

A Message from Fr. Michael

Today is Tuesday 24th March 2020, and I'm speaking to you from where I live, The Presbytery, Kilnamanagh.

I'm sending greetings to the people of Kilnamanagh and Castlevew Parish in your homes via Webcam because we cannot gather for Mass at this strange time.

I hope you are well and that you are able to manage the curtailments placed on all of us by the spread of Covid-19.

This is a very exceptional, even weird, time, calling on all our resources of solidarity, compassion and selflessness.

Everything has gone quiet out there and there's an eeriness in the air.

It makes me sad that we can't gather for Mass and other Liturgies. This is hard and difficult. However, Jesus did say: *I will not leave you orphans* (Jn 14:18), and, *I am with you always* (Mtt 28:20). We know that he is with us in a special way in the Eucharist. But he also remains with us in a special way in his Word recorded in the Gospels. He is also with us through his Spirit poured into our hearts at Baptism. That means he is with us today and accompanies us through the challenges of these times.

I would encourage you to keep in touch with Jesus the Lord these days by reading the Gospels and, in particular, the Gospel Readings for Mass. There's a link to them on the Parish Website.

The new norm for this unusual time is: *We pull together by staying apart*. We in the Parish plan to follow that norm through the wise use of the Internet. We are in the process of equipping our Parish Website with facilities, materials and ideas to help us all keep in touch. This will be a work in progress for the duration of this emergency. So, please use the Parish Website, and if you're not quite sure how to go about it, ask someone who knows.

Pope Francis has asked us to join together in prayer and to pray the Our Father together on this Wednesday at 12 noon, the Feastday of the Annunciation. I invite you to join me in praying together on the Parish Webcam at 12 noon this Wednesday, ie tomorrow.

I also invite you to join me for Mass on the Webcam at 10 am each day except Thursday and Saturday. In this way, though we are physically apart, we are united in the Lord Jesus.

We pray at Mass for everything we need to take the test that is before us now from the spread of Covid-19.

We pray for the strength and stamina that we need for the time ahead.

We pray for courage and generosity.

We ask God to keep us safe and well during this emergency.

We pray that those in the front line will be protected.

We pray that those infected will recover.

We pray in a special way for those dying alone during this pandemic.

We are going through a very difficult time, but we will get through it together. The best advices we can have are in the guidelines issued by the HSE. They are on the job and at the frontline. So we need to observe those guidelines fully. This is no time for selfish behaviour of any kind. This is a time for generosity of spirit and attention to the common good. Covid-19 is, as it were, forcing us to attend to one another and to have regard for the common good.

Irish people suffered many hardships over the centuries and the gift of faith sustained them. Faith can do the same now. So we need to pray for that gift for ourselves and for others. We call on the resources of our faith to help us deal with whatever Covid-19 will bring our way.

Placing all our trust in the Lord, and asking Mary, Mother of Jesus and our Mother, to intercede for us, I invite you to pray the 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 them. Amen.*

God bless you all.

Please join me for Mass from behind closed door tomorrow morning at 10 am.

Slán agus Beannacht.