

**Webcam Broadcast C-19 11**

**Hello Everyone! I hope you are safe and well.**

**It's Monday 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020.**

**Our church buildings remain closed for public worship, and for good reason. It is not safe to reopen yet. And jumping the queue will not make us safe.**

**In last Monday's Broadcast I outlined the mammoth task ahead of us as we prepare to reopen our church buildings. I invited you to reflect on this matter as well because the more people we have thinking about it the better the outcome will be. Next week I hope to invite you to sign up as a volunteer to help with whatever reopening will entail. This Monday I want to continue the reflection I began last Monday on getting ready to reopen our churches to a new time and a new reality.**

**What do we need to do to make it safe for us to reopen after 20<sup>th</sup> July? How do we get ready? What do we need to do to make sure the virus is not spread in our churches?**

**We have to develop a Plan, which, I understand, will have to be vetted before we are authorised to reopen for public worship. I also understand that the Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference is preparing a General Framework Document to guide the entire Catholic Church in Ireland, and that will apply to every parish.**

**As I reflected last week, this is not simply a matter of opening our doors again, or of our ability to apply social distancing. What will be required will be far more comprehensive. I await the checklist with interest.**

**The public health situation must rightly influence all our decisions. This is what Pope Francis said last week when churches in Italy reopened for public worship. He said:**

*'but please, let us proceed respecting the norms, the prescriptions we are given to safeguard the health of each individual and the people.'*

**Whatever measures we put in place, they must make it safe for all concerned, people and priest, to gather for worship together. We have to acknowledge the science.**

**We need to be very aware of how the disease we are trying to control is spread, and of what we know so far and do not know. Perhaps we need to rehearse why it is churches are closed for public worship. No one has the right to endanger the life of another even unknowingly.**

**The fact is Covid-19 kills people regardless of age or health. That's why the world has had to more or less shut down to deal with it.**

**The virus that causes Covid-19 disease is spread from people in fluid and in droplets scattered from the nose or mouth of an infected person when that person speaks, coughs or sneezes. The fluid and droplets land on objects and surfaces around the infected person. Other people contaminate their hands by touching these objects or surfaces and then bring the virus into contact with their eyes, nose or mouth by touching them with their contaminated hands.**

**Covid-19 can also spread if droplets from an infected person land directly on the mucous membranes of the eye, nose or mouth of a person standing close to them. Some scientists contend that while singing, saliva can spread as far as 8 metres or 26 feet.**

**It is still not known how long the virus survives on surfaces in different conditions.**

**We need to be aware of all this detail as we plan to gather for worship again and especially with regards to procedures for receiving Holy Communion.**

**I think, therefore, that our overall approach has to be one of caution, because this is a life and death matter. Hence the lockdown and all the sacrifices we have been making these last months. There is a great tradition in our Faith of sacrifice, sacrifice for the Common Good.**

**However, we do need to keep a sharp eye on how to avoid a second lockdown.**

**A phased approach to reopening our churches, therefore, would seem to be wise to help us get used to what is entailed in living with this deadly virus in the context of Mass. All this will have to be matched to our resources and capacities, both physical and personnel-wise, and what the Parish can afford.**

**I will be glad to hear your thoughts. You can email me at [kcp parishoffice@gmail.com](mailto:kcp parishoffice@gmail.com).**

**As you can see, the task before us is a mammoth one. A whole-community effort is required to have the whole parish pull together in a new way.**

**Until next time.**

**Slán agus beannacht.**