



Pastoral Message from Fr. Bernard P.P and Fr.Hyacinth

We want to advise you of the decisions that we have made in the Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish , following the new directives received from the national health authorities. We are conscious that this is an anxious time for many people. It is important for us to remember the promise of the Lord that He is with us always.

1. Open for Prayer

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

2. The 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, we have decided as follows:

- The public celebration of Mass in the Parish (*with the exception of Funeral Mass and the Celebration of Marriage – see below*) is suspended until and including Sunday 29th March, with immediate effect.
- 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 radio or on web-cam. Lists of available radio stations web-cams will be published the Parish website www.enniskerryparish.ie
- 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

3. The Celebration of Baptism

The Church continues to welcome those who come for Baptism. The following guidelines apply for the time being, as previously indicated:

- The congregation must be less than 100 people
- The celebrant will sign the child with the Cross without touching
- Where there is more than one child being baptised, a single jug of fresh water will be blessed and used.
- The anointing with the Holy Oils will be administered by the use of cotton buds.

4. The Celebration of Funerals

The following guidelines should be followed:

- Funeral directors and bereaved families are asked to limit participation to family and close friends so that no more than 100 people are present
- Members of the congregation are asked to leave the space of one metre between themselves and those next to them
- People are asked to express their sympathies in a way that does not involve physical contact

5. Confirmation:

- Based on the advice that we now have, the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation is suspended for the time being.
- Our priority is to reassure children and their families in our parishes that arrangements will be made to Confirm them as soon as it becomes possible to do so.

6. First Penance and Communion

- First Penance celebrations should be suspended until after Easter.
- We have, for the moment, not considered suspending First Communion, because, in most cases, this is still over a month away.

7. The Sacrament of Marriage:

The Sacrament of Marriage may be celebrated as scheduled, taking into account that:

- The couple understand and accept that the Congregation should be no more than 100 people
- Those present will be asked to sit at a distance of one metre apart
- Shaking hands or embracing in the Church should not take place

8. Pastoral Care of the Sick and Sacrament of Anointing

- The anointing of the sick will be celebrated without direct physical contact. This is to protect the vulnerable from any risk of transference of the virus from outside the sick-room. In practice this means that “cotton-buds” or sterile gloves should be used.
- Under present circumstances, visits to the sick should ideally be limited to no more than five minutes

9. Meetings and Gatherings

- All Diocesan or Regional meetings, including the Deanery Conversations which were scheduled to take place are suspended for the time being.

All of these arrangements are under constant review. Please keep an eye on our website www.enniskerryparish.ie for updates as they become available

We wish you every blessing in these coming weeks and we pray that, as a Christian community and as a nation, we may be able with God's grace to overcome this significant challenge.

Fr. Bernard Kennedy & Fr. Hyacinth Nwakuna