

Ever-present God with us, transform us with the glory of Nativity. Illumine our lives as we behold the new-born Christ. Transform us into a people of his light, that we may reflect your glory in the shadows of life. Amen.

December

God with us

Friday 17th – Saturday 18th of May
 @ The Hotel Minella, Clonmel



Break-Away Retreat of Relaxation, Spirituality,
 Mindfulness, Arts & Crafts, Fun and Friendship.

€250 pp sharing

(twin rooms only - 1 night B+B, dinner & lunch,
 including full use of leisure facilities)

Mothers' UNION
 Christian care for families
 Diocese of Cashel, Ferns & Ossory

€100 deposit due at time of booking to secure your place, with balance due by Friday the 26th of April. Spaces are limited, so early booking is recommended. For further details or to book your place contact Lesley on 085 8890029 or cfodpmothersunion@yahoo.com

We pray for the people of Ukraine and the Holy Land

Immanuel, God with us, who was born into the world on a holy night so long ago, to be our Saviour and King. Help them to experience your incredible grace and to know the joy and peace of an eternal relationship with you. We thank you for your faithfulness and your desire to bring all of us into your kingdom. Jesus, you are our Prince of Peace. You overcame the world to bring peace between us and the Father. You are our Lord, our hope, our joy, and our peace, at Christmas and always. Amen.

Online Zoom Services for December

**Tuesday 5th and Sunday 10th - 16 Days
 of Activism Against GBV**

Tuesday 12th - Advent Carol Service

***Thursday 21st - The Longest Night**

All at 8pm



Mothers' Union Enterprise

For all your cards, gifts, MU badges, and lots, lots more, please contact **Naomi** on **087 7674447** or **cfomuenterprise@gmail.com**

Naomi is happy to travel to branch meetings or events, but a contribution towards her petrol costs would be appreciated. Cards ordered over the phone or via email and text can now be paid for by Credit Card.



Dates for your Diary 2024

Annabella Hayes Day + Festival Service - February 7th in Kiltegan at 7pm
All Ireland Big Hymn Sing - March 2nd St. Canice's Cathedral, Kilkenny at 2pm

Lady Day - March 25th on-line service at 8pm

Spring Council - April 27th in the Dolmen Hotel, Carlow at 10.30am

Retreat/Break-Away - May 17th- 18th Hotel Minella, Clonmel

International Widow's Day - June 23rd service and supper Kilkenny

Mary Sumner Day - August 9th Diocesan 'Big Hymn Sing' for Mum's in May

Autumn Council - October 26th in the Dolmen Hotel, Carlow at 10.30am

CFO Diocesan Holy Communion Service - November 7th in St. Mary's, Carlow at 11.30am

Write a Prayer for Annabella Hayes Day

There are 2 competition – members are asked to write a prayer in honour of our founder in Ireland, **Annabella Hayes**, who we now celebrate on the 7th of February each year.

For the **All Ireland** entry your prayer should be no longer than 100 words and should be submitted to Margaret Jacob by the end of December please.
Entries to: cfomothersunion@gmail.com



For the **diocesan** competition the winner will say their prayer for the first time at next year's Festival Service in Kiltegan, and will also be presented with a prize.

Entries should be sent to William Bayley, Unit Coordinator for Fundraising and Communication no later than Friday the 19th of January 2024, including your name and details.
Please send entries to: william.bayley@ymail.com



Jesus, the Light of the World, as we celebrate your birth, may we begin to see the world in the light of understanding you give us. As you chose the lowly, the outcasts, and the poor to receive the greatest news the world had ever known, so may we worship you in meekness of heart. May we also remember our brothers and sisters less fortunate than ourselves in this season of giving. Amen.

Wishing you all a very Happy Christmas and every good wish for 2024. Lesley xx

Christmas Traditions and Their Origins

- The celebration of Christmas started in Rome about 336, but it did not become a major Christian festival until the 9th century.
- Nativity scenes first appeared in 10th-century Rome.
- The practice of putting up special decorations at Christmas began during the 15th century, when it was recorded that in London that every home be 'decked with holm, ivy, bays, and whatsoever the season of the year afforded to be green.'
- German Lutherans introduced the first Christmas tree in the Cathedral of Strassburg, in 1539.
- Since the 16th century, the poinsettia, a native plant from Mexico, has been associated with Christmas carrying the Christian symbolism of the Star of Bethlehem. In Mexico it is known as the 'Flower of the Holy Night.'
- Towards the end of the 18th century the practice of giving gifts to family members became well established.
- The first commercially produced decorations were created in Germany in the 1860s, inspired by the paper chains made by children.