first and foremost a message of 'Good News'. This message is called, in Greek, the Kerygma. Pope Francis says that this is the Kerygma: 'Jesus Christ loves you: he gave his life for you: and he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.'

That message of 'Good News' has the power to change and transform our lives. It should be the necessary foundation of all we do. Our fervent prayer this Christmas and New Year is that all our relations, friends and benefactors will experience the 'Kerygma' – the Good News – in a very real way and joyfully share it with others.

We, the Poor Clare Community here in Ennis, hold you in our hearts at prayer in the Masses offered daily in our chapel, in the Hours of the Divine Office and in the prayers of the Sisters during their hours of Adoration before the Most Blessed Sacrament.

***May you all have a really happy and blessed Christmas and New Year.***



# Polish Christmas Message

Papież Franciszek powiedział: Boża Łaska objawiła się w Jezusie. On wszedł w naszą historię, podzielił naszą wędrówkę. Przyszedł, by nas wyzwolić z mroków i obdarować światłem. W Nim objawiła się czuła miłość Ojca: Jezus jest miłością, która stała się ciałem.

Ten fakt, że Bóg stał się jednym z nas czyni każdego wyjątkowym. To jest przesłanie Wielkiej Radości dla nas i dla całego świata. Jesteśmy braćmi i siostrami w Jezusie Chrystusie. Jesteśmy cenni w Bożych oczach, ponieważ zostaliśmy ukochani przez Boga jako Jego dzieci. Usłyszymy w te święta o Bożym Słowie pełnym miłości do nas. Poczujmy w naszych sercach i w naszych duszach, że jesteśmy kochani przez Boga. Niech ta świadomość przyniesie radość i nadzieję w nasze życie. Niech Jego miłość dotknie naszych serc, abyśmy doświadczyli chwały Jezusa Chrystusa oraz odczuli Jego miłosierdzie w tym szczególnym czasie. Błogosławionych Świąt Bożego Narodzenia dla Was i dla Waszych ukochanych oraz dla naszych Przyjaciół z Irlandii. Niech Boża miłość będzie z Wami każdego dnia w tym Nowym Roku. Życzę Wam wszystkim szczęśliwych, błogosławionych i pełnych pokoju Świąt Bożego Narodzenia.

Ks. Dariusz Płasek

Pope Francis tells us: The grace which was revealed in our world is Jesus. He has entered our history; he has shared our journey. He came to free us from darkness and to grant us light. In him was revealed the tender love of the Father: Jesus is Love incarnate.

The fact that God became one of us makes each one of us special. This is a message of Great Joy for us and for the whole world. We are brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ. We are precious in God's eyes, because we are loved by God as his own children. This Christmas may we hear God's words of love. May we feel in our hearts and in our souls and experience in our lives that we are loved by God. May this knowledge bring joy and hope to our life. May his love touch our hearts that we will glimpse the glory of Christ Jesus and sense his mercy in this special time. A Blessed Christmas to you and to your loved ones and to our friends from Ireland. May the love of God be with you each day throughout the New Year. I wish you all a very happy, holy and peaceful Christmas.

Fr. Dariusz Płasek



# Reflections on the Gospel of St. Mark

This coming liturgical year, the church will present to us a reading of the Gospel of St. Mark. This Gospel, which is 16 chapters long, is considered by many to be the first of the four Gospels written. Most scholars date the Gospel of Mark to sometime between 60 AD and 80 AD. It was probably the earliest of the four gospels and a source used by Matthew and Luke. The oldest clear evidence we have on regarding the date comes from one of the Fathers of the Church, Irenaeus of Lyons, who wrote in the second century:

“after their death [Peter and Paul], Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, transmitted to us in writing what was preached by Peter.”

Peter probably died around 65 AD, so if Irenaeus is right, then Mark was written after this time

Mark was likely written from Rome and written to Romans, but more broadly, to non-Jewish people who at that time were called Gentiles.

Of all the canonical Gospel's St. Mark's is the shortest and therefore the most easily read straight through from start to finish. In whatever fashion may suit you best, during this coming year I would invite you to pick up the Gospel of Mark and read it; maybe taking one chapter at a

time, possibly reading it the whole way through or perhaps reading anew some of the more celebrated sections such as the curing of Peter's mother-in-law or the calming of the storm or the passion narratives. In whatever manner you desire to read Mark, allow the Gospel to live and breathe in your life, permit the Gospel to be a transformative rather than merely informative experience. Give yourself permission to be drawn into the narrative unfolding before you, into the narrative of the living word of God, alive in the person of Christ. Allow yourself the spiritual joy of being gently coalesced into the world of the fulfilment of prophecies, the drama of conflict, the resolution of suspense and the making lucid those things hidden throughout the story.

the footsteps of Jesus Christ and to do our best to put his words and actions and faith into action in our own lives. I find this comforting. To be on the way anywhere means that you are on a journey, a journey which will bring its own unique experiences. We are all on a journey through life which will take us to places and introduce to people and situations, but as we read St. Mark we will see that Jesus is on the way with us and that he will journey with us. Another great theme in Mark is the theme of inside/outside. This is very simply explained and gives me great hope too. The people on the “inside” are the ones who are supposed to know exactly who Jesus is and are supposed to understand his message. As we read Mark we will see that it is actually the people on the “outside” who understand Jesus more. An example of this is the contrast between the healings Jesus will perform and Gennesaret, (where the people will beg him to allow them to touch the hem of his robe) and the dispute he subsequently enters into with his own people, the Pharisees in relation to the Jewish Purity Laws.

The passion narrative in St. Mark is particularly poignant, showing how the people who have previously left everything to follow Jesus



When I began my Scripture Studies in Maynooth, St. Mark was the first Gospel I studied in depth and the one I fell most in love with for many reasons. The struggle of the disciples to grasp who Jesus is and their misunderstandings of his words and teachings is something which I think we can all identify with. Sometimes to know Jesus can be a struggle and one may find they wrestle with his words, grapple with his promises to us and strain, like the disciples on the windswept sea against the raging torrents of life. One of the great themes in St. Mark is to be “on the way” What that means, very simply is to walk in

will now leave everything to run away from him. Ending his life with a loud, inarticulate cry, Christ joins himself to those who feel abandoned, desolate and extends to them the hope of the Gospel, a hope which the Church is now charged to convey.

During the next year, I invite you to read the Gospel of Mark, carefully. See if you can negotiate the entire Gospel, allowing it to speak to your heart as the Spirit moves you. Try to see some of the themes I have mentioned above at work and if you have any questions I would be delighted to hear them and would indeed invite conversation, questions and investigation!! Most importantly, revisit the Gospel of Mark with the intention of getting to know Christ more and more. That is the true purpose of Mark, to allow you and me to know Christ more. Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. (St. Mark, 9. 24) By doing this we will be enabled to live the command of Christ to Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every person. (St. Mark, 16. 15) I wish you a happy year of St. Mark and a happy journey of reconnection with Jesus Christ, our risen Lord.

*When I say Canonical Gospel's I mean the Gospel's that made it into the canon of Scripture for there are many others, such as the Gospel's of Peter & Thomas which are not included in the Bible.*

# Message from Bishop Kieran

Dear Friends in the Parish of Ennis,  
I take this opportunity, as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Saviour, to send you and your families at home and abroad Christmas greetings and good wishes.

When I received the request to write this Christmas message it was in the middle of November and I began to give some thought as to what I would write about this year. However, events changed my plans as to what I would write. The announcement of my transfer from the diocese of Killaloe to the Archdiocese of Cashel and Emly, by Pope Francis on November 22nd., means that I now find myself writing words of farewell to you.

I have been privileged to have lived and served here in Ennis over the past four and a half years since my ordination as Bishop of Killaloe in 2010. Over that time, I have met so many wonderful people of faith with a great love for Jesus Christ and commitment for the life of the Church. I will always treasure the personal friendships I have made and give thanks to God for the support I have received here in the parish of Ennis and indeed throughout the Diocese. I promise to keep you in my prayers and kindly request that you might do the same for me as I take up my new appointment in early 2015.

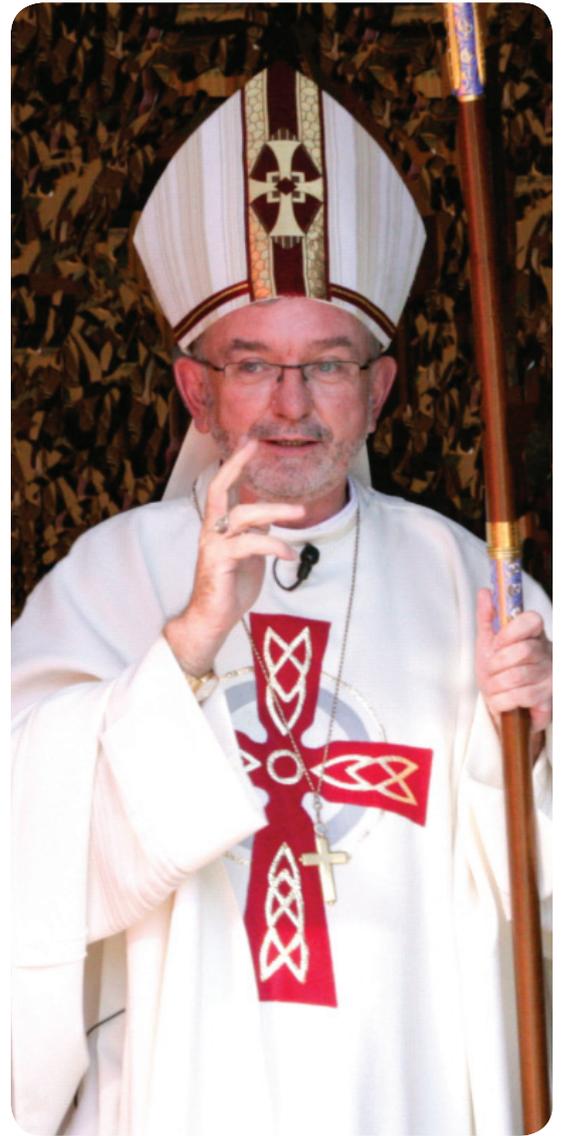
In celebrating Christmas we celebrate the birth of a baby who changed our world, who brought us a message of Joy, Peace and Hope. May each one find joy and happiness with family and friends this Christmas. Over the Christmas days and into the New Year may we reach out in kindness and friendship to perhaps a neighbour or family member whom we have neglected for one reason or another over recent times.

The coming of the child Jesus brought Joy to our world, may each one of us bring joy to family, neighbours and friends.

May the living God support and strengthen us on our journey of life now and throughout 2015.

Beannachtaí na Nollag oraibh. Every good wish and Blessing for 2015.

+ Kieran



*We extend our prayers and best wishes to Archbishop Kieran on his appointment as Metropolitan Archbishop of Cashel and Emly. We thank him for his gentle and inspiring leadership of the Church in Killaloe for the last four and a half years. He came among us as a stranger but we will part as friends.*

*Guimid rath Dé ar do mhinistreacht as seo amach.*



# Bulletin Board



## ECUMENICAL CAROL SERVICE

**Sunday 21st December**  
**7pm Friary**  
**with**  
**Combined Parish Choirs.**

## CONFIRMATION 2015

6th March	Scoil Christ Ri
6th March	Gaelscoil
7th March	Holy Family
14th March	Ennis National
14th March	CBS & St. Anne's



## WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR THE SICK

Wednesday February 11th; Mass of Healing and Anointing in St. Joseph's at 11am.

## TAIZÉ PILGRIMAGE 2015

Sunday 5th July to Tuesday 14th July.  
Contact: Fr. Jerry Carey @ 086 2508444.



### Taizé Prayer:

On 1st Thursday of each month at 7.45pm in Church of Our Lady, Roslevan.

## PARISH STATISTICS 2014

<b>Baptisms:</b>	<b>225</b>
<b>Weddings:</b>	<b>42</b>
<b>Confirmations:</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>Deaths:</b>	<b>136</b>

## CHRISTMAS MASSES

### Cathedral of SS Peter & Paul

Christmas Eve: 6.30pm Children's Mass.  
Christmas Eve: 9pm - Vigil Mass.  
Midnight Polish Community Mass.  
Christmas Day:  
9am; 10.30am & 12noon.  
10.30am Children's Mass: National School.  
Christmas Day: 3pm Polish Mass.

### St. Joseph's Church

Christmas Eve: 5.30pm - Liturgy of prayer and carols around the crib for families with very young children.

Christmas Eve: 7pm - Vigil Mass  
Christmas Day: 8am; 10am & 11.30am.

### Cloughleigh Church

Christmas Eve: 9pm - Vigil Mass.  
Christmas Day: 9.30am; 11am

### Friary

Christmas Eve: 10pm (Carols start 9.30pm).  
Christmas Day: 9.30am; 10.30am & 12noon

### Poor Clare Monastery

Christmas Eve: 9pm - Vigil Mass  
Christmas Day: 7.45am

No Evening Mass Christmas Day in Ennis



## Sacrament Of Reconciliation

The Cathedral  
Confessions: 24th: 10.30am-1pm & 2pm-5.30pm.  
St. Joseph's  
Confessions: 24th: 2pm - 4pm.  
The Friary  
Confessions: 11am - 12.30pm; 3pm - 5.30pm  
Tues 23rd & Wedn 24th  
11am - 1pm; 2pm - 5.30pm;

## Penitential Services

Cathedral:  
Monday 15th December at 7.30pm.  
(No evening Mass)  
Friary:  
Friday 19th December 1.05pm.  
(instead of the usual 1.05pm Mass)  
Tuesday 23rd December 10.30am.  
No Confessions after Christmas until Saturday January 3rd.

## Daily Masses Christmas Week

Cathedral:  
12noon & 7.30pm Christmas week  
St. Joseph's:  
11am: Christmas week  
Cloughleigh: 9.30am (weekdays).  
Friary: 10am Christmas week  
Poor Clare Monastery:  
8.30am (weekdays).



## PRAY OUT THE OLD YEAR PRAY IN THE NEW YEAR

### CATHEDRAL

**31st December**  
**@ 11.30pm.**

## FIRST HOLY COMMUNION 2015

25th April	CBS
9th May	Educate Together
16th May	Gaelscoil
16th May	Scoil Christ Ri
16th May	Holy Family
23rd May	Ennis National



## LENT & EASTER

Ash Wednesday	18th February
Easter Sunday	5th April

## DIOCESAN PILGRIMAGE LOURDES 2015

### Summer:

June 26th to July 1st.

### Autumn:

October 4th to 9th.

### Contact:

Fr. Tom Ryan at 061-364133.

## SAMARITANS

People can contact the Samaritans by phoning 116123, email jo@samaritans.org, write to Pat or Mary, Samaritans, Sunville, Kilrush Rd, Ennis.