



Lent and the Year of Mercy

During this Jubilee Year of Mercy we are all encouraged by Pope Francis to “be renewed by God’s mercy” and to “enable the power of his love to transform our lives”.

This Lent we are suggesting that schools throughout the Diocese would create a Lenten sacred space in the Prayer Room close to which there will be a basket of small stones or pebbles. Each member of the school community (students, staff etc) is invited, to take one of these stones, or indeed to bring a stone, perhaps from their home, and carry it with them for a little while – a class period, an hour, a day, a week ... and to pray and reflect.

We all carry burdens, perhaps of the illness of loved ones, of friends or our own illness, of breakdown in our families, of things we may have done wrong which have hurt others, or things others may have done to hurt us ... Our faith tells us that we don’t have to carry these burdens alone, that God walks each step with us in mercy and love.

When each person is ready they can place their stone in the sacred space (*not in the basket*) as a sign that they are ready to welcome God’s mercy and love, into their lives, to trust their burdens to him. Furthermore, and most importantly, to commit to being transformed by His love and to live as the best person they can be, sharing God’s love with others.

As the pile of stones grows, this ‘mountain of Mercy’ will remind us of how constant God’s love is. If students would like, they could, later in Lent, take someone else’s stone from the pile of stones and pray for that person, returning it to the sacred space when they have done so.

During Lent each Parish in our Diocese has also been invited to create a sacred space in the church, which will become a ‘Mountain of Mercy’. It will contain a

base stone surrounded by smaller stones and on the evening of the Chrism Mass these base stones will be brought to the Cathedral of the Assumption in Carlow.

Before the school term finishes if the stones, or even a few of the stones, in the school prayer room could be added to the 'Mountain' in the local parish church, then, when the Parish base stone is brought to the Cathedral, the burdens of each member of the school community, as well as their willingness to live their faith by sharing God's love and mercy, will also be represented at the Diocesan celebration of the Chrism Mass.

