

Diocesan Magazine



Cashel Ferns Leighlin Lismore Ossory Waterford

Pandemic:

- * Rectors' responses to challenge
- * Parishioners' feedback
- * A principal's perspective
- * A father's funeral

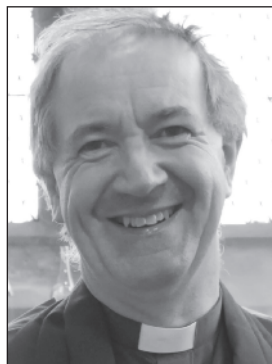
Coffee Break
During Covid



Eile - Archdeacon Elmes' stunt double now online

BISHOP'S LETTER

TESTING TIMES



Dear Friends

IREMEMBER a phrase often used by the bishop who ordained me priest well over thirty years ago. It related to the utter importance of worship as the duty and the joy of the church, as well as something offered in fulfilment of a deep human need. It reminded us that worship is not simply about feeling good, or seeking fellowship but most profoundly about making God known. The phrase was this - **“a God unworshipped is a God unknown”**.

That phrase keeps haunting me in these extraordinary and painful days, when public liturgical worship is simply not happening in a manner that is almost without precedent in our Christian history.

Challenging questions ‘out there’

We can of course worship and pray privately, we can rejoice in the potential of live streaming and the possibilities offered by technology, we can remind ourselves that in more normal times we often over - associate the worship of God with our heritage of buildings. However, having said all those things, there are undoubtedly important and challenging questions ‘out there’ during the current pandemic.

How is God powerfully and effectively made known in the midst of all this?

When public worship, normal sacramental habits, and even certain everyday human tactile expressions of friendship and concern are in suspense, how do we best know the God who especially comes among us when we gather the people and break the bread?

As someone who has long proclaimed that the liturgy is among our greatest tools in evangelism, I find myself asking fresh questions about how we can in these times authentically be the church in a manner that in over three decades of ordained ministry I never imagined would be the case.

And, while the great priority of the present time must be to promote urgently the public health and safety of our people, I do allow myself to wonder how all of this shock and privation will affect our ecclesial self - understanding in a context when we do again begin to reassemble physically, although perhaps required to adhere to certain disciplines of social distancing for quite some time to come.

Without stretching the analogy too far, will we be somewhat like the Old Testament people of God who returned from exile in Babylon and as they rebuilt their lives also found themselves transformed?

Will some of the technological initiatives of recent times continue and become a mainstream context for worship?

Will our relationship with beloved buildings become a little looser?

Will we have learned habits and even instincts of distancing which will affect aspects of the intimacy we associate with sacramental worship together?

Will the enforced loss of churchgoing habits affect how people make their choices in the future; will they have a new sense of the value of what has been temporarily taken away from them ...or (dare I say?) will some people conclude that when they had to stop going to church they didn't actually miss it (or indeed some of the 'politics' that can sometimes accompany parochial life) hugely?

Do not let us fall

As one of those rare creatures who for a combination of reasons almost never missed a Sunday in church from the day of my birth until this present crisis, I find myself engaging in all sorts of surprising self-examination that would never previously have occurred to me ... And in all of this reflection, I have not even begun to address the practical financial consequences which the diocese is bound to face. Nevertheless, all things considered, I find myself praying repeatedly these days a phrase semi-derived from the Lord's Prayer ... 'Do not let us fall when we are tested'.

It may well be the case that historians will conclude that the 2020 pandemic was one of those historic crises and testing moments when people of faith in fact demonstrated precisely what that faith was worth.

At the time of writing I have, of course, no idea how current regulations may begin to adjust or otherwise in early May, and in mentioning now a few practical things I do not want in any way to imply that the chief priority is other than care for the sick and anxious, and fervent prayer for those who are on the frontline.

However..

***Confirmations** are major moments in the lives of individuals and of families and I am often asked about my future plans for them. Much will depend upon the nature of the easing of restrictions and the degree of social distancing still required going forward. There will also be a need to have adequate time to complete the preparation of candidates. Some parishes may prefer to hold things over until next year; I may try to offer a number of confirmations for appropriate clusters of parishes late in the present year.*

*The **institution of the Reverend Edna Wakely in Castlecomer** was scheduled for 24 May. This is a very tough situation both for her and for the parish and I have yet to determine whether it will be possible even to have a ceremony to carry out the necessary legalities in the presence of a few witnesses around that date*

'Easter' Vestries can only be held once conditions permit and when it has been possible to resume public services and to give two Sundays notice of them. Meanwhile current members and parish officers continue to discharge their duties as is appropriate

My road tour of the 150 churches due to start on May 22 and to which I was so greatly looking forward must probably become a matter for reconsideration and possible rescheduling when circumstances allow it.

Hearts go out to those disrupted by current anxieties or bereaved

Our hearts go out to all those whose lives are hugely disrupted by current anxieties, whether those facing the Leaving Certificate, or those who have had to put wedding plans on hold...along with many others.

In particular my thoughts are with those who have lost loved ones from this life without even the consolation of a 'normal' Irish funeral which is so much part of our culture and of how we express solidarity with the bereaved. Personally I am conscious of several funerals of distinguished contributors to the life of this diocese which I might have attended in recent weeks, and I know how clergy have been working hard in all situations of bereavement to give a sense of comfort and dignity (and in many case the prospect of future memorial services.

*As I think of those we have lost from ministry in the diocese of late I think of **David Smyth** of Waterford - a man of many talents, a serving Diocesan Reader and husband of Christine who is one of our cherished priests. I think of **Des Hall** of Lismore Union, one of nature's true gentlemen who served faithfully as a Reader for many years. And I also send our sympathy to the **Reverend Nicola Halford**, bereaved by the death of her father in Sallins, Co Kildare.*

But again I pray with some poignancy - 'do not let us fall when we are tested'...Or forget that it is still Eastertide

Michael Cashel Ferns and Ossory



DIOCESAN MAGAZINE

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**Cashel, Ferns, Leighlin,
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EDITOR:

Margaret Hawkins
085 8010720
cfomageditor@gmail.com

DEPUTY EDITOR 2020:

The Reverend Conor O'Reilly

ADVERTISING:

For ALL queries re advertising
please contact: **Nicola Jacob**
Birnam Lodge, Dunsinane,
Enniscorthy, Co Wexford
njacob2014@gmail.com

DIOCESAN**COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER:**

Margaret Hawkins
Email: cfodco@gmail.com
or dco@cashel.anglican.org
085 8010720

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

For subscriptions contact
the Diocesan Office:

Mrs Denise Hughes
The Diocesan Office,
The Palace Coach House,
Church Lane, Kilkenny.

Telephone: 056 7761910

Fax: 056 7751813

Mobile: 087 2392285

Email: office@cashel.anglican.org

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COVER IMAGE: With meeting for coffee in the Diocesan office or the Deanery not possible during the COVID-19 lockdown coffee break time for the Bishop and Dean David McDonnell meant conversing over a wall, Church lane and via a window in the Diocesan Office!

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STATEMENT OF INTENT

'The Diocesan Magazine Committee and the Editor of the Magazine are bound by the requirement of Safeguarding Trust that pictures of minors (i.e. all persons under 18 years of age) in this publication may not be accompanied by captions giving their names. This may sometimes seem a strict policy but it is a requirement of the wider Church of Ireland.'

EDITORIAL**ONLINE VERSION FOR AN EXTRAORDINARY TIME**

WELL, what to say about all this? Right now, I'm champing at the bit for restrictions to be lifted but at the same time knowing that lockdown could last longer than May 5th. Don't think too far ahead – that's what common sense is saying – so it's a case of 'act responsibly and pray on'.

The Covid-19 pandemic has knocked most of us sideways – emotionally, spiritually, physically and financially too. Who would have thought that such an extraordinary thing would happen to cause such havoc in the world?

Right now, after suggestions that masks should be worn in public places, I am hoping that the pack of 50 face masks that I have just bought online will never be used. I'd like my children to come across these expensive souvenirs in 50 or 100 years' time, gathering dust in a box in the attic and say 'they were bought as a precaution during that terrible coronavirus crisis in 2020 but weren't needed'.

Equally, or even more, my wish for this special issue of the Diocesan Magazine is that it will be kept by families - in print or digital format - as an historic record of what happened in our diocese in 2020. Descendants will be able to read about what happened in parishes, how clergy and laity coped with the challenge of closed churches, what good was seen in this crisis and their thoughts about how the church may change in the future.

Why a free online Magazine this month? The answer is simple. Distribution of print copies is not possible as yet due to restrictions. Some of the April issues still await delivery. Postal subscribers got theirs as normal as did digital subscribers but magazines could not be couriered out to parish distributors. The Media & Magazine committee did the best they could by seeing that each rector got a copy by email that they could send to parishioners who requested one. This, of course, left out a cohort of people who normally collect their copy in church and who don't use email or the diocesan FB page <https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofCashelFernsandOssory/> - or the diocesan website www.cashel.anglican.org

With the lifting of restrictions not assured before the May issue comes out, we had to think of how to proceed. The decision has been to publish a free-to-all shorter version of the magazine on the Diocesan website in order to make it available to as many as possible in these extraordinary times. A limited number of copies will also be printed and postal subscribers will receive their copy as normal. If there are parishioners who don't use email and who would like a hard copy they can let their rector know and one will be sent to them by post by the printer.

With that combination we hope that as many parishioners as possible will be able to read it.

In the meantime, please stay safe and stay well

Very best wishes - Margaret

THE WORD IN YOUR EAR



PLAGUES ARE NOTHING NEW

A worldwide pandemic, such as the present Covid 19, is not an ordinary event, and this has led to many uncertainties in how we worship as a community. The course of how we 'do church', for want of a better phrase, has changed radically, almost on a weekly basis. But plagues are nothing new and throughout history the Church has responded in appropriate ways to new situations.

The first thing to be said about the suspension of public worship is that it is not innovative. There is clear evidence that in medieval and modern Europe, churches were periodically closed. John Clyn a Franciscan Friar and guardian of the Friary in Kilkenny writes one of the few first-hand accounts of the Black Death in Ireland, *'from very fear and horror, men were seldom brave enough to perform the works of piety and mercy'*.

While he doesn't explicitly say that church services were suspended, it can be construed that an unprecedented break in the record of sermons of Richard FitzRalph, Archbishop of Armagh between May 1348 and 25 March 1349 may point to a break in public worship coinciding with the plague.

Similar disruption in the record of the parliament and justicar's courts pertaining to the same time frame may even hint at early evidence of a national lockdown, similar to what we are experiencing at present.

The Red Book of Ossory, written in the hand of Bishop de Ledrede, contains a medical treatise on aqua vitae, or what we

would call whisky/cognac, and the reason for its inclusion seem likely to be linked to the black death that ravaged Kilkenny in 1348/49.

Archbishop Charles Borromeo of Milan closed all churches in the city in 1576-77 due to an outbreak of the plague, during which time he arranged for masses to be celebrated outside at street intersections so that the faithful could watch from their windows.

Altar in an automobile

Here we have an example of the church taking the sacraments outside of the church building in a way that is not too



dissimilar to broadcasting services on Facebook or YouTube, with the faithful participating, albeit at a distance. A photograph entitled 'An altar in an automobile' illustrates how Mass was celebrated in the streets of Belgium during the outbreak of the Spanish Flu. In short, the church has, in past times, responded in a reasonable manner to prevent the spread of disease.

Impulse to help but we need to be mindful also

It is clear also that there are countless instances throughout the centuries where Christians have risen to the challenge of caring for the sick when no-one else would and many paid the price of their lives in Christian servitude. The impulse of the Christian conscience is, of course, to wish to help in times of crisis. To put others before ourselves is a central Christian virtue and we must respect the word of Christ when he said 'I was sick and you did not visit me' (Matthew 25:36), but at the same time we must be mindful that we ourselves may be carriers of infection. It is one thing to wish to help and be present with people, it is quite another to wipe out a nursing home in the process.

While the public witness of Christians in past pandemics has been noble to the point of putting the welfare of others before themselves, we ought to note that there are several factors that set our present situation apart from others.

In former times there was often no healthcare and it fell on the church to step up to the mark. Previous generations ministered to the sick with little or no knowledge of how diseases were transmitted. In our present situation, exercising social distancing, cocooning (for those over 70) and staying indoors as much as possible for the rest of us, is in fact an act of sacrifice and putting others before our own selfish desires.

Communicate hope, love, compassion and friendship

We should also be thinking of how we can communicate Christian hope, love, compassion and friendship in our words, gestures and prayer-life, especially to those who are dying, grieving or struggling with isolation. We ought to exhibit a sense of solidarity in pursuing the common good, and foster a sense of greater empathy for those who are especially vulnerable. There will too be future questions of how to safely re-engage sacramental worship while minimising public risk.

Nothing new under the sun

This short flurry of history serves to remind us, lest we be tempted to think rather too highly of our recent creative efforts in our present situation, of what the writer of Ecclesiastes (1:9) knew of when he spoke '*what has been done will be done again, there is nothing new under the sun.*' But the words of our Saviour echo true now as they have in all generations '*By this they will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another*' (John 12:35).



**The Very Reverend
DAVID MCDONNELL**
Dean of Ossory

Coronavirus COVID-19



Coronavirus
COVID-19
Public Health
Advice

The Facts

Most at Risk

- Anyone who has been to an affected region in the last 14 days **AND** is experiencing symptoms
- Anyone who has been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in the last 14 days **AND** is experiencing symptoms

Prevention



Wash

your hands well and often to avoid contamination



Cover

your mouth and nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing and discard used tissue



Avoid

touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands



Clean

and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces

Symptoms

= A Cough = Shortness of Breath = Breathing Difficulties = Fever (High Temperature)

Affected Regions

Check the list of affected regions on www.hse.ie

What to do if you are at risk

I've been to an affected region in the last 14 days and

I HAVE symptoms

1. Stay away from other people
2. Phone your GP without delay
3. If you do not have a GP Phone 112 or PPP

I DO NOT HAVE symptoms

For advice visit www.hse.ie

I've been in close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in the last 14 days and

I HAVE symptoms

1. Stay away from other people
2. Phone your GP without delay
3. If you do not have a GP Phone 112 or PPP

I DO NOT HAVE symptoms

For advice visit www.hse.ie

For Daily Updates Visit

www.gov.ie/health-covid-19
www.hse.ie

Ireland is operating a containment strategy in line with WHO and ECDC advice



Riádas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES - CASHEL

THE VERY REVEREND GERALD FIELD

Cashel Union of Parishes

For me, like many of those of a certain age and/or with underlying medical conditions, these past weeks have been challenging – both personally and “professionally”. Being forced to self-isolate, my ministry as a parish priest (or lack of it as it had previously been exercised) came sharply into focus!

IMPACT HIT HOME

It began by wanting to inform parishioners that the Daily Office was still being said and their being remembered in prayer was continuing, but in the Deanery rather than the Cathedral. That was quickly followed by notices being placed on all church doors announcing that public worship in church was suspended until further notice. The same information was placed on our social media and web pages, text messages sent to those who had no access to the internet, and phone calls from parishioner to parishioner in the hope that everyone got the message. It was at that point that the reality of the impact this might have on our being supported and supportive as a worshipping community hit home! The greetings, the fellowship, the corporate prayer of Sunday mornings across our five churches gone in an instant.

NEED TO BE CREATIVE HAS LED TO POSITIVES – AND PODCASTS – AND VIDEOS

The need to be creative in ministry, alongside suggestions from parishioners, has led to a number of positives over the past month. But it has also highlighted some shortcomings. As far as supporting the prayer life of our community goes, it's easy to email out the weekly Pew Sheets containing the Sunday readings and Collects and a few prayer suggestions, but there's no personal interaction in that. What really opened the possibility of something new was when I was asked by a parishioner would I consider doing a podcast if she set up the necessary links etc. online? Fortunate enough to have the equipment to do so, it seemed to offer one way of communicating with parishioners



and sharing worship with them. The order of service and Pew Sheets emailed to them, along with the link to the podcast (the same being posted on our Facebook and Web pages), and a form of corporate Sunday worship once again became possible. An offer from another parishioner to do the same via a video followed, the means for which he set up online and helped me to work out how I could record a Eucharist for Easter Day from the Deanery. Another new way to worship together yet apart! The response from those who have been able to access either or both forms of services has made the steep learning curve worthwhile.

HOLY SPIRIT WILL CONTINUE TO INSPIRE US

In terms of pastoral ministry visiting is being done by telephone. Weddings have been re-arranged and baptisms and confirmations postponed but will happen! The shortcomings mentioned earlier are around realising that there are those who have no access to social media or the internet for either worship or passing on information!

As to the future... the Holy Spirit has inspired creative ways for us to continue to be Church, and I believe he will continue to do so!

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THE REVEREND GRAHAM SAWYER

Kilcooley Union with Fertagh

In order to avoid confusion, the submission for the last diocesan magazine was written on 8th March and this one is written on 14 April.

To-day we heard on the radio the news that over half the fatalities of the virus have taken place within 1% of the population and specifically with those most vulnerable in our society such as older people and those living with the challenges of disabilities: most live in care homes. By the time this edition of the magazine is published (in whatever form), we might be worshipping together in church or it is equally possible that the current three-week curfew and cocooning will have been extended. However, what I write to-day (restricted by the editor to 500 words) is a personal reflection on the impact of the last few weeks.

SILENCE AND SOLITUDE HAS BEEN A BLESSING

My own experience started rather earlier than it did for others as I returned from a few days overseas and so was told to self-isolate two weeks before the Taoiseach told us all to stay at home: with the exception of a very few trips to supermarkets I have not left home for almost five weeks. While conscious that for others the experience will have been (and will continue to be) very different, a long period of silence and solitude has been a personal blessing made considerably easier by living in probably the most isolated of all rectories in the diocese.

PRAY AND WORK

I am someone who has the starting points of silence, solitude and contemplation in order for my faith then to become action. As a member of a Benedictine religious community for whom the motto and commands of *pray and work* are very much in the order in which they are written, my spirituality hangs on the trellis of eight monastic services a day including the recitation of the Psalter once a week as well as daily ruminating on scripture. I have prayed much and read a great deal of scripture in my isolation and

been left with an enduring sense of thankfulness and peace.

GOD WILL GET US THROUGH THIS

Over the last weeks I have had many conversations with parishioners on the telephone and I have kept in touch with others by letter and email: a recurrent theme is that of enormous thanksgiving to God that we live where we do and that only God will get us through this; there is also a universal belief that life will never be the same. We probably ask ourselves in the words of Psalm 31 *How long?* That said it is clear from our faith that it is in suffering that we all shall find redemption and that we are always dependent on God alone.

WE WILL BE CHANGED BY THIS – AND HOPE AND JOY WILL TRIUMPH

Each one of us, including our parishes, our diocese, the Church of Ireland and society in general will be changed by our experiences of the last few weeks: some will have lost their lives and others will mourn deeply those they have lost. The risen Christ tells us that hope and joy always triumph.

SILENCE



SOLITUDE



CONTEMPLATION



ACTION

Templemore

VACANT

NO NOTES AVAILABLE

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NEWS FROM THE PARISHES - OSSORY

THE VERY REVEREND DAVID MCDONNELL

**Cathedral Church of St Canice and
Kilkenny Union of Parishes**

SEE 'WORD IN YOUR EAR' COLUMN ON PAGE 6

NATIONAL SUPPORT NUMBERS

1 Life (Text: HELP 5144)	.1800 247100
Alcoholics Anonymous	.01 8420700
Aware	.1890 303 302
Barnardos Child Bereavement Services	.01 473 2110
Bodywhys	.1890 200 444
Caredoc (6p.m. – 8a.m.)	.1850 334 999
Childline	.1800 66 66 66
Citizens' Information Board	.1890 777 121
Console	.1800 201 890
Drugs/HIV Helpline	.1800 459 459
Gamblers Anonymous	.01 872 1133
Garda Confidential Line	.1800 66 61 11
Gay Switchboard (7p.m. – 9p.m.)	.01 8721055
Grow Mental Health Movement	.1890 474 474
Headstrong (12-25 years)	.01 472 7010
Irish Childhood Bereavement Network	.01 6793188
ISPCC	.01 6767960
Money Advice and Budgeting Services	.1890 283438
Pact (Services in Adoption)	.1850 67 33 33
Parentline (Parents Under Stress)	.1890 927 277
Pieta House (Suicide and Self Harm Support)	.01 601 0000
Protestant Aid	.01 6684298
Rape Crisis & Counselling Centre	.1800 478 478
Samaritans	.116123
St Vincent de Paul	.01 838 6990
The Mothers' Union in Ireland	.01 873 5075
Women's Aid	.1800 341900

If you think that a number should be added to this list please email or write to the Editor or include with next month's parish notes.

RACHEL TREACY

Castlecomer Union of Parishes

(New rector THE
REVEREND EDNA WAKELY
to be instituted in May)

As I look at my "Thought for the Month" from last month I'm reminding myself often of how apt it now is in April... *"A secret to happiness is letting every situation be what it is, instead of what you think it should be."*

The entire world is taking drastic measures to combat Covid-19 and to safeguard our lives. This tiny virus which is seemingly smaller than one micrometre, has sent global markets plummeting and brought international travel to a standstill. It has curbed our freedoms and gripped nations with fear... but I know God causes all things to work for our good, Romans 8 v 28. In the midst of it all nature is thriving, we can hear the birds more clearly and our skies and air are clearer too.

We cannot meet as a church family but every family within the Union is more aware of the needs of those around them. People are reaching out across the phone lines, text messages, the Facetime, the Zoom and Facebook. We are really grateful for all of Bishop Michael's Facebook contributions. Some of us are learning new media skills!

Thank you to all those who are keeping our churches and graveyards looking so well during this time. Everyone is just quietly doing what needs to be done in every corner of the Union.

Thank you to the Reverend Ian Coulter and

the Venerable Robin Bantry-White who have been keeping in touch by phone with those who would normally have home Communion visits. Those calls are very much appreciated.

As I prayed about the situation here in this Union without a resident Rector, I set up a WhatsApp group. Unfortunately, not all parishioners are able to use WhatsApp, but trusting to reach



as many as possible as a way of keeping people connected. Each night we read Psalm 91 – *Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High* - (often known as the soldiers' prayer) and we pray for all our parishioners, neighbours, relatives and friends. Psalm 91 has much to say to us and it can be a great encouragement to us. The psalm is of a constant theme throughout about taking refuge in God and his protecting you when you do so.

I post the words of a hymn for that night too and sometimes if God is really impressing something on my heart/thought for the day, I share that too. It is lovely to see others posting songs or reflections that are impacting them also. So even though we are not in a church building, we are connecting with each other as best we know how.

We are very aware that we need to count our blessings that we are a rural parish, as we have freedom to walk outside and enjoy the beauty of nature in spring.

We also look forward maybe to having a lively Songs of Praise when lockdown is over and the icing on that cake will be to share it with our new Rector, the Reverend Edna Wakely.

Thought for the Month

Genesis 8;22. "As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease."

THE REVEREND VICTOR FITZPATRICK

Clonenagh Group of Parishes

IT WAS THE SPRING OF HOPE, IT WAS THE WINTER OF DESPAIR

"It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness..."

Thus opens Charles Dickens' classic historical novel *A Tale of Two Cities*. I think that Dickens might just as easily have been referring to Lent 2020 as France 1775. The schoolchildren's initial euphoria at an unexpected break from the classroom was quickly replaced by scenes of lengthy queues snaking around supermarkets as panicked shoppers piled their trolleys high. The wisdom of staying indoors and keeping not only oneself safe, but one's family and neighbours safe too, was jettisoned by some as they made their way along Ireland's motorways to caravans and holiday homes near the sea.

BEST OF TIMES – BEST OF PEOPLE

However, overwhelmingly it has been the best of times, or rather the best of people. Our Group of Parishes has always been a fine example of a community that knuckles down with the task in hand

whenever anything needs doing. This has been very much in evidence just recently - in Seir Kieran with the community coming together as one to undertake much welcomed ground improvement works; the extremely generous response to the Clonenagh Golf Classic annual fundraiser; and not least of all the spontaneous outpouring of goodwill, kindness, innovation and generosity which greeted the call to restore Laccagh Church's roof.

RECENT WITNESSING OF TREMENDOUS SPIRIT OF CARE

There are plenty of other examples too of the Clonenagh Group of Parishes coming together so readily to meet challenges, and there are equally more examples too of our Christian family of believers simply doing their level best to live out God's call to act justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly. We've always been good as a community in keeping an eye on our neighbours, but these recent weeks have been witness to a tremendous spirit of care, compassion and charity.

IMPACT ON GRIEVING, HEALTH AND FINANCES

It hasn't all been plain sailing. Church closures and social distancing has radically altered the traditional Irish community-centred approach to grieving, mourning and rallying round the bereaved. The long-term impact of this on grieving people is yet to be seen. Yet to be measured too will be the long term mental health trauma from anxiety, fear and worry, not just at the physical health implications of the spread of the Coronavirus, but the resulting financial ramifications and impact that this epidemic has had on families, farmsteads, individuals and livelihoods, and indeed the increased stress on our young scholars

and exam students. We pray that the Lord guide and direct us all to respond effectively to their needs.

May I end with some personal words of gratitude: thanks for all the kind phone calls, cards, texts and emails enquiring after my mum and I; thanks for the thoughtful (and delicious!) gifts of fruit bowls, venison, pheasant, lamb, cakes, and assortment of vegetables; thanks for the kind and supportive words of encouragement and your appreciation of the online church services. Thanks too to Fr. Seán for allowing me the use of the St Fintan's Church radio transmitter to

broadcast our Easter Vigil live; thanks to our DCO for sourcing a mic and tripod mount from the Priorities Fund to assist with the online services; to Bishop Michael Burrows and clergy friends and colleagues for their cheery comfort; to Joan for her thoughtful and inspirational messages on WhatsApp;; and most importantly thank you one and all for your kind support of each other during this dark period in our history.

"Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16, KJV).



LIGHT BREAKING THROUGH

**THE REVEREND
CANON JAMES
MULHALL**

**Kells Union of
Parishes with
Inistioge**

The experience of ministry here in the Kells Union with Inistioge during Covid-19 is so different than what had been planned. We gathered while the snow fell on Shrove Tuesday to celebrate as a community with pancakes and to plan our supper dance on March 13th. Great progress had been made on ticket sales and there was a sense of anticipation about the upcoming event. It was all systems go with planned Lenten Services each Wednesday night. Within a few weeks Services were curtailed, we could no longer share the common cup and then all churches were closed for worship. All stopped. I looked at the bundles of Service Sheets that I had prepared for the midweek services and Holy Week and I remember the sinking feeling of putting them all neatly into a box for another time. There was a sense of disbelief at what was happening. The stillness, the lack of vehicles travelling on the road with the exception of tractors with cultivating machines, was engaging. Amidst the quietness the lambs were playing in the field in front of the Priory and the crows were busy nest building with all their noises.

NO MEETINGS

Ministry changed. The freedom of house calls, and the chance meetings had ceased. Now it was texting, phone calls and emails to keep in touch. The interactive relating had changed but neighbours became or seem to be more aware of the needs of those living in the community. I have heard so many people speak of the care that they have experienced especially those who are cocooning. Being among those cocooning it is a most unusual experience of seeing every situation as a source of risk of infection with hand sanitizer in the car, on the office desk ... everywhere. So strange. There was such a change of lifestyle, no meetings, no attending conferences for Children's Ministry in the UK, no Safeguarding training sessions etc.

**LIFE SLOWED DOWN – TIME TO
EXPERIENCE THE PULSE OF GOD**

Life slowed down. There was time to think and "Be". I pondered what was all the 'going' and the 'doing' about. Now there was time to read, to study, to reflect, to pray and to walk. More importantly silence became a much more significant part of my day. Quiet times allowed me to live in my 'being', to experience the pulse of God in what was happening around me, even in the dark days of aloneness, confusion, question and isolation.

There are many excellent Services streamed and recorded on-line. These have been a source of comfort and connectedness for people. There was a sense of realism about them that was refreshing and engaging. Many parishioners have spoken of looking at services on line and maybe this is a way forward for those who are housebound or unable to attend church services regularly.

A TIME FOR STOCKTAKING OF WHAT IS REALLY WORTHWHILE

Relationships are at the heart of parish community life. Sustaining relationships and a sense of belonging is the task of discipleship as we live out the reality of Christ's risen presence among us. So texting and phone calls play a huge role in this as we sustain ourselves in these 'extraordinary times' which are likely to continue for some time. I miss fellowship,

worshipping together and this time has awakened afresh in me much of what I took for granted and lived as routine. Now I believe there will be a renewed freshness in the simple community times of sharing, fellowship, worship and togetherness. It's a time of hope, for stock taking of what is really worthwhile pursuing and a time for fresh vision on discipleship.



HOPE

**THE REVEREND
RICHARD
SEYMOUR-WHITELEY**

**Rathdowney
Union of Parishes**

Our experiences of the present time of 'Lockdown' are varied. Some Rathdowney parishioners are feeling imprisoned in their homes, and others of course have their farms where they can get out into the open air. Some parishioners are feeling lonely or even without purpose with their work and contribution to society taken away from them.

The resolution and understanding of many in the parish about the severity of the Covid19 problem, shown by their willingness to go through the current restrictions, is good to hear. I am also hearing of how people in the town and parishes of the Rathdowney Union are showing concern and are helping those in the vulnerable groups those having to 'cocoon' to ensure their own safety as much as possible. The crisis has also revealed how high a proportion of our congregations are in the vulnerable categories, obviously because of age, but also younger members who have underlying health problems. This of course will not simply be true in Rathdowney but Church wide. And it has become clear the high proportion of clergy who are in the same situation. We are also aware of sections of the

population who are ignoring the restrictions, and are regarding the lockdown, with all its travel restrictions as unnecessary and unacceptable: on RTE, hearing about people protesting how outrageous it is 'Irish people telling other Irish people' they cannot do this or that. We are amazed at the selfishness and wilful stupidity of some who risk spreading this killer disease to others.

This I'm sorry to say has also been shown by a refusal in some circumstances to accept these restrictions in the case of some funerals, ignoring all social distancing and the desperate need to restrict numbers, even when the majority of those attending might scarcely know the deceased! On the other hand, the generosity, compassion, kindness and community spirit of others being shown in particular at this time is wonderful to see and experience. And most of us are so

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grateful for the dedication, compassion and selflessness shown by those risking their lives in the various health and caring professions.

Sadly, I know that two of our families have been touched by Covid19 and we extend our deepest sympathy to them and to any other families in the parish who are affected.

We don't yet know how this prolonged shutdown on Sunday worship will affect us long term. I know that a number of parishioners deeply appreciated receiving readings, prayers and reflections for Holy Week and Easter Day. My hope is that a goodly number of people made use of them, to remember and pray about those

things which make us Christian, and which make us want to be followers of Jesus.

This leads me on to say what makes me a Christian believer: the compassion of Jesus, which took him even to the Cross and resurrection after that. His was a compassion which knew no bounds, a compassion which is the very heart of God, and something of this compassion is well and truly being shown by so many in society at the moment with their care for others, often at considerable risk to themselves. Wherever we are, although we are unable to meet together on Sundays, the one thing we can do is to pray. Genuine prayer is an act of compassion and the heart.



EMPTY TOMB - EASTER

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES - WATERFORD

THE VERY REVEREND MARIA JANSSON

Waterford Union of Parishes

All life changed on Tuesday March 10th when I emailed parishioners, closing the cathedral, cancelling the youth group trip to Ovoca, choir rehearsals, all meetings and all services bar HC the following Sunday in the cathedral. Staff and Friends of the Cathedral were sent home. The following Friday the schools closed and it was official, a graduated lockdown had begun.

I've always felt that Irish people do death well, that the community gathering is a vital part of the healing around the death of a person. But this virus has gone to the heart of community and left many to grieve on their own privately without that support.

We have had four deaths in the community over the last month and our deepest condolences go to all the families concerned. I will write more of these people in the more regular June issue of this Magazine but I write now of how funerals have been very different since March 10th.

Initially we were allowed 100 at a funeral but we had no shaking of hands, no Book of Condolences or the usual throngs that gather to honour long and good lives. Then that figure was reduced to only 50 people permitted to attend, again the

change adding to the loss for families. Within days there were further radical changes. Prayers at the graveyard were only permitted. Photographs were taken of attendees and sent to family members who could not be there. While a graveyard, at one funeral, was bursting with spring and birdsong the small group present were deprived of the full Irish gathering to honour a long life.

By the next funeral only 10 could attend. That service, streamed by a friend, got over 1400 hits. Friends of the deceased did not have an opportunity to grieve together publicly. When this pandemic ends we will hold memorial services for these four people and for all who die during this lockdown.



PEOPLE LOOK AT SERVICES IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Another great change over the last weeks has been that we had to put our services on YouTube. That turned out to be a vertical learning curve. The basics have

now been mastered and what I have learned is that the numbers who tune into that worship far exceed the numbers who attend worship in church. I write this article on Wednesday after Easter. In 2018, 335 people attended Easter day worship. 523 people have watched the service online over the last three days. I've learned that people look at this service in different ways. Some tune in at the hour of their Sunday worship. Others look at it when the children have gone to bed, or after Sunday tea, or when they cannot sleep. Some replay bits they like and skirt over the bits that bore them. Some forward the link to family members and friends. People are continuing to worship but are doing so in a different way. I cannot see us meeting as a community in the manner in which we used to meet until next Christmas. By then many will have got out of the habit of going to church, others will have decided that online worship is easier for family reasons and comfort. The future of the church will be very different from its past.

SURPRISING CONVERSATIONS

Parish visiting has had to change radically. Even though there was massive resistance in some church quarters against GDPR, it has served a very useful function at this stage. We have accurate data and contact details which means we can make contact with every household regularly. So starting at the top of the list and working to the end we spend hours each day ringing people. Sometimes the chat lasts less than a minute because they are OK and managing fine. On other occasions surprising conversations occur around the life changing financial consequences of this pandemic, about the loneliness of family separation, or the

stresses of being thrown together in a house with little more to do than gardening and housekeeping. Social isolation is very challenging for a lot of people and a call from a clergy person just maybe what is needed on a given day. I have had deeper conversations with some parishioners than ever before.

BLESSED AND CHALLENGING TIME TO BE A PRIEST

Finally, this is both a blessed and challenging time to be a priest. Normally we mix the tragic and the happy, the mundane and the imaginative, the administrative and the pastoral, prayer and worship music and management. But now everything is reduced to two things: shared worship and care for God's people. It was for that reason we became priests but the high price of that calling was the circle dance of meaningless meetings. Now we do what we have been called to and it is both a privilege and a challenge.

NEVER HAS OUR WORK BEEN AS IMPORTANT, AS PRIVILEGED OR AS GOSPEL LED

We hit the wall as well, we cannot see our families and we are at risk every time we go into the hospitals to attend the dying. But never has our work been as important, as privileged or as gospel led. We don't have the joy of weddings or baptisms or holding the newborn or community celebrations. What we do have is the power of the scriptures and the grace of Holy Communion and upon those two rocks we find strength hope and direction.

WE MOVE TO A FUTURE IN GOD'S HANDS

This is a learning time and an important

time. Not unlike the people of Israel in the desert we cannot go back to where we came from but move to a future in God’s hands. How we use these months and how we care for each other at this time will decide the landscape of the future church into which we are walking together. We trust in God and find in Christ the way and the hope by the power of the spirit we sustain each other in love.

PSALM 42:11

*Why are you cast down, O my soul,
and why are you disquieted within me?
Hope in God; for I shall again praise him,
my help and my God.*



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NEWS FROM THE PARISHES - LEIGHLIN

THE VERY REVEREND TOM GORDON

Leighlin Union of Parishes

LEARNING IN LOCKDOWN – OF CAMELS' BACKS AND PEARLS

The extended closure of parish churches has been a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Neither two World Wars nor the Foot and Mouth emergencies parallel the comprehensive human dislocation of the current COVID-19 pandemic. For people of faith, it has removed the established rhythms of the week. There is anxiety. The happy concerns of who is on this month's flower rota are replaced with dark warnings that every pew and door-handle might carry a risk. And so we find ourselves in a great Exile. The duration uncertain. The consequences unknown.

For myself, I choose to actively embrace this Exile experience, disturbing and disorientating though it is. Yes, I continue pastoral contact by regular telephone calls, texts and letter-writing to parishioners who are ill, isolated or troubled. Yes, I attempt a 'broadcast' Sunday reflection on the parish Facebook page but not one which attempts to reconstruct a chancel liturgy, no matter how impressive the broadcasts of others have been.

And this is because – to adapt a phrase from our Brexit neighbours – Exile means Exile. It is a desolate experience but one

which is deeply part of the narrative of God's people throughout the ages. In Exile, settled expectations are disturbed, radical options are considered and uncomfortable realities become unavoidable. At one level, a positive aspect is apparent. There is time to confront priorities, gain perspective, wash the car (I haven't) and notice things about which we were previously unaware. (Seamus Heaney's poem, *'Mint'*, is particularly poignant in this regard.) There is too the invitation – indeed, temptation – to give easy meaning through elegies to a truer spirituality made possible only when free from the death-dealing shackles of pre-lockdown demands. Apparently we, the wearied dogs of institutional religion, might now discover more spiritually authentic tricks. A new way of being.

But what looms large for me in the present crisis is the certainty that Church of Ireland people are a people of place, structure and ritual. Our parish church matters. The Sunday raising of the hymn-board a pointer to an intuitive sense of the Other. Our understated faith is holistically entwined with our physical gathering in this place at this time to do these things. It is one which is possibly

unique and not adequately recognised in the newer fads of spirituality, mission and renewal.

My Exile experience is thus raising many troubling questions. Given our identity with place, how might we do church in what is likely to be a COVID-19 culture for the foreseeable future? Mindful of the higher age-profile of the majority of parishioners, the specific vulnerability of this group, and their correspondingly higher involvement in the active life of the church, what will now be the make-up of each Sunday gathering and how prepared are we to redefine ourselves within this potentially new reality? The inevitable financial fallout for our parishes brings with it further challenges at every possible level – ministry resourcing and accountability, the

continuance of support for ineffective church structures and decision-making bodies, ways of maintaining pastoral connectedness, outreach and communication. How might these be addressed in the parish and the wider church?

The Children of Israel found their Exile to be an unwelcoming place of radical – indeed, enforced - change. It is the kind of change which the Church of Ireland is not good at. It will therefore require imaginative vision, prophetic insight and prayerful discernment in determining whether COVID-19 will be the straw that broke the camel's back or the sand in the oyster which engendered a new pearl.

Tom Gordon, *Dean of Leighlin.*



THE REVEREND CANON PATRICK HARVEY

Abbeyleix & Killermogh Union of Parishes

PARISHIONERS' REACTIONS

Undoubtedly there is a greater sense of community. I'm having long 'phone calls. People constantly ask how others are. And mean it in a new way. I'm still getting messages from people offering to help others who may be compromised by being isolated. I have never had so many discussions about worship. Folk who have never been 'churchy' ask when the next Facebook service is due and make suggestions for further services. The Editor asked what might the implications of this 'Coronavirus time' be for the Diocese ... well ... without being melodramatic this is one of the greatest opportunities the church is ever going to have. No pressure.

NO CHURCH SERVICES / FILMING / STREAMING

I am lucky that one of my family is at present a film student. I am grateful to him for his endless patience since we originally recorded the services. This was very time consuming. Now most services

are live-streamed. I asked him recently if he had learnt anything about working with a 'client' who was a Rector and wanted to make 'liturgy' for broadcast. His reply (I won't say it was exactly withering) was ... "Dad – I know all that stuff already". He didn't know that the Epistle candle had to be lit before the Gospel one though.

EMPTY / FULL

I never thought I would 'live stream' a service. Perhaps it was a vague 'I might do it someday' thought. I led a livestreamed Facebook service on Good Friday in Abbeyleix Church. I was the only one present in a church designed originally to seat 466 people. The Church darkened for Good Friday I read all the parts normally shared between three or four people. There was nobody there, and yet my mobile 'phone on a little tripod on top of the organ cover was all the while transmitting it to, literally, the world. One thousand eight hundred people viewed our Easter Day service.

ABSENCE / PRESENCE

Sadly, a parishioner died on Palm Sunday, 5th April (more will be mentioned about this in the regular June issue) and one of the hardest things that I've found clergy are having to do right now is to advise bereaved families that we are not permitted to visit their homes, that funerals are private, there can only be ten people at a burial, that there will be no service in the church. One of the most bitter sweet experiences I've had in my entire ministry was, with the kind encouragement of that person's family, over the 'phone when I said prayers with one of their 'phones switched to 'speaker' in the room where they were gathered. I learnt later that the person died a few

minutes afterwards. The technology we sometimes complain about has profound uses we never in our wildest dreams thought of.

OVERALL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE PARISH / DIOCESE

Before the arrival of Coronavirus we were about to embark on a journey with the Diocesan Review Commission to elicit the views of the laity regarding, amongst other things, the future of parish life. At the time of writing we are preparing a Sunday service here with six voices, the participants using their phones at home to record their parts. There is a discussion ongoing about further lay involvement in the leading of worship and the emerging ordained local ministry. All I will say is those proto 'ministers' are already here. I actually needn't take any part in that service.

WHAT I HAVE LEARNT

I believe it's the sound recordings which are the most compelling and memorable, not the film / images. Several people have said 'we listened to every word'. It's all about the Word. Who knew?! Parishioners have mentioned a sense of having the 'church in our house'. That's where it all began.

BIRDSONG

A closing question and answer I read recently in a weekend newspaper ... Q "Are there more birds?" A "No, it's just that you can hear them now".

PRAYING

I genuinely believe people are praying in a profoundly new and different way. Certainly each and every hour I give thanks that I'm able to breathe still.

STAY SAFE. KEEP WELL.

Patrick Harvey



THE REVEREND MÁIRT HANLEY

Baltinglass, Ballynure, Stratford, Rathvilly.

I was always more of a Paul McCartney fan myself but there is a John Lennon song going round my head at the moment, *“nobody told me there would be days like these, strange days indeed, most peculiar, moma”*.

STRUCTURE TAKEN DOWN - DISORIENTATING

One of the things that nearly makes it more odd but also easier to deal with, are the things that are the same. Walking the dogs, family meals and bundles of paperwork that I keep promising myself I will do and still manage not to get round to. Well, bit by bit, the paperwork is getting done, though the surreal feel in the air makes it somehow more difficult to do even though I have the time to do it. I think that this is because some of the structure around us has been taken down by these events and that is slightly disorientating. But an amount of the structure that we build around ourselves is like scaffolding, it is only there to help something else be put up and then has no reason to stay.

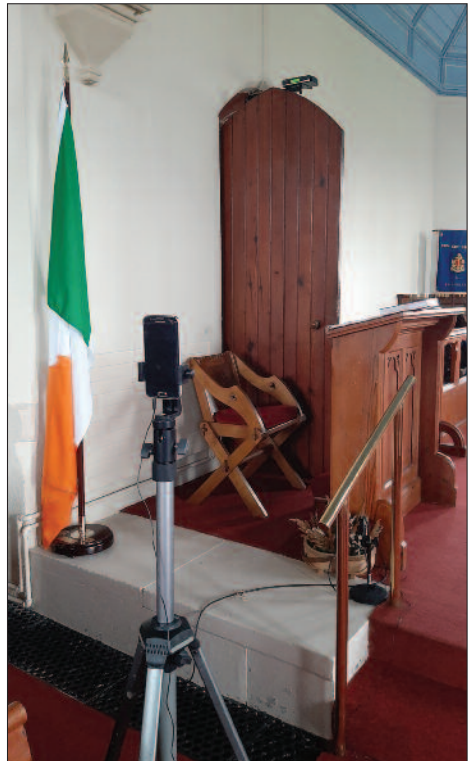
TAKE SCAFFOLDING DOWN – REVEAL BEAUTY BUILT BENEATH

Part of what Lent is about is to see what is

scaffolding in our lives and take it down, to reveal the beauty built beneath. In some ways I think that the current situation may have done some of that. I returned to concentrating on praying for people, and thinking about what that is and what that means. For me it was about being a spiritual light in dark times.

JOY TO KEEP WORSHIP AND PRAYER GOING – ON YOUTUBE

Whilst keeping a light going is a good thing, sharing a light is better, so how to share? Well as the clouds gathered, I had made a YouTube prayer service for those who were vulnerable and so might not



Camera and mic ready for service
in St Mary's, Baltinglass

come to church but with the cancellation of services I thought I had to think a bit more. I have a cousin in Duncannon who is always putting up things on Facebook Live so I thought I would give this a try. It went very well and was appreciated by parishioners and those further afield. It has been a joy to keep worship and prayer going in the church here in Baltinglass every day and a privilege to broadcast that prayer twice a week to far more people than we have here in the parish. There was also the opportunity to do some things with and for The Community of Brendan the Navigator which helped enrich Holy Week.

Friday we were all alone as Christ was left alone, but we were alone out of solidarity with all just as Jesus was alone to bring all humanity together. As I look at the empty church and pray, it is to me the empty tomb, Christ is risen and we will meet him, individually out and about until we can come together for a new Pentecost when all this is done.

In news in the parish our heart goes out to those families who have had bereavements over this time. More will be said in the regular June issue of this Magazine.

A HOLY WEEK LIKE LONG AGO

Many have said it was a Holy Week like no other but that just makes me think that we get used to things being the way they were last year and believing that they always have been that way and always should. It was a different Holy Week but for us commemorating in our homes not able to parade our faith with others outside, surely this is just as it was for Christians for 300 years before Constantine, as it has been for our brothers and sisters in parts of the world where the church is in chains, as it was for our Jewish brothers and sisters marking passover 75 years ago in much of Europe. This last thought was in my mind thinking of the 75th anniversary of the martyrdom of St. Dietrich Bonhoeffer on Holy Thursday this year. On Good



Scaffolding in our lives being taken down is disorientating

THE REVEREND DAVID WHITE

Carlow Union of Parishes

FLOATING ON THE SEA OF GOD

'The love of God is a magnet drawing us ever beyond our present situation. God is always just out of reach, far enough away so we can never settle down in comfortable complacency, and yet never so far that we can give up the quest as hopeless - once we can abandon our own expectations and let him truly be the Lord of the dance...'

Thomas Green in his book *When the Well runs Dry* challenges us to rethink our approach to faith, and in turn, to life. In order to grow and to flourish, we need to let go of our expectations and in a very real sense allow God to be in charge. This seems to go against the grain, since as adults we have been trained to be independent and to plot our own course. Yet if we claim to be people of faith, how do we draw on God's inspiration and guidance?

PANDEMIC REMINDS US THAT OUR LIVES ARE FRAGILE

The current pandemic starkly reminds us that our lives are fragile and everything we think of as important can be threatened almost overnight. These strange days have brought me back to ask

really essential questions including, 'What does it mean to be Church?' and 'What would it feel like to hand the reins over to God?'

When we encounter a situation over which we have no control, it is ironic that our first reaction is often to try to take control over it. We try to drown it in what we think is common sense and develop strategies to make the frayed edges straighter. Yet in all this bluster, we may make a bad situation worse and even obscure the most useful ways to proceed.

WHERE IS GOD IN ALL THIS?

During this strange time, I have tried to sit and wonder where God is in all of this. I was really stopped in my tracks, by Green's challenge in his book to be 'floaters' and not 'swimmers'. He suggests that the Lord's work is all directed to teaching us to float in the sea which is himself and it is really the 'floaters' and not the 'swimmers' who get to places and accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God. The question is then, 'How can I float in the Sea of God?'

FLOATING GOES AGAINST THE GRAIN

Again, this goes against the grain. Surely life must be lived purposefully and with vigour. I suppose we have to ask the question, 'What does it mean to be a 'floater?'' Green explains that 'floaters' are not 'drifters'. While they may appear very much the same from outward appearances, there are some significant differences. Drifting in the water will lead to one's legs settling to the bottom and to balance being lost. The drifters are not responsive to the current and the waves; they have a will of their own - the will to be lazy - and are soon upended. Floaters, however, are intensely active but what is absent from their lives is blinding tension.

SWIMMERS EXPERIENCE TENSION

Then there are the 'swimmers'. These strive to do their best but experience the tension between their own efforts and the contrary pull of the water. The swimmers have two wills pulling them - their own and God's - and this is what makes swimming exhausting.

The invitation is to 'float' and to allow the will of the Lord to become our own will. This will mean not always being intensely active. We need to embrace the 'God of Surprises' and all that this relationship will bring us, which will allow the magnet of God's love to draw us into freedom, leading to fruitful decision-making and better choices, and all this in God's own time.

WAIT FOR AN ANSWER RATHER THAN SIT RESTLESS WITH UNEASE

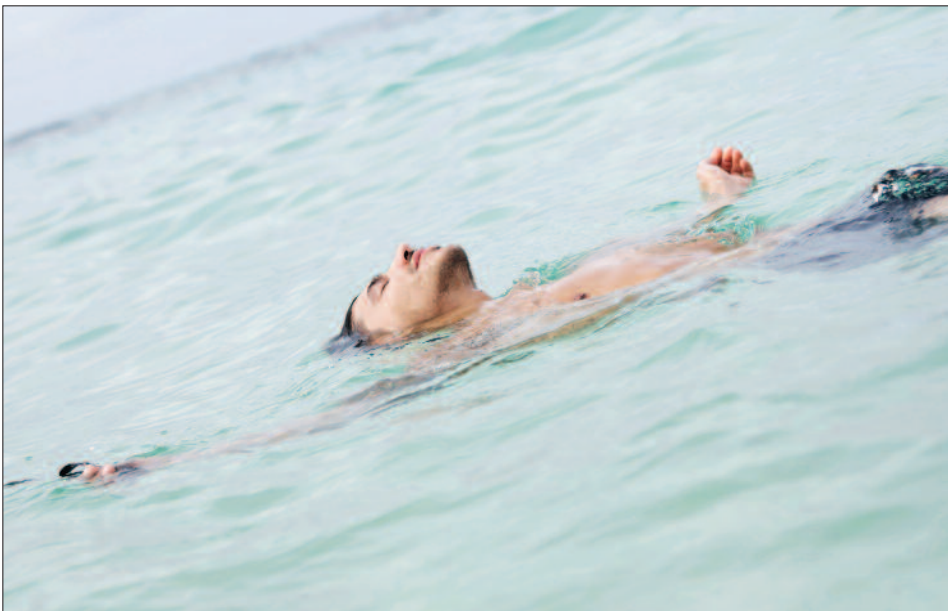
This current pandemic can be a time of opportunity if we allow the searching

questions emerge - the ones that busyness and fear often prevent us from asking. It will mean sitting restlessly with unease and uncertainty. And when we ask these questions, what would it be like to wait for an answer to come from God, rather than frantically searching out the answers ourselves?

St. John of the Cross' advice to those trying to make sense of life is '*...to have attachment to nothing and desire for nothing, and to have a true and complete desire for him who is your proper guide, for to do otherwise would be not to desire a guide.*'

SEE WHERE HIS CURRENT TAKES US

The challenge for all of us now, is to float in the Sea of God and see where God's current brings us. We must abandon our own expectations and let God truly be the Lord of the dance. In all that is happening, may we be courageous and free, to allow God be God.



THE REVEREND KEVIN RONNÉ

Dunleckney Union of Parishes

In Dunleckney we decided to do online services of prayer, reflections, school assemblies, and parish services doing in Christ Jesus to encourage each other and others.

We began with Sunday and Wednesday and then included all of Holy Week. In these times I did prayer reflections and bible study. Our Bible foundation came from a few different biblical Scriptures. Many found psalm 91 a real light to hold onto in the wake of the corona virus.

I will now share with you a few comments received related to these, ranging from local to abroad:

- Good idea with the group (union) during this time
- Keep the show on the road Reverend Kev. Thank you.
- Lovely idea.
- Beautiful video.
- Just goes to show the power we have in our hands - comforting, consoling, a booster to inspire and so much more. Stay well stay safe.
- During this isolation I think of it as being given the gift of time - to think (reading, prayers, poetry), to create (decoration, knitting, to learn like a new language - NEVER TOO LATE. Such a strange Easter.
- Wonderful Kevin, go raibh maith agat.
- That was lovely
- Thanks. In God we Trust.
- Thank you for the prayers and my favourite psalm 91
- Do you know I have a feeling in my heart that this in the group (union) is the beginning of big things to come. This is the reason for this season.
- Thank you for the wonderful live Church during this time. It was so uplifting at a time that can be so difficult. Your talks are so easy to understand and you bring it into our daily way of life. I hope you can continue to do this.
- I like the idea of 7 p.m. mass every evening. Gives me something positive to look forward to as I know by end of the service there is hope restored.



- It's a positive idea for all listeners to set goals that are challenging and that require us to reach beyond our comfort zones. It is also important for these goals to realistically match our ability.
- Thank you for doing this online mass.
- Fair play for keeping the light shining in this hard time.
- From South Africa - Thank you Kevin, I have just been listening to you live on Facebook, so beautiful. Happy Easter to you and your family as we celebrate our Risen Lord.
- From Australia - so good to be able to tune in to FB and listen to the word of God in these troubled times, thank you.
- I look forward to the online services especially during these difficult times.
- Thank you for bringing the services to us.

These are but a few comments on the happenings during this time of uncertainty and lack of peace. And yet we know that we serve the living God whose peace surpasses all understanding. Peace and joy of Christ Jesus be with you all. I would like to extend a special thank you to the Lord our God and to all of the Church in the Union and those who, in obedience to God, made all this possible. Our online services will continue on each Sunday at 11 a.m. and Wednesdays at 7 p.m. and every morning a short 3-minute reflection. For the Lord God will neither leave us nor forsake. Let us then be strong in the Lord and in His mighty power. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Happy blessings
Rev Kev

THE REVEREND LESTER SCOTT Fenagh, Myshall, Aghade and Ardoyne Union of Parishes

During this COVID crisis I think that in our team ministry in the diocese we are all busier than ever. I am sending videos, sermons, prayers and reflections every week to all my parishioners. Many of them are not online so using An Post in our current situation augurs well too in my context. Phoning and talking with people is equally important in my view. Many of the elderly isolated especially are very bored and anxious at this time. In my local community we have a 24-hour phone support line and I give three nights each week to this. I have made over two hundred phone-calls in the past three weeks to people in my parish and community and I find that the Covid crisis offers an opportunity to connect with people like never before because we are all on the same journey and in the same struggle.

THE LORD IS MY SHEPHERD

If our memories failed us and we could only remember one piece of Scripture, one word of comfort from our God to us, that would carry us through our earthly days, through each triumph and tragedy, through the on-going Covid-19 pandemic, I have no doubt that for many it would be the twenty-third Psalm. This Psalm speaks to our deepest fear and to our deepest angst. It is a part of our human condition that we fear that

we will be left alone, forgotten, forsaken. And we fear that we will not only be forsaken by those who love us, but also by God.

This is a fear to which even Jesus succumbed on the cross in his own cry of dereliction. Thus it is to this psalm that we turn at our darkest hour. It not only comforts us when all seems bleak, but challenges us to believe in the midst of our doubt. It challenges us to claim the reality of the Good Shepherd, our Risen Lord, who neither forsakes us nor forgets us, but walks with us and holds us close, even as our faith wavers and our hope falters.

It is a powerful piece of Scripture to which even the un-churched turn in times of crisis. I have a cousin in Perth, Australia whose ministry is almost exclusively a ministry to the bereaved. She officiates at Christian funerals for those whose faith is but a distant memory. She often asks them if there is a particular Bible verse that they would like read as part of the service. Invariably they pause for a moment and then say, "Oh yes, do you know that one about the shepherd?" Thanks be to God that there is a piece of Scripture that universally calls out to the human heart.

I remember from my childhood on a farm in Tipperary, an elderly neighbouring farmer, in his 80`s, Mick, who carried a clipping of Psalm 23 in his wallet, throughout his entire life. It was, for him, a tangible way of expressing the reality that God never left him, that the Good Shepherd was daily leading him beside still waters. It was one of the first times I remember meeting Jesus the Good Shepherd of my childhood, when Mick took the Shepherd Psalm clipping from his pocket, as a farmer and shepherd

himself and read those precious words to me.

But for the disciples, after the death of Jesus, perhaps Cleopas and the others along the Emmaus Road, it must have seemed like their Shepherd had abandoned them. Where now was his rod and staff? And yet, along the road of life they too met a stranger who opened the Scriptures to them, broke bread with them, and then their eyes were opened.

(abridged version)

Psalm 23

1

The Lord is my shepherd;
therefore can I lack nothing.

2

He makes me lie down in green pastures
and leads me beside still waters.

3

He shall refresh my soul and guide
me in the paths of righteousness
for his name's sake.

4

Though I walk through the valley of the
shadow of death, I will fear no evil;
for you are with me; your rod and your
staff, they comfort me.

5

You spread a table for me in the presence
of those who trouble me;
you have anointed my head with oil and
my cup shall be full.

6

Surely goodness and loving mercy shall
follow me all the days of my life, and I will
dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**THE REVEREND
ROBERT STOTESBURY**

**Killeshin
Union
Of Parishes**

CHALLENGING TIMES

Since I wrote the notes for the last magazine our whole way of life has been upended. No one could have anticipated the magnitude or impact Covid19 would have on our daily lives. It has affected many aspects of our lives including parish life. We had started to

adapt to changing how we interacted during services and were making adjustments in order to prevent and contain the spread of the virus but the difficult decision was made to close our Churches and socially isolate to protect our communities. A pandemic is like no other situation we have dealt with before in our communities.

**SENSE OF FELLOWSHIP WHEN
PEOPLE GATHER WILL NOT BE
REPLACED**

Churches have historically been a place of sanctuary in times of crisis. Meeting in Church acts as a support system for many people and also importantly to pray and worship. We have had to use other forms of communication, such as the internet, You Tube, WhatsApp, etc. to offer each other support. I have had many positive responses to my efforts to keep in touch with parishioners, using modern technology. But there are many who do not use these modern communications. Broadcasting services over the airways



will not replace the sense of community, support and fellowship that is obtained when people gather together for worship.

TAKE THE LONG VIEW

Loneliness, fear and uncertainty cause people to look for signs of hope and we need to help people to take the long view – God’s presence was here before this crisis, he is with us during it and will be after we return to some form of “normal”. Seeing ourselves as part of a much larger picture offers stability and hope. It can help us to have a sense of God’s loving presence in our lives even when events threaten to take away our hope.

WHAT WE’VE LEARNED

We have had to simplify our worship and use the power of prayer to sustain us and all who work in all the front-line services. I know this has sustained people working in these services knowing they are being prayed for and have the support and prayer of the wider community.

We have learnt how precious a gift life is and we must celebrate it. We have learnt how much we value family, friends and community. We have also seen the selfless work of people in the front-line services. We look towards the time when we can worship together and this may mean adjustments to how we do this. Amidst the worry and the challenges, it has been humbling to learn how people have supported each other and no doubt will continue to do so over the coming weeks and months.

“For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not harm, to give you a future with hope”. (Jer. 29: 11)

THE REVEREND ROBERT JONES

Kiltegan, Hacketstown, Moyné & Clonmore

Six Sundays have passed since we last worshipped together, and as a worshipping community we among other things, ask ourselves how we continue to grow our relationship with God and each other. The latter is much easier to answer as we can see from many initiatives throughout our communities and further afield that people in general have that innate gift of caring. Daily we are hearing of the wonderful example of people’s generosity. As for the former it might be more difficult to answer. With our churches closed and all that that entails, some may wonder where God is in all this. Apart from those times when we come together on a Sunday, one might question what the future is for our parish communities.

At present Morning Prayer is said daily in our churches (more frequently in St. Peter’s Kiltegan). On other occasions we have along with our fellow Christians rung the bell at designated times. In Kiltegan at Easter the empty cross was erected on the village green.

On a more practical level, as there are no restrictions on nature and with the season that is in it, the grounds and all parish

property have to be maintained. Under lockdown our FAS workers are not able to work and so we are very grateful to those who are quietly keeping the grass in our graveyards cut and the grounds maintained.

People really are very resilient and in so many ways we are fortunate that we live in a rural community, not to mention the fact that the weather has been kind in allowing us to be out most days. Within this rural community where many people have if not other family members, wonderful neighbours, isolation for many has been made that little bit more bearable. As one parishioner who is self-isolating, said to me, “the hardest aspect is not being able to go anywhere”. The fact that the decision is made for us is challenging. By the very nature of our common humanity, we are a sociable race. But, maybe during this current crisis we are being asked/challenged to consider distance and space. I know I am.

Over the past six weeks there have been many initiatives to acknowledge all those who are at the coal face in the Health Service and engaged in the caring and services professions. We have seen on our television screens the country wide response to these. And so we think of and express our untold gratitude to all who are Key Workers, especially our farmers as they continue to provide us with well needed nourishment.

And so we continue to remember in our prayers, those who are most affected, through the death of a loved one, those who have tested positive and ALL those who give so selflessly to the wellbeing of their fellow human beings. Stay Safe and Well

THE REVEREND CANON PETER TARLETON

Portlaoise Union of Parishes

We are a people of faith. What does this mean when we are in our comfort zone? What does it mean when we are thrown into confusion and confronted with challenges we have never before encountered?

Of course, it would be reassuring if we were able to restore our way of life to what it has been, and not to have to guess what the future holds. And we are a people of faith who embrace what is given to us and say “Thank-you” to God.

OUR BIG OPPORTUNITY TO LIVE OUT WHAT WE BELIEVE

It is shocking to lay to rest loved ones and friends who only a few short weeks ago appeared to be in good health. It is frightening to hear and read news of the extent of distress around the globe. And we are a people of faith, who, even when we do not understand what is happening, embrace the fear with our love for God and for our fellow-humans.

St Paul challenges us with “How can you know the resurrection, if you do not die with Christ?” So as a people of faith this is now our big opportunity to live out what we believe.

RELIGION SET ASIDE AND NOW OUR SPIRITUALITY KICKS IN.

This is a much clearer expression of the distinction between Religion and Spirituality – much clearer than I could have explained it during our Lent conversations!! Our religion is put to one side to prevent us from infecting each other with the c-virus. And now our spirituality kicks in. What lies in the heart of each of us is a longing for the best for all. A deep-seated desire for the universe to function to its optimum, and for each human to feel appreciated and treasured for what we are – completely human. When we hear again the Easter story we can understand that this is what Jesus wants for us – not to suffer unnecessarily, but to grow to understand how wonderful all of life is – even, and especially, when it goes wrong.

DNA OF OUR SPIRITUALITY

We are raised in families like little chicks – and then we take our wings and fly. We are given wings NOT that we might worry about what could happen if it all goes wrong, but rather to put our trust in One who will ensure that the challenges of life will offer us higher wisdom and understanding, and give us an even more beautiful vision of the whole of creation. This is the process of our spirituality – something which has at its heart the lessons we learnt at our Grandma’s knee, or in Sunday School, or in our sharing in the Thanksgiving meal, the Holy Communion. These elements of our religious/spiritual inheritance comprise for many of us the building blocks or DNA of our spirituality – the awareness of the frailty of human existence, and the interdependence of the whole of humanity.

POSSIBILITIES WE CANNOT YET IMAGINE

Maybe the future holds for us possibilities we cannot yet imagine, but our response will help to shape that of our grandchildren and the generations after them. So let us be bold about our faith – willing to speak out at all times for the Truth, willing to stand up for what is Right, and to live our lives with faith hope and love, confident that these are the treasures which carry the greatest currency in an uncertain world.

**“May God the Father, by whose glory
Christ was raised from the dead
raise YOU up to walk with him in the
newness of his risen life”**

Peter Tarleton



THE REVEREND ALEC PURSER

Stradbally Union of Parishes - Laois

Standing in Saint Patrick's Church Stradbally at the beginning of this countrywide lockdown, I began to think of all of the disasters that this building has witnessed and seen through-out its long history. The famine, dis-establishment, two world wars, the 1916 Rising, The Civil War to name but a few.

SILENCE AND EMPTINESS IS UNCOMMON

Yet there is something different this time, different than any other time of this building's witness, the silence and the emptiness is uncommon. Shut doors to prevent the spread of the Virus prevent us from doing what seems natural at a time of trouble, prevents us from doing what we have always done in a time of crisis, gathering together as a community to support and sustain each other.

But it is not only the doors of our churches that are closing, nursing homes, hospitals and some many other businesses are doing the same. Social distancing is now the norm and prevents families, friends and neighbours from doing what they would have always done

in a disaster, gather and talk about the problem.

DILEMMA CLERGY FACE

The dilemma clergy now face, is how do we stay in touch with our parish if so many of the doors are locked and keeping us at a distance, a social distancing we all have to respect. Of course, we can use all of the tools that are available, texts, emails, Facebook, YouTube and even a conversation on the phone to stay in touch.

A RE-THINK OF THE NORM IS NEEDED – BY CHURCH AND SOCIETY

But in reality a re-think of what the norm was and will be in the future is required, perhaps now is the time to begin that conversation, while we still have some element of control in our hands and this should be an exercise not only for our churches but for society in general.

WORST POSSIBLE OUTCOME

Such questions can no longer be avoided, the vision of the world that existed some few weeks ago, before the crisis cannot be the same vision that takes us out of this crisis and into the future. The worst possible outcome of all of this would be to return to how things have always been, the same consumerist driven society, the same apathy to poverty and homelessness, the same way we have turned a blind eye to all of the other disasters that fall upon faraway places of the world, allowing them to continue but only calling stop if they affect us.

When it affects us, we suddenly sit up and listen very attentively, what becomes evident is no longer can that selfish individualism that once reigned, continue to be the standard, but the realisation that the health and wellbeing of oneself depends upon the health of others.

We see the sacrifices made by hospital staff for the good of others, the willingness of people to look out for neighbours and those living alone, the overall kindness and solidarity of people wanting to not only give from what is left over but wanting to give from the little they have.

MUST PLAN TO PRACTICE WHAT WE DO DIFFERENTLY

From the monotony of forced lockdown and quarantine we can hope and indeed plan to practice what we will do differently, how we will do church differently, finding new ways to spread the Gospel of hope, build a better world more concerned with people and time to spend together rather than the accumulation of worthless material things.

THE OLD NORMAL WAS THE PROBLEM – NOW A SECOND CHANCE TO LIVE DIFFERENTLY

We cannot go back to the old normal because the old normal we had was the problem. When this comes to an end, when we have licked our wounds clean, when we have mourned the loss of those who have not made it through, perhaps then we can remember that this is a second chance to reconsider what is worth keeping from the old and what new possibilities we can have. This is a second chance to live life differently, I hope we don't let it slip from our grasp.



**THE REVEREND
CANON BRIAN
O'ROURKE**
**Tullow Group
of Parishes**

*Alleluia! Christ Is Risen!
He Is Risen Indeed! Alleluia!*

These are the words that would have been used at the beginning of our Easter Day Eucharist, but this year we were in a very different place. Our churches for the first time are empty buildings, no people, no singing, no exchanging the Peace, no receiving of the Bread and Wine, no shaking hands at the door and the usual few words of greeting.

LENT IMPOSED ON US BY THE GOVERNMENT!

I'm sure, like me, these weeks of staying home and 'cocooning' have given much time for thought. (I do understand if you have children or teenagers this may not be possible!) For many this is not a completely new way of life, it's the norm, but for others it's a complete upheaval. It's as though LENT has been imposed on us by the Government!

TESTING TIME

For many this is a testing time. Testing our patience with each other, testing our resolve to do the right thing, testing our remembrance to wash our hands while

singing *Happy Birthday* or saying the *Lord's Prayer*. Perhaps testing our understanding of church and what it all means. This period will bring out the best and the worst in us. The best in personal sacrifice and the worst in selfishness. The best in people like Fr. Giuseppe Berardelli, a 72-year-old Italian priest. He had been in hospital for days on a respirator having contracted the coronavirus. His parishioners had bought the ventilator to help save his life. He gave the ventilator to a younger patient who needed one. He died soon after. Such heroism will not be demanded of us all. But let us all serve each other in the way we can.

UNUSUAL FUNERALS

Our prayers, thoughts and deep sympathy go to those who have lost family in these times. Our daughter-in-law's Pastor in the Netherlands

conducted six funerals in one week. Their small parish is in deep mourning. Unfortunately, that picture has been repeated daily on a global basis. Funerals, conducted at the graveside or crematorium, without the personal words of comfort or sympathy, are alien to our way of doing things.

EUCHARIST IS ABOUT THE PRESENCE OF THE PEOPLE

I haven't celebrated the Eucharist since this began. Over the weeks I have come to realise what the Belgian theologian Edward Schillebeeckx understood about the Eucharist, it isn't about the priest, it's about the presence of the people.

When this is over, and it will be, we will come together again, and we will greet, and we will sing, and we will do this in remembrance of him.

Until we meet again in person - Brian



NEWS FROM THE PARISHES - LISMORE

THE VERY REVEREND PAUL DRAPER

Lismore Union of Parishes

As we reflect on the effects of the measures in Ireland we add our prayers for all who have died, are suffering, bereaved and all who are redefining the word "care" for us on the front line of health care. Thank you for all you are doing.

In Holy Week we thought about the Seven Last words of Jesus through short devotions on the website. The third word is when Jesus said to his mother, **'Woman, here is your son.'** and said to the disciple, **'Here is your mother.'**

A FORCEFIELD OF COSTLY SELF-GIVING

Martin L Smith SSJE reflecting on this, reminds us that church is not an institution, or a structure.

"...John does not even use the word "church". It is a communion grounded in the common experience of intimacy with Christ. The new community is not an inward-looking mutual admiration society, but a force field of costly self-giving. In a mysterious sign the evangelist points to the new home of the beloved disciple as the place where this has happened..."



St Carthage's Cathedral

The quotation moves church into the home, and into our inter-relatedness. This current lockdown has taken us there; to the recognition that we are a people given to each other, and to the world in the same selfless love that brought us to being. We are instinctively being “church” in necessary ways and expressing our givenness in creative ways, and by using our distinctive giftings.

WE FOUND OUR TOGETHERNESS APART

Yes... it was very strange not to be together from Kilmacthomas to Cappoquin and Stradbally to Lismore... and yet we found our togetherness apart. We shared liturgies at home and what was sustaining us, and recommended links to choirs and liturgies.

We leapt forward several centuries (or the Dean did) in our use of technology and enabling the website to connect us.

We uploaded reflections on the Seven Last Words of Jesus, and posted and e-mailed daily devotions to the Union.

We dropped off the Chapter to readers and they were very appreciative, while many took it on-line.

We engage with the world church through the Anglican Communion streaming services from different countries each week.

We had hoped to celebrate Easter with Bishop Michael but still he is with us weekly with his reflections.

We rang the bells at noon most days and also on Good Friday. My thanks to those who helped with this.

Parishioners were moved by the cross which was in the porch of the Cathedral in Holy Week and lit by night. Those who walked around and came to see it left flowers. Many shared that they cried at a recording of an Easter reflection and verse of “Thine be the Glory” on Easter Day from the cathedral...**and so we connect and pray and learn to walk again by faith in this uncharted terrain.**

In time we will be given the opportunity to either contract around the old version of ourselves and our world — insular, self-interested and tribalistic — or understand the connectedness and commonality of all humans, everywhere. In isolation, we will be presented with our essence — of what we are personally and what we are as a society. We will be asked to decide what we want to preserve about our world and ourselves, and what we want to discard (Nick Cave)

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**THE REVEREND
CANON
BARBARA FRYDAY**

**Clonmel Union
of Parishes**

Who would have thought that we would not have gone to Church on Easter Sunday? I'm sure most of us did; but it was not our "normal" way of dressing up, going into a beautifully decorated space where we would celebrate the Risen Christ with joyous hymns and a celebration of the Lord's Supper.

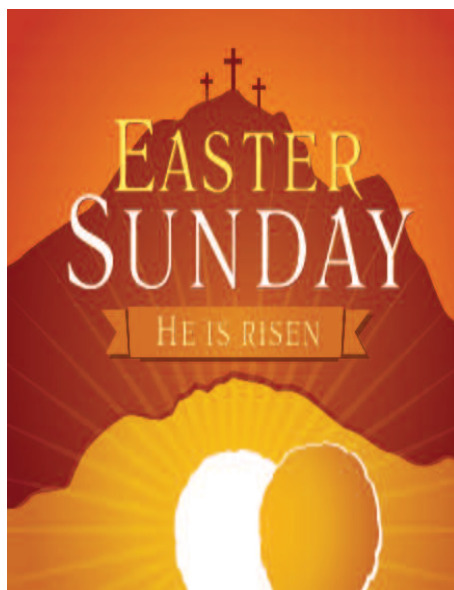
**HAD TO THINK HARD THAT
AFTERNOON**

I began to wonder if our "normal" Easter was going to happen earlier in the week. More and more people were becoming anxious about going out and, particularly about the spread of Covid-19. By Holy Thursday afternoon, more and more people were telephoning; obviously concerned and anxious. I was given a variety of options that might keep us safe as we worshipped and also some that clearly came from those who were very upset, anxious and afraid. I don't think I have ever had to think as hard as I did that afternoon. To "cancel" Easter was not something any Christian would want to do; but, having weighed up all that was said, offered and asked for; I decided that bringing everybody together was neither safe nor possible on a number of fronts.

**SERVICE WITH A CONGREGATION
OF ONE UPLOADED TO
SOUNDCLOUD**

And so, the churches were closed and arrangements made for a Eucharist, recorded and uploaded unto Sound Cloud in my study; with John as the "live" congregation. I would like to say thank you to the group of parishioners who call themselves "Positive distancing" for their daily prayer and music on Whatsapp!

In general, everything seems to be a challenge at the moment and I don't think we have ever been under so much pressure. My feelings in regard to our churches being closed for Easter have been mirrored and are continually being mirrored by the feelings of so many parishioners; especially those who only appear on Christmas Day and Easter Sunday. It is like an awful bereavement.



THE REVEREND VICKI LYNCH

Fiddown Union of Parishes

So often the negative aspects of social media are highlighted and certainly there are downsides of overuse and misuse and the possibilities of compromising privacy etc. but I think there is little doubt that the effective ways of communicating that are now available are making the current isolated way of life a bit more bearable.



THANKFUL FOR AN POST

However, it's not for everyone and I am very thankful for the reliability of An Post. Many of the folk in our parish don't use the internet never mind Facebook so the good old-fashioned postal service it is and plenty of chats on the phone; no Facetime, no Skyping, just ordinary chats. I think many of us are also very thankful for all the effort and creativity that has gone into continuing worship and prayer during these weeks of isolation.

WHAT WE'RE MISSING

While certainly enjoying the experience of remotely taking part, it really does highlight for me the true importance and enjoyment of actually being together, physically in the same space. Those times of fellowship that happen before and after the service, the preparing of the space, the little hitches, the reminders in the church buildings of all those who have worshipped there (and repaired things) over the years, the joy of singing a well-loved hymn together (however imperfectly), the willingness of people to read scripture, lovely flowers, people being early and people being late, the wondering we feel when people we expect to see don't arrive, the curiosity when there is a new face; all the things that make us human and help us to feel like a community, we miss them.

ENJOYING TO THE FULL IN THE FUTURE

I think we're all looking forward to enjoying all these things to the full when they return and being renewed in our thankfulness for them.

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES - FERNS

THE VERY REVEREND PAUL MOONEY

Ferns Union of Parishes

By the time I heard Noel Peppard ring St Edan's Cathedral Church bell to mark Easter at noon on Easter Sunday, I had already been to the Cathedral to read Morning Prayer alone but out loud as I had done now on previous Sundays.

Robert Milne had said it was as if every day was like Good Friday and personally I felt the Lenten Prayers and readings spoke to me as they have never spoken before.

THINK OF THE SICK AND MORE

We cannot help but think of the sick and dying not to mention the scared and lonely among us. Thankfully here in Ferns the weather has been good enough for farmers to farm and our largely farming parish has been kept busy. Our teachers and school staff have kept up the work of teaching remotely and parents have been busy keeping up with school work and ways of keeping young people occupied. For many keeping up with older family members has been a matter of talking through the windows and bringing food and shopping as required. Our older parishioners have been cocooned and are cocooning with little option but "FaceTime" has certainly become part of the vocabulary of many

who would have had hardly known the meaning of the phrase a matter of weeks ago.

EASTER LED TO PERSONAL REFLECTION

Easter Sunday fell on April 12th which was a day I was looking forward to celebrating on a personal level as it was on Palm Sunday April 12th 1987, a few months after Soonduk and I married, that I began to attend the Anglican Cathedral in Seoul and so, for me, April 12th marked 33 years of worshipping according to the Book of Common Prayer in one or other of its various forms.

Also, on Maundy Thursday April 12th 1990, I was received as a priest into the Anglican Diocese of Pusan in Korea and I was naturally looking back on thirty years of ministry in Korea, Belgium/Netherlands and Ireland.

I found myself giving thanks for many blessings and the friendship and mentoring and assistance and understanding of various people, some of whom are no longer with us on this earth. Matters of faith are deeply personal and yet at the same time are bound inextricably to connections with people within community.

FUTURE SHAPE OF MINISTRY WILL COME INTO SHARP FOCUS

Almost eighteen of my thirty years of ministry in the Anglican Communion have been spent in the Diocese of Ferns within these United Dioceses. The lasting effects of the Covid 19 Pandemic and its restrictions will only be fully apparent in the coming years but one thing is sure, the discussions about the future shape of ministry and the organisation of our Parishes and wider Diocese will come into a much sharper focus as we emerge from our isolation. Hopefully by Pentecost, we can begin to come out from our upper rooms and allow ourselves be led by the Spirit, strengthened to cross whatever boundaries we have to cross knowing that God is always both with us on our journey and on the other side waiting for us.



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Sharper focus for ministry and organisation

THE VENERABLE BOB GRAY

Ardamine, Kilnamanagh and Monamolin Group

Last month's parish notes were written before the coronavirus restrictions were put in place and our lives have changed dramatically in the meantime.

The government and health officials are to be commended for the swift and wise action they have taken to limit the spread of this highly infectious disease.

MAKING THE BEST OF CURRENT CIRCUMSTANCES

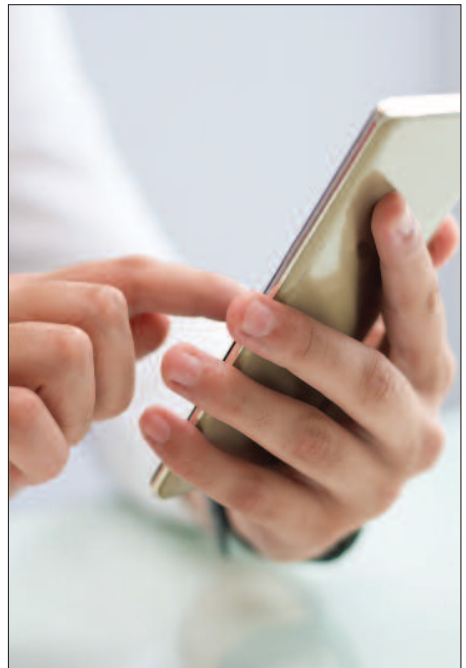
In our parish, as everywhere, we have tried to make the best of the current circumstances. In line with the guidelines, the Reverend Margaret has been cocooning. For the first week after the initial restrictions, I held "open church" in Ardamine for 90 minutes so people could come to church and pray for a few minutes and receive consecrated bread, if they wished. Nine people came during that time. The following week, the restrictions were changed and we had no choice but to close all our churches for any kind of public worship. I set up a texting system on my mobile, where I

have been able to contact virtually every family in the Group and I decided I would send out a weekly text, to encourage and advise.

Parishioners have also been contacted by phone, to keep in touch and ensure that they are managing in the current situation.

TEXT AND EMAIL GROUPS

Initially I encouraged parishioners to gather in their homes at 11 a.m. on the following Sunday to pray, so that we could continue to have a sense of being a worshipping community. During the days that followed, it became apparent that these restrictions were likely to be in place for a considerable time, so I decided to supplement this with an email group, inviting parishioners to send me their email address and each Friday I would send them out a short act of worship



which we could all use together at 11 a.m. on Sunday mornings. These initiatives have proved to be most effective and highly appreciated and over 50 households have signed up for the email acts of worship.

WE PRAY THAT THIS TIME WILL PASS AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE

I know that some clergy have been recording or live streaming services for their parishioners; however, I decided against this for a couple of reasons – firstly, many/most people in my Group do not use social media, so the reach would be limited. Secondly, as we are a very rural Group, broadband speeds and reliability would mean that streaming/downloading worship would be very difficult for many in the parishes. For those who would like to see a streamed service or use other resources, I gave parishioners the link to the diocesan and Church of Ireland websites. At the time of writing, it looks like restrictions will be in place for a considerable time to come, which not only affects us as a worshipping community, but as a diocese, both spiritually and financially. Along with everyone else, I pray that this time will pass as quickly as possible, that the coronavirus may be overcome and that we all stay healthy and safe.

May God bless us all at this difficult time.

BUNCLODY UNION

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Diocesan Reader: Mrs Valerie Power

Tel: 053 9377675

The pandemic of Coronavirus outbreak is spreading rapidly across the world, beginning in China, badly hitting Italy, Spain, America, it's worldwide, the numbers of people affected is increasing day by day.

We pray for an end to the Covid-19, an end to violence, an end to war, poverty and inequality across the world.

We are living through a very difficult challenging time, affecting every man, woman and child.

Following Government regulations, suddenly, there are no church services, no congregations, no parish activities, no schools, no meetings, churches remain closed, a change of approach is urgently necessary to curtail the spread of this contagious disease. This can't be happening, the bell is not ringing on Sunday morning, the church doors are closed in our Union.

Considering our turnout and real interest in attending regular church services, church activities, how many of us as a church family are really affected by this?

SADDEST SITUATION

The saddest situation of all during this pandemic is the death of a family member, regardless of age, not being able

to share the last moments of their earthly life, that opportunity doesn't come again, for the family to grieve properly, and the harshness of committal without a church service.

BUT ISN'T GOD IN CONTROL OF THE CURRENT SITUATION?

At times like this help us to experience our dependence on God and on one another, as we keep in touch, lend a listening ear, support each other, protect the isolated and vulnerable. Sometimes the weaker we feel, the harder we lean on God.

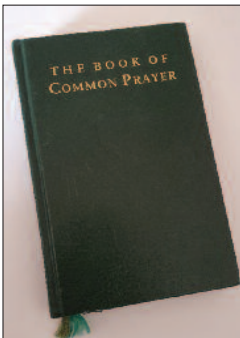
"The hardships, we experience, the trials that we face, Will teach us that we're strongest when we're trusting In God's grace"

Prayer for the sick

Our prayers are asked for all who are sick in our union at this time. We pray for all those whom we know and love who are recovering from illness in hospital or at home.

Father we bring to you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ those who are resident in care homes and those who are suffering with ill health. May your healing spirit assist them and restore them to wholeness of body, mind and spirit, for the glory of your name. Amen.

Notes contributed by Valerie Power



THE REVEREND NICOLA HALFORD

Enniscorthy & Monart Union of Parishes

Like all parishes in the diocese our Union of Parishes closed following Government guidelines of Covid 19. At first it seemed that our churches could stay open as places for people to come and pray quietly but we soon realised that there were still risks associated with this and so our church buildings closed.

As our churches were closing, I was preparing to come back to work following maternity leave and so plans quickly had to change from the normal service schedule to an online service.

REACHING A WIDER RANGE OF PEOPLE ONLINE

Our first online service was streamed on Palm Sunday which was my first Sunday back 'on duty'. I am sincerely grateful to have a gifted organist, Nik Myers, who is also technologically advanced. We met up before restrictions tightened and planned what format our services would take. We agreed that I would lead the services from different churches and that we would ask parishioners to video themselves reading the bible lessons and to send them to me to be included in the service. Nik would play and sing the

hymns from his home and then he would piece the service together with a new computer programme we had invested in. The feedback and the viewing figures have been very encouraging as we begin this new form of worship for our Union. We are certainly reaching a wider range of people online than we have before and so there may be some consideration how we might continue this ministry even when church buildings re-open. However, I long for the day when we can all be together again in our beautiful churches, worshipping God together. We never fully appreciate what we have until we have it no longer.

KEEPING CONTACT

As rector, I continue to keep contact with parishioners through phone calls and texts and we continue to produce a monthly newsletter which is posted to all parishioners. Instead of just news, service schedules and photos, the newsletter has featured more prayers, for times such as these, as a helpful aid for prayers at home. Many parishioners who are cocooning have been very stoic, but I know they are finding it difficult. Social interaction is so important for mental health and wellbeing. I fear that some people might not be admitting how hard they are finding it, adding to their sense of

isolation. All meetings and gatherings have obviously been cancelled and we, like many parishes, know that finances will be a concern moving forward.

HELP US TO APPRECIATE

I pray that this time of social distancing will help us to really appreciate all that we have in our families and those whom we love and that it may be a time of renewed faith and trust in almighty God.



St Mary's Church, Enniscorthy

THE REVEREND CANON MARK HAYDEN

Gorey Group of Parishes

This has been a time like no other in living memory. As the situation in March became more confused and uncertain in the days leading up to the lockdown we were very lucky in our diocese to have the leadership of our Bishop who made the difficult but correct decision to suspend all services. Bishop Burrows took this decision at a time when other leaders were afraid to be the first to do so and as always someone has to lead the way. I had been challenged by one or two people over the suspension of the cup at Holy Communion but they are the same people who would have complained if we had done nothing! Thankfully the four parishes that make up Gorey Group of Parishes have pulled together as always and the level of support for each other is impressive.

HURRY UP AND WAIT!

I spent a lot of my earlier life in uniform as a volunteer and it taught me above all to 'hurry up and wait.' What I mean is that there would be pressure to get ready for an exercise or deployment and then... ..nothing! We would have to wait until the go ahead to act was given and that is how we are at the moment. We are all

waiting for the go ahead to go back to what we regard as normal living. What will that really be like I wonder?

FUNERAL SERVICES HAVE BEEN DIFFICULT

Conducting funeral services at the graveside with a maximum of 10 people has been very difficult as it goes against so much of what we are as Irish people and it deepens the sadness for those who have loved lost ones to be so alone. I am blessed that I have my family around me but am very conscious that my mother (who resides 60 km from Gorey) is alone whilst cocooning. Not everyone finds being at home an easy thing to do and I know that some people are struggling without the interaction that is so much a part of normal life. Contacting people by phone, WhatsApp or Messenger has become a vital tool for me to keep in touch with parishioners.

IMPACT ON THE DIOCESE AND MORE

As part of this month's notes we have been asked to surmise the impact of COVID 19 on the parishes, diocese and Church of Ireland as a whole. A big question and perhaps one I won't be able to answer properly for some time. Sadly, this period may sound the bell for smaller parishes that have been struggling prior to this but could be in real trouble now. Supporting local businesses will be all the more important in order to get the local economy up and running again. I hope that this period of time could also present us with positive challenges for the future and what future church practice may be. The range of talent visible online has been wonderful to see even though it is beyond my skillset. I do think there is a need to have some way of bringing worship to

those parishioners who are not tech savvy or who have poor internet access and this could be looked at by the diocese.

I also think that a proper system of photographic identification for clergy is needed as very few of us actually have such identification and the need for this has been highlighted by the travel restrictions that have been in place.

GREAT HOPE FOR THE POSITIVES THAT WILL COME

Easter 2020 will remain in our memories for many years as the Easter the doors remained shut. We have lived through possibly the most unique Easter since the first one but we are an Easter people, a people of resurrection, new beginnings and new hope. That is why I have great hope for the positives that will come out of this strange and difficult time.



**THE REVEREND
IAN CRUIKSHANK**

**Killanne Union
of Parishes**

**Also providing
pastoral cover for
New Ross &
Fethard-on-Sea Union**

When services stopped, in Killanne and New Ross & Fethard Unions I decided to open churches for half an hour each day for prayer, with strict adherence to social distancing and hygiene guidelines. A regular number attended these times of prayer, with others expressing gratitude that in some form the churches were remaining open. This continued till all churches closed for all purposes including prayer. Some say you don't have to go to Church to pray or worship God. We are one, even when distance separates. True, but this experience has shown that there is something human and divine in travelling & gathering in the same physical space even when adhering to social distancing.

It's one thing to challenge a weekly routine of gathering together in the same place for worship and prayer, but then disrupt that even further by cancelling Easter Services including unique aspects

of worship associated with Easter, the impact was difficult and challenging but was accepted as what had to be done.

PALM SUNDAY – FIRST TECHNICAL ENDEAVOUR

Within the parish there is one person who works in web design and web management who had been offering to set up online facilities for the parish. I had always appreciated the need and potential for such resources but due to pressures from other sources I never took the offer, until now.

Palm Sunday was our first endeavour. By going onto the parish website killanneunion.ie you can find a link that gives different listening options. You can listen to a Full Service recorded by myself with all aspects of a service of Morning Prayer. Or you have the options of listening to, Just the hymns, Just the liturgy, Just the prayers, Just the readings or Just the Talk.



These six options along with a Service of Compline are recorded onto CDs and are available for anyone who can't obtain internet or would simply prefer a CD.

FEEDBACK VERY POSITIVE

From Palm Sunday there have been 722 hits online, 454 from Ireland, with 176 from the local area. Presently twenty-five CDs are being distributed for each service. The feedback has been very positive with people playing their CDs frequently. It is interesting that although you can listen at any time, most people tune in to the Full-Service online when a service would be held in the parish. Parishioners were also availing themselves of services being broadcast elsewhere and loving it. This has been so positive that I intend continuing the online and CD services and develop them further. This is not to replace but supplement and reach those, for whatever reason, aren't attending a service.

WILL SMALLER CHURCHES GET BACK TOGETHER AGAIN?

However, people do miss coming together and there is a realisation that things - service and church wise - may not go back to how they were for some time and this uncertainty has been expressed. Indeed, some wonder if some of the smaller churches will get back together again. The main negative for clergy and parishioners alike is their not being able to visit those in hospital or care homes, especially if they are undergoing/facing major procedures or treatment.

CLAIRE AULD

**Notes contributor
from New Ross
Union of Parishes**

As regards Funerals it has been challenging with the restrictions but everybody has been compliant.

Some are reading their Bible daily now and any of us that can take walks are enjoying the lovely spaces that we live in and reconnecting with nature.

We are looking forward to our Churches being open again in the future.

Some of our parishioners are availing of Services online and in general are finding them very good, especially being led by a priest as when we are left to our own devices with a service sheet it doesn't seem to be as easy to follow. Many thanks to our parishioner from Killesk Church who keeps us connected with technology and makes it easy for us to access these Services.

A couple of senior parishioners won't connect with the Internet so have had a huge loss as far as Ministry goes.



**The road you must travel is not very wide
With twists, bumps, and potholes that hinder your stride
You'll walk when it's easy then fall when it's tough
This life's about taking the smooth with the rough
Though the scene will keep changing, around every bend
Know the Lord will be with you, all the way to the end**

THE VENERABLE RUTH ELMES

Tinahely and Carnew Union of Parishes

It is the best of times, it is the worst of times...

Living in splendid isolation in Tinahely with the company of Ruby the Setter journeying through Holy Week and Easter with few of the usual landmarks of this liturgical season has been a peculiar experience.

The challenges of engaging mentally with services and providing pastoral care have been an exercise in trial and error with a pinch of creative thinking. Pastoral care includes making lots of phone calls and answering the phone to various enquiries. Getting out and about is a pleasure when doing messages and getting shopping for others.

Palm Sunday began a week of balancing an iPad on four large Bible Encyclopaedia on top of the photocopier in my office trying to find the plainest background with the best wifi connection. I quickly worked out that the best way for me to achieve results was to “live” stream the service and reverse the image so I could see what was happening as I went along. This image reversal led to an Internet question about whether or not I was left-handed as I seemed to use it to give the blessing!

A personal guide to streaming live Holy Week and Easter services:-

- Start Facebook on time – surprisingly, people are waiting on line
- Leave the front door open for the dog to go in and out (she will bark in the middle of the service to exit otherwise)
- Park out the back so the dog does not suddenly spot said car and bark at the “visitors” during live liturgy
- Put slippers on the dog so that, when she wanders around the wooden floors during the services people won’t wonder what she is up to and whether she’s eating a bag of crisps.
- There is no point in spending the afternoon recording a Maundy Thursday Communion Service Rite 1 at the church as it will not load on time, will fill the storage on the iPad and be too big to email...
- When carefully recorded service does not load be prepared to do the whole thing again, live, with 10 minutes’ notice.
- Don’t panic if technology lets you down at 5.55 a.m. on Easter Sunday morning when you are due on line at 6 a.m.– you will work it out somehow.



- Don't believe the weather forecast when streaming a service in the garden – it is too late to come in out of the rain half way through.
- Smile like it is all going according to plan and try to keep the expression of relief off your face when you press the “finish” button.

Other learning has included:

- Local shops contain things that you may never even have dreamed are possible – Mc Vities Strawberries and Cream Digestive anyone?
- Some will be glad of a call checking in with them, others seem a little nonplussed about why the Rector might be on the phone
- Old fire fighter gloves take the sport of bramble pulling to a whole new level
- A puppet that looks like you or a photo of your dog will get more “likes” on Facebook than you yourself.

STAY SAFE, STAY WELL.

Ben Furney

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THE REVEREND CHANCELLOR ARTHUR MINION

Wexford and Kilscoran Union of Parishes

The emergence of Coronavirus Covid 19 (hereto C19) has had a drastic impact on parish ministry here in Wexford and indeed on my life and ministry in a very strong and challenging way. I was to go on a Sabbatical from the end of April 2020. That had to be cancelled and Susan and I were blessed to retrieve much expenditure involved with relatively little financial loss. St Iberius' church was open every day in Wexford town and it had to close. All staff are cocooning at home. The array of people who arrive at the church for daily prayer, spiritual support, the homeless for various needs, tourists, visitors, musicians and artists among them no longer can arrive. Our Christian witness and community support has ceased there.

MINISTRY VERY DEMANDING

Ministry had become very busy and very demanding. It was never dull and was not a place where one could be idle. The planning and organisation of services in liturgy and music for the church and events and activities across the churches and community has ceased. I produced

and packed envelopes with a pastoral letter and 5 service sheets for services in Holy Week only to receive a warning by a colleague that I risked the health of parishioners by C19 via paper. I resorted to technology and by support from Margaret Hawkins broadcast services live via Facebook. All my usual services are now broadcast in this manner. Internet speed at The Rectory must be upgraded to continue efficiently and my knowledge in use of technology is vastly improving also. The resource of a proficient, knowledgeable, professional technician in media technology available to clergy and other staff is seriously needed in our united diocese. The mobile phone has been my greatest communication with people in conversation and text messages. Life has slowed down somewhat and I have been able to reach on a backlog of work that I was finding great difficulty in addressing. I had training courses at Wexford General Hospital in my capacity as Chaplain. This was challenging and I have had visits there to people whose lives were in danger, two of which subsequently died, but not of C19. Pastoral care and practical plans for bereaved people are challenging.

MONEY MATTERS

Parishioners face great challenges to their security of work and income. This undoubtedly will have a direct impact on

parish income alongside church closure. Some have contacted me and our treasurer for Direct Debit subscription via the bank and others have posted subscriptions to us which is thoughtful.

CHALLENGED TO THINK

Church closure has challenged us to think of what church is, people or buildings. God has closed our buildings or allowed our buildings to close in this plague. What does that mean for us? Has the time come for us to reassess what it is to be church?

QUESTIONS ARISE FOR ME;

- greater lay participation in areas of pastoral ministry and worship liturgy
- adequate training and education of clergy and workers in gospel communication
- what does being a parishioner really mean when ancestral affiliation and cultural upbringing is stripped away? If a person considers themselves to be a parishioner what are their expectations of their parish community and the worshipping community's expectations of them?



Covid-19

PARISHIONERS' EXPERIENCE OF COVID LOCKDOWN

A HOSPITAL DOCTOR IN THE DIOCESE

What does quarantine mean for me? Isolation. Exclusion. Stop. Fear... Every day I awake, follow my usual routine, get ready for work, make a coffee and head for the door. Normally, I had a certain routine, a small level of expectancy when it came to my job – what may I see today, what may I encounter but this time it's different. I stop at the door, reflect on what may be, what this virus may bring.

It's tough not fully understanding something we are all trying our best to treat. How will it affect each patient, each loving family member, each healthcare worker?

We are all coming from different perspectives with the same goal – treat the patient and give the best we have.

We all face a different struggle too each day being in quarantine. For me, it's the fear of not being able to save a patient from this terrible virus, informing a family member that the best wasn't enough and unfortunately, they are unable to say their final goodbyes.

The fact that I can't see my loving family and friends and be able to hold them as I normally would is the toughest part but the smallest price I have to pay to protect them. Protecting them the small way I can

– staying away, washing my hands and everyday praying. God is my refuge, he is my peace and every day, like I always do, I thank him for who I am, what I am able to do and for the wonderful people in my life.

I pray for mercy and peace on this earth because as Albert Einstein stated: *science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind.*



This statement combines two aspects of two different spheres – religion deals with the emotions, morals and the human heart whilst science deals with the physical mind, body and universe. Combining these aspects gives understanding and peace, something we are all trying to find within the chaos at the moment. As the human race, we can pull through this and with God’s help, we will find peace.

Watching the online services gives me the moment of breath I need, the stillness in the chaos. When the services come online I have the time for reflection, the reset button to get me back to the person God created. Reverend Kevin’s services allow for each person watching to join together wherever they may be to connect with each other through Christ and with God. Having solace through the services delivered is exactly what, as a nation, we need. This allows us to maintain our faith through this time of uncertainty. Joining in faith is what keeps us together and this is the time to be mindful of that. God is the strength we need, the joy we have and the love that we will forever hold closest. Psalm 144 verses 1 and 2:

Blessed by the Lord, my rock, who trains my hands for war, and my fingers for battle. He is my steadfast love and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer. He is my shield, in whom I take refuge.

ANDREW FROM BALTINGLASS GROUP OF PARISHES

As a parishioner of Baltinglass group of parishes I am reflecting on Easter 2020 at home in lockdown with my family. Baltinglass is a small rural town in west Wicklow starting to look beautiful as spring unfolds this Easter time...

With the suspension of public worship however it has been a very different Easter. It’s been a time of social

distancing, self-isolation, frustration and anxiety. However, we were blessed to have Holy Week events covered on YouTube and Facebook Live by our local rector. Watching online has become the norm. Knowing that there are others watching by seeing the “likes” appear on screen is consolation of sorts that you are not alone during worship. Seeing the church on screen brings you closer to normality. I got a great sense of sharing and being in a community together when during the live broadcasts I could see the light in the window behind the altar changing as it did outside my window.

So in spite of everything the Easter day service became an intimate and moving experience at home with my partner but in congregation with the Facebook community. We sang along with the hymns, followed the prayers and thanked God for being alive and well.



KATHY, A TEACHER IN DUNLECKNEY UNION OF PARISHES

Since Friday 13th March our school, St.Mary's NS has been closed until further notice due to the Covid-19 social distancing restrictions.

Schooling for our students has changed dramatically overnight, with little warning nor adequate preparation time for our teachers, students and parents of our school community. The desire to lessen any digital divide has been an immediate necessity. Our students are missing each other; playing together, preparing for school sports, school tours and all the other wonderful whole school events that bring us together as a school community.

Our weekly school assembly has also been sadly missed as a face-to-face service. To facilitate some normality of school life, our rector has kindly agreed to provide a digital assembly for our students on a weekly basis. Our assemblies are uploaded to YouTube and a link is provided on our school website. We hope you all remain safe and well during these unprecedented times and pray we will see you all again soon.



A PARISHIONER FROM STRADBALLY, COUNTY LAOIS

It's Easter weekend as I sit writing and thinking about the effects Covid 19 have had on me and my family. With the announcement on Thursday 12th of March 2020, our lives were dramatically changed without us even realising. As I drove home from work with my family, little did I know that this was only the start of a new way to live.

In a short space of time we have been thrown into a world of home schooling, working from home, Zoom meetings, Facebook and YouTube church services, shopping online, cocooning and social distancing. While the excitement of being off school was a huge bonus for the children it soon lost its sparkle when they realised that their Mum was going to be their teacher, that work did have to be completed and that they would not get to see their friends for quite some time.

I feel very lucky and thankful that we live on a farm as there is always something to be done. Our boys too love the farm and all the activities. There was corn to be sown, calves and chickens to be fed, stones to be picked and things to be mended. There began the bargaining between home schooling Mum and boys who now saw themselves as fully fledged farmers! We struck a deal and the work in both places was done. Easter holidays were a welcome break from the schoolwork and a chance to have a rest from the new routine. The good weather over the holiday weekend was an added bonus but then came the question of where could we go?? Perhaps this is having the biggest impact on our family. We miss the outings, the after-school activities, the sport, the day trips and seeing our family and friends.

We have been thrown into a virtual world for socialising. The two older boys

continue to text and use Snapchat and WhatsApp to contact their friends but for the youngest I watch as he awkwardly tries to chat to his friends on a Face-time call. This is alien to him and should be. Facetime and Houseparty apps have become the norm for chatting to our family and friends. Our church service has been on Facebook and YouTube. As I sat and watched these services in my pyjamas, while eating my breakfast, my initial thought was I could get used to this on a Sunday morning! But no, there is something missing, I miss the sense of community, the smiles, the greetings and the general chit chat. Working from home too has its challenges, one misses the value of meeting a colleague face to face, the facial expressions and the human-to-human contact and of course the chat in the staffroom over coffee.

As I write I am conscious of those who are finding this time very hard. Those who are living alone, missing family, and social outlets, those family homes that for one reason or another are not happy and safe places to be.

I think too about those who have lost loved ones or are worried about a person close to them that is unwell, awaiting surgery or has to work each day.

My reflection has been one of thankfulness, thankful that my family are safe, our daily needs are met and that we can continue to live some kind of normal life through this. It is a testing time for so many, yet it is **a chance for us to perhaps re-evaluate our lives** and think about **those who have to strive for food, medicine and somewhere safe to lay their heads down each night**. I am very grateful to all who work on the frontline and risk their lives and those of their families as they go to work each day. It is reassuring how people have risen to the occasion in our country. We all can and

are contributing a little in our own way by staying at home and obeying the new regulations we find ourselves living by. We will come through this and my hope is that we will have a better understanding of what is really important. For me that is people and the importance of how each and every one of us lives our lives.



HARRY FROM STRADBALLY

Holy Week has come and gone, and it's been like no other in my lifetime. Churches, schools, colleges, hotels, restaurants and most shops have been closed for weeks. Hospitals and nursing homes have closed their doors to visitors.

The news is more tragic day by day. On Monday the swallows arrived, signalling winter is over and summer is not far away. By Wednesday the temperatures had risen, and I sat out and listened to the bird song. It sounded louder this year, probably because of the absence of traffic.

Three weeks ago, I suspended my P.A. and home help services, which has been a constant part of my life for over 10 years. I also suspended visitors coming into my home. These were difficult decisions to make but had to be done in the circumstances. I am privileged to have family to care for me during this difficult time. The phone is my lifeline to the outside world. My journey through life has presented me with numerous challenges. I used to run marathons, now I spend my day in a wheelchair depending on other people.

New words such as social distancing, cocooning that we are all adding to our vocabulary and way of doing things have

been a part of my life for many years. Because of my challenges, I have cocooned for many years and kept a social distance to prevent any unwanted infection from causing me serious problems, perhaps my life, so in reality this has being my norm for some time. Of course, this has brought change to my life, but yet, I realise how blessed I am and how lucky I am to have the support of my dedicated wife and my true friends. This is not something I do on my own.

These challenges and this crisis have presented an opportunity to reflect upon the important things in life; family, friends, community and a higher power. The pandemic will pass but the important things in life will remain. Stay safe.



FROM RUTH IN FIDDOWN UNION OF PARISHES

My only thoughts on the matter are how it has hit home what the age profile of our active parishioners are. So many of our usual 'go to' people are 'cocooning' and I never thought of them in this way before because they are so active in all respects at parish level. Also with my financial hat on I've been taken aback that parishioners

have contacted me directly to see what way the finances are and what they can do to help. Banking on line has become very popular and for those who deal with weekly envelopes we've been able to deal locally with drop off points etc. so as to keep our account in the black to deal with direct debits such as electricity, insurance etc.

It's a worry though about our less active parishioners and whether we'll see them after the lockdown and if they're out of the habit of coming, will we get them back? On a positive note it's great to hear about people contacting each other to check in with them and to let them know what services are available on TV and radio so that they can watch or listen especially those who aren't computer literate and haven't the benefit of our diocesan website www.cashel.anglican.org



GEMMA FROM TULLOW GROUP OF PARISHES

This time is difficult in so many ways for us all. It's great how there are still ways we can all feel connected and not only to friends and family but to our church. Many rectors are doing live services or videos. This is all making us feel together when not together. Or be it a simple

phone call. It's nice to know we are thought about at this scary time. In my household we watch many different clergy in all dioceses which is lovely as you are getting a change to a normal Sunday service. It's nice to know that they are praying for us and helping us to have a small bit of normality during this time. As a family we enjoy services and prayers on Facebook.

- "The Churches Ministry of Healing" page that puts up lovely prayers.
- "The Grouped Parishes of Powerscourt with Kilbride" page. The rector of that group is a family friend of ours who puts up lovely thoughtful videos.
- Our Bishop Michael Burrows has thought provoking messages also which is all lovely at this time. We can all be together when we can't be together.

OLIVE FROM NEW ROSS AND FETHARD UNION OF PARISHES

We have been exceptionally busy with our vegetable business in March and April as there is demand particularly for vegetables used in smoothies e.g. kale. We are allowed to deliver so we get out every few days.

I have been texting everyone on the parish text list that I compiled to enquire if they are all okay and let them know if anything significant happens e.g. a death in the parish. Otherwise I've been listening to South East Radio services and televised services but really miss singing the hymns!

We miss seeing our children and grandchildren and our parents and I miss the fellowship every week with the small few at St Mary's but otherwise, so far, we are coping all right with this COVID lockdown.



ECOLOGICAL NOTES - THE REVEREND TREVOR SARGENT



- ANOTHER REASON TO THINK GLOBAL & ACT LOCAL

Bill Gates, of the *Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation*, writing in *The Irish Times* (13 April 2020), stressed that a global approach is needed to stamp out Covid-19.

Amidst the life and death trauma of our local lockdown measures and the enormous strain under which frontline personnel are working, it is easy to overlook the global reality of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, as John Donne, Dean of St Paul's in London, said in 1624, '*No man is an island, entire of itself*'.

Bill Gates wondered why the coronavirus has not yet hit many lower income countries yet. One likely reason is the stationary nature of the poor in contrast to the highly mobile North American, European and wealthier Australasian communities. International travel has helped the virus to spread and thrive.

The virulent nature of Covid-19 will sooner or later reach poorer parts like Africa, where there are far less intensive-care beds proportionately than in the West. Covid-19 is not only a health issue, it is also a global justice challenge.

Demonstrates our interconnectedness as a species

Even if wealthy nations succeed in slowing the spread of the virus in the months ahead, the hotspots in other parts of the world will sooner or later re-infect those communities which thought they were

clear. Covid-19 sharply demonstrates our interconnectedness as a species and beyond that as a thread in the web of life on earth, '*our common home*', as Pope Francis likes to say.

Local community resilience, global decision making and equitable resource distribution will be critical in overcoming this virus. While the merits of a government of national unity are debated in Ireland, there is, meanwhile, a need for a more global government of unity to tackle this deadly pandemic.

Meanwhile, we, the Church, need not wait around for the G-20, or the U.N., to pull together as a global community. Remember in church, how we used to sing '*The Church's one foundation is Jesus Christ her Lord ... Elect from every nation, yet one o'er all the earth?*' As a Church, let us pray and reach out globally in '*righteousness and justice*', as we also respond to the crisis locally

POSTSCRIPT: The hoped-for success of global governance and action to halt the coronavirus will in turn give humanity a valuable global template to address that even more deadly and equally urgent global challenge – climate change!

'Let your loving-kindness, O Lord, be upon us, as we set our hope on you.' (Ps.33:22)

See poster next page.

**A PODCAST
FROM THE
WORLD
ECONOMIC
FORUM**

WORLD
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FORUM

WORLD VS VIRUS

HOW THE WORLD
CAN NAVIGATE THE COVID-19
CORONAVIRUS



Coronavirus crisis hits world's poorest

Rich countries have struggled. Poor countries will be devastated. But Christian Aid helped reduce the spread of Ebola and we can slow the spread of coronavirus too. Your gift today will save lives tomorrow.

Coronavirus is having a huge impact on the rich countries of the world. Our health systems are stretched and struggling. Tens of thousands of lives have been lost and the death toll grows with each passing day. But in the world's poorest countries, perhaps just three weeks behind the UK and Ireland, a catastrophe is unfolding.

The infection has reached every one of the countries in which Christian Aid works, with the highest numbers of reported cases being in Brazil, India and the Dominican Republic. As ever, a lack of testing masks the true scale of the pandemic.

Aid agencies are warning that coronavirus will devastate poor countries, and here's why:

Handwashing - without soap and water?

Three billion people, 40% of the world's population, do not have access to soap and water. In sub-Saharan Africa, home to 645 million people, three-quarters of the



population have no facilities at home to wash their hands with soap and water.

Physical distancing - in a crowded slum or refugee camp?

Physical distancing is impossible for the one billion people who live in overcrowded refugee camps, slums and shanty towns. And you can't isolate those with coronavirus symptoms if your entire family live in one room.

Poor people = poor health

Many people living in extreme poverty, in refugee camps, or battling drought, hunger, malaria and HIV, are already in poor health and lack the resilience to withstand a new infection.

Fragile health systems

The world's poorest countries, many dealing with conflict and humanitarian crises, can barely handle their everyday caseloads, let alone a pandemic. Poor countries have few, if any, ventilators or intensive care beds. South Sudan, for example, has no intensive care beds and only two ventilators for a population of 12 million.

Fragile social welfare systems

The governments of poor countries lack the social welfare systems to help those who lose their jobs due to lockdown. For the newly unemployed in these countries, there will be no government bail-out or guaranteed 80% of their salaries to help ensure they are still able to feed their families. Many people will have no choice but to go to work, spreading the infection. The poorest people work in jobs that are insecure and cash-in-hand, leaving them with just enough money to get by each day. Even a single day of lockdown would cause hardship.

But there is hope. Working with local partners and faith leaders, Christian Aid helped reduce the spread of the deadly

Ebola virus and we are already working to slow the spread of coronavirus.

In Afghanistan, our local partner has given hygiene kits containing soap to 1,400 people. In Afghanistan and Bangladesh, we are sharing vital health information via religious leaders. In Bangladesh and Myanmar, we are bringing food and soap to families facing hardship after losing their jobs due to the lockdown. In Myanmar, our local partners have given soap to more than 30,000 people and distributed 2,000 surgical masks. In the Rohingya refugee camps of Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh, we are setting up isolation areas in health facilities to treat people with symptoms. There, and in north-east Nigeria, we are working to prevent the spread of fake news. In Angola, El Salvador, Gaza and Guatemala we are helping women at risk of domestic violence during lockdown. In South Africa, our local partners are campaigning to ban evictions during the pandemic so that shanty town dwellers don't face an even greater risk of infection.

Love unites, love protects, love never fails. Even in the darkest moments, love brings hope. £27/€31 could help provide food for someone in quarantine, so they don't have to leave their home and risk spreading the virus. £50/€57 could help pay for a community toilet and handwashing block. £120/€137 could help provide areas within health facilities to isolate anyone with symptoms. Please donate today to save lives. Visit caid.ie/coronavirus or call 028 9064 8133 (Belfast) or 01 496 4070 (Dublin).



Covid-19

A homily

**The Reverend Conor O'Reilly
Deputy Editor**

The Covid-19 outbreak is stirring up anxiety, confusion, and major inconveniences. It is a situation in which we can easily over-react or under-react. How can our faith guide and comfort us through this troubling time? A good starting point is to remember that the most repeated phrase in the Bible is "Do not be afraid!" Fear is such a big part of human nature. Fear can alert us to dangers in our lives to keep us safe, but fear can also lead us astray, toward selfish responses. Of course, we see these same dynamics play out in Scripture, where fear leads to hoarding.

The most famous story is when the Israelites are in the desert without food (Exodus 16). God rains down manna from heaven but also cautions them to take only

what they need for now. They disobey but find that the food they attempt to store away goes bad immediately. The consistent message we hear in the Bible is that we need to trust in God, who will provide enough for everyone. The problems come when people begin to take more than they need leaving the vulnerable at risk.

Scripture reminds us again and again that we—as individuals and a society—must protect and give priority to those who are most vulnerable and at risk. In the midst of the Covid-19 outbreak, the vulnerable take many forms. Most obvious are those who are elderly or have other health conditions that make them most susceptible to illness. Those who are younger may not be concerned about their own health risks, but if we help pass on the virus, it can be a life-



or-death situation for others. Others are financially vulnerable as a consequence of this unprecedented crisis. Many parents do not have the flexibility to stay home when school is cancelled for their children. The situation is impacting many others, such as small business owners who may already be on shaky financial ground. This health crisis is challenging many of us to make sacrifices in our lives. Some are huge, such as those made by exhausted health care workers around the world, desperately trying to keep patients alive (while avoiding the illness themselves).

Other sacrifices fall more in the category of inconveniences. It is inconvenient when events are cancelled, schools close, and travel is limited. It is inconvenient to wash our hands intentionally and regularly. But this kind of sacrifice is at the very centre of our faith. Every time we gather around the Lord’s Table, we celebrate the powerful way Christ showed us how to love others. He sacrificed everything in self-giving love for us, and he invited us to do the same. In turn, we die to ourselves—through inconveniences and more—in order to love those around us. Truly loving others will always cost us something.

We may grumble about or resist changing our habits, especially if it’s unclear what’s in it for us. But we need to remember that many of these actions are more about protecting others. Perhaps the invitation amidst this crisis is to embrace the inconveniences fully, and then move beyond them to seek out the best ways to serve those who are most in need. Community is essential to us as Christians. So it may be a bit harder for us to handle the fact that we can’t attend church and the “social distancing” happening in our communities. Our call to community is not only in the context of our church but also in our neighbourhood community.

How do we literally love our neighbour? One way is to regularly check in on your neighbours who may be vulnerable and isolated. Offer to deliver groceries or to run other errands so they won’t have to risk infection by leaving their home. May God protect all of you at this time of trial for us all and may we put all our faith and trust in Him now and always. Amen.

While the Reverend Leslie Crampton was doing some sorting recently he came across the following extract from the Church of Ireland Gazette under the heading: **The Qualifications for a Clergyman*** and thought it would be interesting for the Magazine

- The strength of an Ox.
- The tenacity of a Bulldog.
- The daring of a Lion.
- The patience of a Donkey.
- The industry of a Beaver.
- The versatility of a Chameleon.
- The Vision of an Eagle.
- The meekness of a Lamb.
- The hide of a Rhinoceros.
- The disposition of an Angel.
- The resignation of an Incurable.
- The loyalty of an Apostle.
- The heroism of a Martyr.
- The faithfulness of a Prophet.
- The tenderness of a Shepherd.
- The fervency of an Evangelist.
- The devotion of a Mother.

Maybe, in present circumstances, he suggests, a line could be added:
A wizard with technology.



**it predates the ordination of women*

Education During a Pandemic – A Steep Learning Curve!

On the 12th March the door of Carrigduff NS in Bunclody was locked and remains locked. While we knew that a closure was likely in the following weeks, we were not expecting it so soon and in the end we had just three hours' notice of closure. We made a number of decisions quickly and tried our best not to share the panic we were feeling with the children in our classrooms.

On reflection in the first days I was in shock. Like a swan gliding along a river what I showed was a permanent smile on my face and a "This is all going to be fine" approach but behind the scenes I worked hard to keep myself and all those around me positive. In that first week every educational company I had ever spoken to contacted me. The constant emails and constant questions were exhausting.

The constant worry was overwhelming. It was hard to listen to other schools and not think we should be doing this or that. It took courage not to jump in and change everything, not to introduce complex new systems. Looking back, a couple of events stood out as lifesaving. The staff WhatsApp group was where we shared our worries and ideas and inevitably our jokes. It was alive in those initial days as we all struggled to stay connected and make sense of what was happening to us.

My local principals' support group on WhatsApp was vital and I will always be grateful to them. The Board of Management were supportive and reassuring. My garden and the church garden kept me grounded. A national webinar for principals organised quickly and efficiently in the

early days, taught me how to use Zoom, gave me some ideas, affirmed my own values and started plans forming in my mind. The one thing that I knew for certain at that point was that human connection had to be protected and fostered, and so on day 2 of closure we had the first of our now weekly Zoom staff meetings and on day 9 we held the first Zoom Assembly for our school community. This was a new venture for most of the staff and parents, but we all learned together.

The Zoom Assembly was probably the most meaningful thing we did in those initial days. We approached it with a pioneering spirit saying "Let's give it a go" "The worst that can happen is that it doesn't work" "We'll try again if so". That Friday morning 31 out of 57 families managed to join us online. The following week 37 out of 57 logged in. The kids were so excited to see each other and we had 15 minutes of hellos at the beginning until we muted everyone's microphones so we could get on with assembly.

One teacher managed the technology, another led assembly, a teacher introduced us to her dog, and another played the keyboard for us. We all learned how to behave at our online assembly, we listened to a story, we looked at examples of pupil's work, heard about children enjoying outdoor and farming activities, we prayed and we sang (badly). It was marvellous and inspiring!

The pandemic has shown us very clearly what schools are. Workbooks and projects can be completed at home. A lot of learning can happen at home, with the right support. Much of what schools do can be

attempted in homes but school is more than that. Schools are communities of people. School is a family of families. Schools are primarily about relationships and connection. We learn from each other and with the help of other people we change and grow. Years ago in Ireland we had hedge schools and now we have kitchen table schools.

As we face into the Summer term in our new schools, our kitchen table schools spread across towns, parishes and counties; the core values that we bring with us as we plan for learning in a strange expanded school community are connection, relationships, understanding, respect, openness to new skills and love.

Carolyn Good - Principal

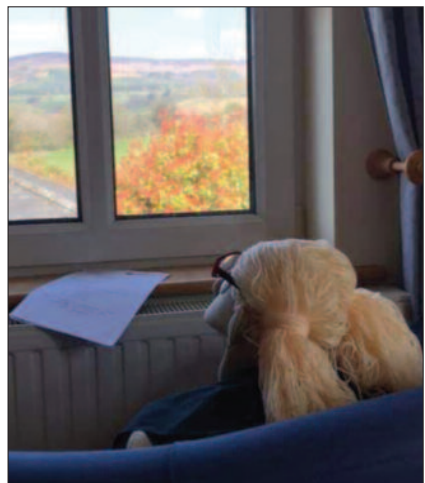
THE BIRTH OF 'EILE'!

Eile, aka Archdeacon Ruth Elmes' stunt double, has been making covert appearances on the Tinahely and Carnew Union of Parishes FB page of late but how did this puppet make it to the screen?

"I did a little video on my personal page," says the archdeacon, "and then realised it was a good way to reach out without sounding "preachy" to those who are worried – a post for the kids and often the adults benefit too. I did one "for the bored" next and then one on 'looking forward'.

I got the puppet in Theological College through a classmate who did a placement in Africa and encountered a Christian charity training workshop who made them for sale and export. 'Eile' came as a blonde and is now wearing my glasses but any similarity is purely accidental!

My concern now is that fame may go to her head when she finds out she has made it to the cover of the Diocesan Magazine!



Eile contemplates before finishing a sermon

A FUNERAL AT THIS TIME

Funerals during this time of restriction are difficult events with the usual supports from family and friends not possible. Here the Reverend Nicola Halford talks about how her family experienced her Dad's funeral a few weeks ago

My darling Dad, Michael Halford, passed away on Saturday 4th April (not from Covid-19) in his home in Sallins, surrounded by his wife of 40 years and his three daughters. After a steady decline in health his death was peaceful and exactly how he wanted.



When the news broke of his death we were inundated with phone calls, texts and flowers dropped to the door of my parent's house. However, the house itself was quiet and we all really missed the company and support of family and friends. The visits from friends and neighbours, the tears shed with others who loved him never happened.

A sense of helplessness

Those who would have naturally surrounded my family with love and support could not physically be there and I felt a sense of helplessness from them when I spoke to them on the phone. They wanted to do so much for us but there was little anyone could do.

My family is very close, thankfully. I am the eldest of three girls and we have a very strong relationship with each other and our parents. Our sister Elaine was home from London on furlough before Dad died so we were all together and could support each other in the quiet days between my Dad's death and his funeral. We appreciated being allowed to have him home for a night before the funeral and there was a beautiful intimacy in it just being him and us in the house.

We had his funeral service in Newlands Cross crematorium on Tuesday 7th April. There were six of us present. My mother and sisters, my husband, and future brother-in-law. Sadly, my Dad's two sisters Nuala and Carmel, were unable to attend his funeral as both are cocooning. I conducted the funeral as per Dad's wishes, a shortened funeral service and committal. Had things been different the plan had been for an ecumenical funeral service in St. Aidan's Cathedral, Enniscorthy. My Dad was Roman Catholic and knew Fr. Odhran Furlong from spending time in Enniscorthy. We hope that in the future we might be able to hold some form of memorial service for him followed by a burial of his ashes.

Touching moment

A touching moment came as we prepared to leave my parent's home for the crematorium. All of my parents' neighbours came out and stood in their gardens and on the large green as a guard of honour, of sorts. It was very moving to see everyone standing there in quiet solidarity with us.

Similarly, I had been told that many of my clergy colleagues as well as parishioners were praying for my family at the time that the funeral was taking place. As we said our goodbyes to Dad, leaving him in God's gracious keeping, I had a strong sense of peace. God's Holy Spirit was certainly with us in the crematorium that day, comforting us and bringing peace and I want to thank everyone who upheld my family with prayer on that day. We were very aware of it.

Missed the opportunity to celebrate our Dad with others

What we missed the most was the opportunity to celebrate our Dad, who we loved so much, with others. We did not have an opportunity to give thanks publicly for a man who had lived a good life, who was devoted to his family, who was a lot of fun to be around and who will be greatly missed by all who loved him.

The Reverend Nicola Halford

Mothers' UNION



From the PRO: Vivien Black

Tel. 087 6467986 E-mail vivienblack2010@gmail.com

Dear fellow members,

I hope you are all keeping safe and well still, as we continue to move through these uncertain times. We will soon be receiving the next issue of *Families Worldwide* and you will find inside it a letter from our Worldwide President Sheran asking for financial help for the **Emergency Appeal**.

As the fundraising efforts usually undertaken at this time of year have had to be put on hold and revenue created by Mary Sumner House conference space has also ceased indefinitely, help is needed now more than ever to keep the Mothers' Union afloat and help those who need it most, as we work to rebuild our own communities after the pandemic has passed.

The prayer for May 8th in *Families Worldwide* especially speaks to me, saying

exactly what we as members of the Mothers' Union are about:

Lord we live in different communities, cultures and families but are united in faith and prayer. We pray for better understanding of each other's needs, as we continue to put our faith into action and make a difference in your world. Amen.

The Diocesan Trustees have already contributed to this fundraising effort on all our behalf, but I ask and encourage you, if at all possible, to send as little as € 5 each to help to keep our beloved charity functioning in these difficult days.

With every blessing and much love.

Lesley xx



Mothers' UNION
Christian care for families

Away from it all 

AFIA (Away From It All) is a scheme funded by the members of Mothers' Union to help anyone who would not otherwise be able to have a break. AFIA offers grants towards short breaks, youth camps, school tours, and carers away days.

We invite recommendations from clergy, teachers, and MU members throughout the diocese – to begin the application process simply send an email outlining why you think the person/people should benefit to: cfoafia@gmail.com.



GIRLS' FRIENDLY SOCIETY

36 Upper Leeson Street, Dublin 4
 PRO: Alison Bailey (Abbeyleix/Killermogh GFS) 085 1009998
 Email: alisonschoice@gmail.com ~ www.girlsfriendlysociety.ie



As I'm sure you will all be aware amid the current social restriction all upcoming GFS related activities (Diocesan service, camp, day trips and branch meetings) are cancelled until restrictions lift. This has also meant that GFS World Council has been postponed until July 2021 so I guess that just means you will have me harping on about World Council for another year!

Despite no branch meetings happening, I know in my own branch we have been receiving many messages and pictures of craft work that the girls (and leaders!!) have been producing in this time at home. It is wonderful to see and hear that many of the girls have picked up these craft skills through GFS. If you would like to see more of what GFS are up to during this quarantine time, then

do follow our Facebook page – Girls Friendly Society Ireland - <https://www.facebook.com/GirlsFriendlySociety/> to see pictures, verses and info.

Likewise, if you have been up to any crafts or activities and want to share it with the GFS community, then do either send myself a message, or send a message to the GFS Ireland Facebook page. It would be great to see what some of you are up to.

As we continue through this quarantine, please do stay safe, look out for each other, whether that's a message or a phone call to check in with a friend or family member, and do look after yourself. Looking forward to seeing you all again soon ~ Alison

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News from Kilkenny College



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Chaplain: The Reverend Alex Morahan

We're all in this together. How often have we heard this said? And yet we are experiencing isolation like never before. But together we are because we are connected, almost by an invisible thread which unites us. For many of us this thread may be Kilkenny College, for others it may be family, friends, community, work and of course our church and our faith binds us as one.

I was looking back on the last report for Kilkenny College and felt a real sense of loss as I realized all the things we are not doing at present. No more quizzes, debates, trips, visitors, TY activities, rugby and badminton, hockey and competitions... everything gone quiet.

Everything hasn't just stopped though. Life still goes on and Easter time was particularly interesting and enjoyable for me. I got to *visit* many churches which I haven't been to before, on live streams, of course. I got to listen to some beautiful four-part Easter harmony sung by our Choral Director, Mr Thiede. But it struck me that we are actually becoming good at this.

I watched services from Waterford, Tinahely and Abbeyleix and even listened to a few messages from our Bishop, Michael. It was very beautiful to have access to all of these. It struck me that there

is some good coming from this terrible Covid-19 crisis. Church services can happen from the kitchen table or the front garden and the congregation can be from anywhere in the world.

Another great learning is that we can stay connected as a school with our teachers, colleagues and students. Classroom can be wherever you are and, if the internet is decent, you can stay connected from your own bedroom. I have been so impressed with the level of connection from the staff in Kilkenny College. I have seen parents' comments that they feel supported and their children are managing to keep focused and positive. This says a huge amount about the College and the dedication and commitment of all to maintain a sense of normal whatever is happening. I am very proud of the people who make this happen.

At this time our thoughts are with our exam students who are experiencing such a mixture of emotions. It cannot be easy but they know they will survive this too. When you survive a difficult time you learn a lot about yourself. You know that you are stronger than you thought and this is a great feeling. Be really proud of yourselves that you are getting stronger through all this time. Well done.

Alex

DIOCESAN CYCLE OF PRAYER –MAY 2020

Sunday YEAR A

3RD MAY - THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER: The Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Communion in Japan) - The Most Reverend Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu - Primate of The Nippon Sei Ko Kai & Bishop of Hokkaido

DIOCESAN: Cashel – The Very Reverend Gerald Field

PORVOO PRAYER DIARY: Church of Norway: Diocese of Björgvin, Bishop Halvor Nordhaug

LINK DIOCESE SODOR & MAN: St George and All Saints, Douglas - The Reverend Andrew Brown

READINGS: Acts 2: 42-47 or Nehemiah 9: 6-15, Psalm 23, 1 Peter 2: 19-25, John 10: 1-10.

10TH MAY - THE FIFTH SUNDAY OF EASTER (WHITE)

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER: The Anglican Church of Kenya - The Most Reverend Jackson Ole Sapit - Primate and Archbishop of All Kenya

DIOCESAN: Clonemagh - The Reverend Victor Fitzpatrick

PORVOO PRAYER DIARY: Church of Sweden: Diocese of Västerås, Bishop Mikael Mogren

LINK DIOCESE SODOR & MAN: St Matthew, Douglas - Vacant

READINGS: Acts 7: 55-60 or Deuteronomy 6: 20-25, Psalm 31: 1-5, 15-16, 1 Peter 2: 2-10, John 14: 1-14.

17TH MAY - THE SIXTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: ROGATION SUNDAY (WHITE)

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER: The Anglican Church of Korea - The Most Reverend Moses Nagjun Yoo - Primate of Korea and Bishop of Daejeon

DIOCESAN: Clonmel – Canon Barbara Fryday

PORVOO PRAYER DIARY: Evangelical Lutheran Church in Denmark: Diocese of Viborg, Bishop Henrik Stubkjær

LINK DIOCESE SODOR & MAN: St Ninian, Douglas - The Reverend John Coldwell

READINGS: Acts 17: 22-31 or Isaiah 41: 17-20, Psalm 66: 7-18, 1 Peter 3: 13-22, John 14: 15-21.

24TH MAY- THE SEVENTH SUNDAY OF EASTER: SUNDAY AFTER ASCENSION DAY (WHITE)

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER: Pray for all members of the Anglican Communion around the world - For the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend Justin Welby, and all primates and Bishops, For members of the Anglican Consultative Council - For the Secretary General, The Most Reverend Dr Josiah Idowu-Fearon, For the staff at the Anglican Communion Office in London and the UN offices in Geneva and New York.

DIOCESAN: Leighlin – The Very Reverend Tom Gordon

PORVOO PRAYER DIARY: Church of Norway: Diocese of Nord-Hålogaland, Bishop Olav Øygard

LINK DIOCESE SODOR & MAN: St Thomas, Douglas – Vacant

READINGS: Acts 1: 6-14 or Ezekiel 39: 21-29, Psalm 68: 1-10, 32-35, 1 Peter 4: 12-14, 5: 6-11, John 17: 1-11.

31ST MAY - THE DAY OF PENTECOST: WHIT SUNDAY (RED)

ANGLICAN CYCLE OF PRAYER: The Anglican Church of Melanesia - The Most Reverend Leonard Dawea - Archbishop of the Anglican Church of Melanesia and Bishop of Temotu

DIOCESAN: Ardamine - The Venerable Bob Gray

PORVVOO PRAYER DIARY: The Lusitanian Church (Portugal): Bishop José Jorge Pina Cabral, The Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church Abroad: Archbishop Lauma Zušēvica

LINK DIOCESE SODOR & MAN: Onchan, Lonan and Laxey - The Reverend Alessandra di Chiara (Interim Rector)

READINGS: Acts 2: 1-21 or Numbers 11: 24-30, Psalm 104: 26-36, 37b, 1 Corinthians 12: 3b-13 or Acts 2: 1-21, John 20: 19-23 or 7:37-39.

* Acts 2:1-21 is read either as First or Second Reading. It must not be omitted.

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PLEASE NOTE: THE CROSSWORD WILL RETURN IN THE JUNE ISSUE AND THE APRIL CROSSWORD WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED THEN ALSO.



*How long will we have to wait
to see this sign again?*



KILKENNY COLLEGE

Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny
www.kilkennycollege.ie

The Board of Directors of Kilkenny College,
a Co-Educational Boarding and Day School with a Church of Ireland Ethos
seek applications from suitably qualified candidates for the following positions:-

Boys Residential Boarding Housemaster x 2

(Residential by Licence, commencing late August 2020)

This is a position of important responsibility within Boys Boarding at Kilkenny College. There are 230 Boarder Boys enrolled. Reporting to the Head of Boys Boarding. Applicants will be likely to have previous experience, including extra-curricular activity roles, in a boarding / residential work setting.

Application requirements :-

- Letter of Application
- Current C.V.
- Proof of relevant qualifications
- Two named references

Full Job Description available at doloresdowling@kilkennycollege.ie

**The Closing date for receipt of application is:
5:00 p.m. Friday, 14th May 2020**

Addressed to:
Mr. Simon Thompson,
Headmaster / Principal
Kilkenny College
Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny. R95 CF61
or: Email to vacancy@kilkennycollege.ie



KILKENNY COLLEGE

Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny
www.kilkennycollege.ie

The Board of Directors of Kilkenny College,
a Co-Educational Boarding and Day School with a Church of Ireland Etho
seek applications from suitably qualified candidates for the following position:-

Head of Girls Boarding

(Residential by Licence, commencing August 2020)

This is a Senior Position with overall leadership responsibility for 230 Boarder Girls, Leadership of the Boarding House Team and Reporting to the Senior Management Team. Applicants will be likely to have previous experience, including leadership roles, in a boarding / residential work setting.

Application requirements :-

- Letter of Application
- Current C.V.
- Proof of relevant qualifications
- Two named references

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Kilkenny College serves families across the diocese of Cashel, Ferns and Ossory in the first instance and other families who wish to have their children educated in a school with a Church of Ireland Ethos.

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- 3 Naughton Scholars (Engineering) in the past 2 years. The only school in Ireland to achieve this.
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Our wide-ranging Extra-Curricular Programme is based on encouraging participation and finding your own niche in sports, the arts, music, Sciences and relaxation.

Hockey, rugby, athletics, tennis, swimming, equestrian club, badminton club, outdoor pursuits.

Sporting facilities include four rugby pitches, four hockey pitches (two astro turf) tennis and badminton courts, large sports hall. Music department with choir, jazz band and orchestra.

CLUBS & SOCIETIES INCLUDE:

Art, Drama, Debating, Language Clubs, The Heritage Club, Yoga. A wide range of tours annually.

ASSISTANCE WITH BOARDING CHARGES OR DAY OPTIONAL CHARGES:

Contact the Principal or Bursar about scholarships, SEC Grants, family allowance for siblings, bursaries and other assistance.

Castlecomer Road, Kilkenny.

Tel: 056 776 1544 **Email:** info@kilkennycollege.ie

Web: www.kilkennycollege.ie