

Killaloe Diocese responds to Government recommendations in relation to

COVID -19 (Corona Virus) Pandemic  
Pastoral Message of Bishop Fintan Monahan

Killaloe Diocese  
12 th March 2020

Following the recommendations of the Government and Public Health Authorities this morning, the Diocese of Killaloe wishes to put measures in place to help ensure the containment of the virus and the protection of the faithful who may be particularly vulnerable at this time. The provisions will have immediate effect and will be followed by all parishes in the Diocese of Killaloe. These provisions will remain in effect until otherwise advised by the Public Health Authorities.

I am mindful of the concern for the well-being of our communities and the anxiety being felt by members of our families who may be elderly or living with chronic illness. The current situation presents real challenges to us as a community and society. Our first obligation is to the care of our people who may be most vulnerable to the effects of this virus. Guided by the advice of those in the medical community and the public health authorities we are instigating a series of measures to limit some of our activities that involve gatherings of people. This will affect our celebrations of the Sacraments including the Eucharist. I appreciate that many of these measures may be a great challenge to people of faith but our priority is the care and well-being of our brothers and sisters.

Call to Prayer

I encourage all people of faith to bring the current situation to the heart of their prayer and I invoke the protection of the Blessed Virgin Mary on all those who are suffering and on all who care for and love them.

Existing Precautions

Recommended best practice in relation to hand-hygiene, environmental-hygiene and social distance will continue to be observed. We remind those who are elderly, vulnerable or feeling ill that they are under no obligation to attend religious services.

Open for Prayer

In challenging times like this people find strength, consolation and hope in prayer. We rediscover the value of traditional prayers such as the Rosary, the Memorare, St. Patrick's Breastplate etc. Churches will remain open for prayer each day at times to be advised locally.

Public Celebration of Mass

In View of the Government Statement and the need to avoid indoor public gatherings of more than 100 people, and the difficulty of guaranteeing this in practice, following consultation I have decided as follows:

- ☒ All public Masses in this diocese, Sundays and weekdays (with the exception of Funeral Masses and the Celebration of Marriage – see below) are suspended until 29 March or until further notice.
- ☒ The obligation to be physically present at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days (including St. Patrick's Day) is therefore suspended for everybody until further notice.
- ☒ Priests will continue to remember the needs of parishioners at Mass celebrated privately.
- ☒ The faithful are encouraged to join spiritually in the celebration of Mass, either on parish radio or on web-cam. Parishes that have web-cams include: Kilrush, Roscrea, Ennis, Quin, Nenagh and Shannon.
- ☒ Parishioners are also encouraged to pray at home, including especially prayers for the sick, for those who are caring for the sick and for all who are working so hard to protect us

Confirmations

With immediate effect, all Confirmations scheduled to take place have been postponed. The re-scheduling of these events will be reviewed after March 29th.

#### Baptisms

The Irish Bishops' Conference has issued guidelines in relation to the celebration of Baptism which will continue to be followed. Only immediate family should attend the celebration of Baptism. People who might be susceptible to severe reactions to the virus should not attend.

#### Weddings

It is important that we observe the government guidelines in relation to public gatherings. The recommendation is that no gathering of more than 100 persons take place indoors. Wedding guests should be limited to the Bridal Party and immediate family. Guests are asked to observe the hygiene protocols and observe social distance while in the Church.

#### Funerals

We appreciate that a bereavement is a very sensitive time in the life of any family and that the support of friends and neighbours is an integral part of the grieving and healing process. This has involved the tradition of expressing sympathy by attendance at the funeral rites and making physical contact with the bereaved. In the light of the guidelines received we ask that only immediate family and close friends would attend the funeral liturgy, observing the protocols already mentioned. At such a time as this, a thoughtful card or note expressing sympathy might be effective in expressing our solidarity with the bereaved.

#### Eucharistic Adoration

Eucharistic Adoration should not be held in confined spaces. People are encouraged to pray before the Blessed Sacrament in the many Churches of the diocese which will remain open for personal prayer.

#### Meetings

All non-essential public meetings are suspended pending further review on March 29th .

#### Extract from Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ in me,  
Christ beneath me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right,  
Christ on my left,  
Christ when I lie down,  
Christ when I sit down,  
Christ when I arise,  
Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,  
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,  
Christ in every eye that sees me,  
Christ in every ear that hears me.

#### Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary,  
that never was it known that anyone who fled to your protection,  
implored your help, or sought your intercession was left unaided.  
Inspired with this confidence,  
I fly to you, O Virgin of virgins, my Mother.  
To you I come, before you I stand, sinful and sorrowful.  
O Mother of the Word Incarnate,  
despise not my petitions, but in your mercy, hear and answer. Amen.