

The Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois

Church arrangements during the Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Pandemic

God is with his people in good times and bad. Like believers in every age we say: 'If I should walk in The Valley of Darkness no evil would I fear for You are there'. Care of the vulnerable is at the heart of our pastoral ministry. In this pandemic all are at risk and so extraordinary measures have to be taken to limit the spread of the virus. We ask the Lord to be very close to us in these times and our Lady to protect us.

The following are the arrangements for liturgies and church events in the Diocese of Ardagh and Clonmacnois during the period 13th March to 29th March 2020.

Churches

In these times of uncertainty many will wish to visit their local church. Our churches will remain open for prayer each day at times that will be advertised locally.

The celebration of weekend and weekday Mass

Because of the requirement that indoor gatherings of more than 100 people be avoided, and the difficulties that may arise in achieving this, and always mindful of public safety and those with underlying medical conditions, the following arrangements are to be followed in all parishes:

- Because of the current emergency situation, all parishioners are dispensed from the obligation to physically attend Sunday Mass.
- During the period 13th March to 29th March the public celebration of Mass on weekdays and at weekends is suspended with immediate effect. This includes Saint Patrick's Day.
- Be assured that priests will continue to celebrate Mass privately and pray for the needs of their parishioners.
- Mass will be available by webcam at Saint Mel's Cathedral www.longfordparish.com each day – 8.00am, 10.00am, 1.05 weekdays, 7.30pm Saturday, and 8.00am, 10.00am, 11.30am and 1.00pm on Sundays.

You are encouraged to continue to pray at home with your family and especially for those who are sick and those who care for them.

The Celebration of Baptism

Baptisms will continue to take place provided the congregation is less than 100.

A single jug of fresh water will be blessed and will not be reused.

Signing of the cross will take place without touch and the sacred oils will be administered with the use of cotton buds.

The Celebration of Funerals

Funeral Masses will be celebrated in church with only immediate family members in attendance and no more than 100 present. Those attending are asked to sit at least two metres apart. (www.gov.ie)

Sympathising should not involve handshaking or physical touch, hand hygiene measures will be maintained throughout the ceremony.

Confirmation:

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is suspended for the time being.

The Sacrament of Marriage:

The Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated in church. Representatives of the couple are asked to ensure that no more than 100 people are in attendance in the church. People are asked to sit at least two metres apart.

Hand hygiene measures in place. No exchange of the sign of peace by means of a handshake

Pastoral Care of the Sick and Sacrament of Anointing

Great care will be taken with the administration of this reassuring sacrament.

Priests will use a cotton bud or a sterile glove to administer the oil of the sick.

Spiritual Communion

The tradition of Spiritual Communion, whereby those who cannot directly receive the Eucharist, can by their desire to receive it, also gain its benefits. Although unable to receive the Eucharist in person we are not separated from it, but drawn into a deeper appreciation and desire for its graces, which continue to be poured out to each of us.

“My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You have already come, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen”.

Saint Francis

Review

These arrangements are subject to review. Any change will be communicated to parishes and will be advertised on the diocesan website www.ardaghdiocese.org