

LEADER

VIEW

Suicide – a time for compassion

The figures make for shocking reading. 2,738 have died since the year 2000 by their own hand.

Suicide. The very word sends a shiver down the spine and remains for the most part a taboo subject rarely spoken about. Column inches devoted to the issue are painfully thin particularly in comparison with other tragedies like the weekly carnage on our roads.

The prevailing attitude in our country is that if we ignore something then it will go away. When it comes to suicide that blasé non committal view won't wash. An average of nine people a week take their own lives leaving behind more questions than answers.

This week we have decided to highlight suicide as a major issue and no doubt some will say that's not in the Christmas spirit. Yuletide cheer it may not be but statistics show the greatest number of suicides take place in the festive season.

While many of us are tucking into second portions of turkey and ham there are thousands of people who feel lonely, isolated and that they don't fit in. For many they see no alternative but to take the ultimate step and end their lives.

Suicide isn't glamorous although many try and portray it that way. From speaking to the relatives of people left behind we can still see the pain they continue to feel from losing a loved one to suicide.

What's even more commendable is that they don't judge their loved one from taking their life. As Fr. Iggy said it's a time for compassion not judgement.

Writing an article about suicide may not change the world but at least it's a start. Anything that takes 2,738, mainly young lives, shouldn't be swept under the carpet.

Our special feature on suicide can be found on page 25.