

Dear Friends

As we enter into this time of Level 5 restrictions, I pray God's blessing on us all. It is a difficult time and we are all a little disappointed that the virus has taken hold in such a strong way in the country. However, it is a time for deep solidarity. I watched a programme on an English channel shortly after the announcement of Level 5 restrictions. While one journalist was critical and said that Irish levels of infection were less than those in quite a few countries and criticized this restriction, there was also another English journalist who commented that the Irish were teaching others how to live in a society rather than an economy.

We live in a society and we are asked in this time to make sacrifices for that society. It is difficult to see sports fixtures cancelled. It is difficult that we cannot gather for Mass or other liturgies. It is difficult that we cannot travel to see family or friends but living with those difficulties and overcoming this virus with solidarity and with responsibility will be the hallmarks of heroism for our time.

On a practical level, there are a number of considerations:

- The Parish Office will be closed. If anyone wants to book an anniversary Mass or ask for a Mass card, please send an e-mail or call to the house and I will try to facilitate if I am there.
- All liturgies are behind closed doors and we hope to continue with the live streaming of Sunday Mass but this is dependent on the possibility of our broadcaster to travel. Hopefully, we will be able to continue on Sundays but this will be on a week-to-week basis. The link will be communicated as heretofore by means of Facebook and text message.
- Thanks to all who have contributed so generously to the Parish. Quite a number of people have dropped in envelopes or made donations. This helps us with the practical needs and we are most appreciative.
- If anyone finds this time difficult, or has any particular difficulty, we hope to network within the parish to help anyone in isolation or difficulty. We can start a telephone service to anyone in isolation, with a daily or twice weekly call if necessary. We can also ask some people to offer practical help to anyone in isolation if necessary. If anyone needs help, or anyone wants to help, please contact the office number.
- Please be assured that our prayers continue. I offer Mass with prayer for the parish each day in one of the churches. While we cannot gather as a community, please be assured that the tradition of worship holds strong here.
- In addition, I hope to offer three times of "permanence" in each of the churches. This will be a time when I will be present in the church and available if anyone wishes to call in for confession or a chat. I will also have the diary and Mass cards available. These times will be
Broadford: Sunday, 2.00-5.00pm
Johnstownbridge: Monday, 4.00-6.00pm
Clogherinkoe: Tuesday, 4.00-6.00pm.
- We have a new parish e-mail. From now on we are available at Balynaparish2020@gmail.com
- Thanks to all who were instrumental in the renewal of the church grounds and car-park in Clogherinkoe. Through the involvement of some good friends of the parish, Kilsaran Concrete have generously given us the filling and gravel to galvanize the carpark from the worst of the winter weather and the grounds have been completely refreshed over the last while. Thanks to Kilsaran and to all involved!

Thanks to you all for your encouragement and your solidarity. We will pray for one another and we will see an end to this sad time and brighter days, with God's help!

God bless!

Fr Seán