**Ecumenical Report**

**Diocese of Killaloe**

**2021-2022**

6th April 2022

There are happy relationships in the Diocese of Killaloe between the local churches in Ennis – the Cathedral, the Friary and the Church of Ireland St. Columba’s, and some cooperation across the Catholic Diocese and the Church of Ireland Diocese of Limerick and Killaloe. This has been an important part of our work this year as the pandemic has made such an impact on the way we have been able to come together and worship as a church, and as churches together.

Lockdown has necessitated new ways of being church online, via video links, and Zoom and as a Diocese we have risen to that challenge and it has helped to build relationships between the churches.

In Lent 2021 a joint team of people from the Friary in Ennis, the Cathedral there and St. Columba’s Church put together a *via dolorosa* through the town, with Stations of the Cross in different windows – both of the churches but also in local shops – with maps to follow and a reflection for each window. The approach taken was one which sought to broaden the context of the sufferings of Jesus on his way to Calvary to include those in our society who are at present most marginalized, most alienated and those who are suffering today the raw pain of grief, loneliness, bereavement or exile from their home. For example we used the Patrick Kavanagh poem “Can a man grow from the dead clod of failure, Some consoling flower” for the station where Jesus falls for the third time; and for the station where Veronica wipes Jesus’s face we placed a mirror in a dress shop window asking people to reflect on what image of Jesus people see when they look at us. Hundreds of people walked the ‘Way of the Heart’ in Ennis during Holy Week, when we were unable to gather together in our churches as we are used to do.

The pandemic continued to affect us during Christmas and so groups of musicians and singers, and readers from both the Catholic and the Protestant churches in the area were filmed for a half hour You Tube video entitled ‘A Christmas Miscellany’. To date it has had more than 1,000 views, and is a combination of Christmas music, and readings from diverse sources including Henri Nouwen, Charles Dickens, and Rowan Williams, with a mixture of Cathollic and Anglican readers, and with prayers from the Bishop of Killaloe and the Anglican Dean of St. Flannan’s Killaloe. We are very fortunate to have such friendly and happy relationships on a personal level between the churches.

Most recently the Rector of St. Columba’s Ennis has filmed a joint conversation with the Bishop of Killaloe where they discuss the background of the Jesus Prayer from the Orthodox Tradition and commend its use for prayers for the sufferings of the people of Ukraine.

The launch of our bishop’s book on C.S. Lewis, the Anglican writer, with a foreword from the Anglican Rector is perhaps indicative of how closely the ecumenical friendships between the churches flourish and that it is through relationship rather than more formal services, however carefully put together, that we are able to understand each other as Christians – a people of one faith in the knowledge and love of God.