



Thursday, 2nd April.

Dear Father,

Greetings and good wishes to you and your parishioners as we continue to observe the requirements of the “lockdown” for the good of all. I thank our priests over the age of 70 and those with special medical needs for observing all the required physical distancing. It is very important that we all adhere to the government requirements for “cocooning”.

GRATITUDE TO THE CARING MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITIES

My thanks to all the priests who are helping their brother priests in neighbouring parishes where a priest may be “cocooning”. You have shown great solidarity at this time – thank you for your availability and support.

My thanks to the many wonderful volunteers and local support groups that have come alive throughout the Archdiocese who give such valuable support to all who live alone and must remain indoors at this time. When we reflect on these days in the future, we will surely recall that a very positive feature of this present crisis is the way in which neighbours, parishioners and young people have reached out to assist one other in the community.

I ask all priests to exercise all necessary caution if you are invited to any function, especially Wakes. I know these are very important aspects of our lives, but, for now, please exercise great caution if you should be asked to participate.

HOLY WEEK CELEBRATIONS 2020

It is regrettable that we will not be able to celebrate this most important week in the life of the Church as we have done each year. Fortunately, the opportunities for our parishioners to join in the ceremonies through TV, Webcam and local radio has never been more accessible. Many of our parishioners are very familiar with the transmission of mass on the TV. A programme schedule for the transmission times for RTE religious programmes during Holy Week will be sent in a separate email.

As we prepare to celebrate Holy Week this year, I would like to outline the following :

Guidelines

1. Palm Sunday

Based on the instructions from the Congregation for Divine Worship the Commemoration of the Lord’s Entrance into Jerusalem is to be celebrated using the Third Form: The Simple Entrance in the Roman Missal (page 142ff).

A symbolic amount of palms may be blessed but not for distribution. If a parish is broadcasting via webcam or radio it is possible to invite those who are joining the

ceremony from home to cut a piece of palm or a piece of an evergreen plant from their garden and during the moment of blessing that it would also be blessed with the palms in the Church.

2. Chrism Mass

In the archdiocese of Cashel and Emly as in many Dioceses throughout Ireland, the Holy Thursday Chrism Mass – normally celebrated on Wednesday of Holy Week in the Archdiocese, is suspended and will be celebrated at a later date.

3. Holy Thursday

The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. During the mass of the Lord's Supper I invite all priests of the Archdiocese to renew their Priestly Promises. At the end of the mass of the Lord's Supper the procession is also omitted, and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the tabernacle. On this day the faculty to celebrate Mass in a suitable place, without the presence of the people, is exceptionally granted to all priests.

4. Good Friday

In the Universal Prayer, Pope Francis has requested that the following prayer be included in the Universal Prayer:

For the Afflicted in time of pandemic:

Let us pray also for those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

Prayer in Silence, then the Priest says:

Almighty living God,

Only support of our human weakness,

Look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children

Who suffer because of this pandemic;

Relieve the pain of the sick,

Give strength to those who care for them, welcome into your peace those who have died

And, throughout this time of tribulation,

Grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.

Through Christ our Lord.

Amen.

The Adoration of the Cross – by kissing is limited solely to the celebrant.

Stations of the Cross

"The Stations of the Cross - Then and Now" by Fr Denis McBride C.Ss.R. In this one hour video the voice and visuals open up new ways of thinking about Jesus' journey and demonstrate how the passion story, in all its savagery, continues in our own time.

Visit the Redemptorist site: the free offer is Available to view online from 1 - 13 April.

The Easter Vigil

For the Baptismal Liturgy only the renewal of Baptismal promises is maintained.

I conclude this letter by asking you to join in a Call to Prayer that the Leaders of Ireland's main churches, together with other denominations and Christian organisations, have issued. The call to pray will take place on Palm Sunday, 5th April from 3.00-4.00pm. we are asked to remember during this hour the sick and all in the health and frontline care services for their courage in the battle against the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. Please encourage parishioners either individually or in family groups in their homes to join in this time of prayer with our Christian brothers and sisters together throughout Ireland.
Please stay well and stay safe.

+ Kieran O'Reilly

