

Parish of the Immaculate Heart of Mary
Enniskerry, Kilmacanogue, Curtlestown & Glencree
Website www.enniskerryparish.ie

FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS – updated 10.05.21

We are still operating under severe and strict restrictions intended to minimise the risk of spreading the COVID-19 virus. In addition to a moral compulsion to provide a safe environment for all visitors to our churches, we are also subject to a range of requirements prescribed by the Irish Bishops, the HSE, NPHE and the Irish Government. One of those requirements is that we ensure safe physical distancing within our churches. Consequently, the number of people that we can accommodate in each of our churches at any one time is severely limited. That applies to any event that might take place within any of our churches, including funerals, and it applies to outdoor as well as indoor events.

We do not wish to find ourselves in a situation where we must turn people away from the doors. However, that might become necessary if too many people arrive for a service. In order to avoid that happening, we ask that anybody responsible for organising an event in any of our churches liaise with us beforehand so that we can ensure that those who need to attend can do so safely. We suggest that a single individual be appointed to liaise with us.

At present, the following rules strictly apply to any funeral that is to take place:

- **A MAXIMUM OF 50 MOURNERS ARE PERMITTED TO ATTEND THE FUNERAL**

Government guidance does not distinguish between indoor and outdoor segments of the funeral. Therefore, the maximum number of 50 mourners applies equally to the church building and to the church grounds, including the cemetery. Thus, no more than 50 mourners should attend within the church grounds at the time of the funeral. 50 mourners can only be accommodated inside the church in situations where 2 metres clear space can be maintained at all times between individual mourners, other than between those living together in the same household. **Please note that, although in some instances, up to 50 mourners could be accommodated in St. Mary's church, the numbers of mourners that can be accommodated in our churches is usually much less than 50, particularly in our smaller churches.** The precise number that can be accommodated in any instance depends on the makeup of the household groups, i.e. the numbers of mourners who can sit together, and it can only be established by allocating places in accordance with the seating plan.

In our experience, people tend to gather in the church grounds and in the cemetery when they know that a funeral is to take place. The only way to prevent that from happening is to refrain from publishing details of the funeral arrangements. Consequently, **PLEASE DO NOT PUBLISH, BY NEWSPAPER, ONLINE NOTICE OR ANY OTHER MEANS, DETAILS OF THE ARRANGEMENTS, I.E. THE TIME OR PLACE OF THE FUNERAL.** For close family or friends who are unable to attend a funeral held at St. Mary's, the church ceremony may be viewed online via our parish webcam. A link to the webcam is provided on our parish website, at www.enniskerryparish.ie. We suggest that those who need to view the ceremony be notified privately of the link and of the time of the funeral. **To reduce the risk of people gathering in the church grounds, those details should not be published widely by newspaper, online notice or other means.**

- **NO PERSON SHOULD ATTEND A FUNERAL WHO IS KNOWN TO BE, OR SUSPECTED OF BEING, INFECTED WITH THE COVID-19 VIRUS.**

That includes:

- (a) anybody unusually exhibiting common symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, new cough, shortness of breath, breathing difficulty, or loss of, or change to, sense of smell or taste.

- (b) Anybody who has had recent close contact with a person known or suspected of being infected with COVID-19.
- (c) Anybody who, in accordance with HSE guidance, should currently be self-isolating or restricting their movements for any other reason, such as travel.
- **THE COFFIN WILL BE RECEIVED AT THE FOOT OF THE ALTAR, WHERE THE FINAL BLESSING WILL ALSO TAKE PLACE.**

(In normal circumstances, the reception and the blessing would take place at the church entrance.)

- **THE COFFIN SHOULD NOT BE CARRIED IN THE CHURCH.**

Manual lifting, carrying and lowering of the coffin requires the close gathering of six to eight people, and that should be avoided except in exceptional circumstances. Instead, where possible, the coffin should be transported by means of a trolley.

- **EVERY PERSON ATTENDING A FUNERAL MUST WEAR AN APPROPRIATE FACE COVERING AT ALL TIMES.**

That includes those who have previously been infected and those who have been vaccinated.

- **EVERY PERSON ATTENDING A FUNERAL MUST MAINTAIN A CLEAR SPACE OF AT LEAST 2 METRES (6 FT 7 IN) AT ALL TIMES BETWEEN THEMSELVES AND ANYBODY OUTSIDE OF THEIR HOUSEHOLD GROUP.**

Note, a household group is a group of people currently living together in the same household. **A family is not necessarily a household group.**

- **SINGING WITHIN THE CHURCH, BY A SINGLE CANTOR ONLY, MAY TAKE PLACE IN SOME SITUATIONS, AND BY PRIOR ARRANGEMENT ONLY.**
- **EVERY PERSON ATTENDING A FUNERAL IN THE CHURCH MUST SIT ONLY IN THEIR DESIGNATED PLACE.**

Any direction given by a church steward must be heeded.

We have prepared a safe seating plan for each of our churches. In order to avoid confusion and possible disappointment on the day of the funeral, we need to identify beforehand, by means of individual names marked on the seating plan, the positions of all those who need to attend. **We must have the names of each individual who is to attend.** It is not sufficient to indicate simply “X plus family”. Please note that only people who are currently living together in the same household should sit together. A family group should not sit together if they do not all live together in the same household. For contact tracing purposes, we need to record contact details for each individual, or for each household group where appropriate. The completed seating plan must be returned to the Parish Office well in advance, so that arrangements can be confirmed, or adjusted if necessary, in good time. Assistance in completing the seating plan can be obtained from the Parish Office.

Please note that we do not make the rules, but we have a responsibility to apply them to the best of our ability. The Covid-19 virus still poses a serious threat, and we ask that you respect our responsibility and that you cooperate fully with us in our efforts to reduce the risk to all of those who need to attend a funeral, including mourners, clergy and lay volunteers, and to the wider community.