

**Webcam Broadcast C-19 18**

**Hello Everyone! I hope you continue to be safe and well.**

**It's Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July 2020.**

**Every 4 or 6 weeks for the past 20 years I have been visiting the same barber, until lockdown came in March.**

**4 months later, to the day, last Thursday, I visited, by appointment, again.**

**I never appreciated before what a relief a visit to the barber might be. I recommend such a visit**

**- though I've noticed some who may need a surgeon rather than a barber. I'm informed that in the past the same person often performed the same functions ...**

**It's such a weight off my head!**

**Now I know what the skip was doing outside his premises!**

**Some of us are beginning to have experience of what attendance at Mass is going to be like for the foreseeable future in the new normal or régime brought about by Covid-19.**

**People may find themselves occupying seats in church they never did before. This can give rise to new angles of view and new perspectives on things, some welcome, some maybe unwelcome.**

**Even exiting through a different door can give a different perspective on what we thought we knew.**

**Hopefully, seeing things from new angles and new perspectives will be one of the bonuses that will come our way from the dreadful discommoding experience Covid-19 has brought our way these past 4 months**

**- and we need to note that the Pandemic is far from over yet.**

**Just yesterday, the largest daily number of Covid-19 cases worldwide was reported.**

**The island of Ireland is not isolated from the rest of the world.**

**We are going to have to learn how to live alongside this virus, which can come at us from many angles, for a long time yet.**

**From where I stand in the sanctuary it's wonderful to now have a congregation back before me again in the church, though much diminished in numbers because of the restrictions to a maximum of 50 congregating indoors. The exception is in the case of a very large church - and neither of our churches qualifies as very large in that regard.**

**It is a strange experience for me for the moment looking at the congregation, dispersed very differently from before, and for the most part wearing facemasks.**

**I'm so glad the congregation is back.**

**All of what I am about and what I do makes no sense whatsoever without a congregation.**

**My vocation is to minister to people.**

**I'm delighted to see familiar faces back, but I'm not all the time sure who is there before me.**

**Both the variety of facemask and the style of wearing them are worthy of note**

**- as is the struggle some have to place the Holy Communion host on their tongue while still wearing the mask!**

**I think we have made a very good start at reopening our 2 churches. This could not have been done without our stewards and cleaners. And the reopening cannot continue without enough stewards and cleaners being available every time the church opens.**

**This situation will prevail for the foreseeable future.**

**Adjustments of various kinds are required of us all as we set about living with our new companion Covid-19. As we all see precisely what is involved in the new "dance" we now have to learn with each other called "Two Metre Distance", what needs to be done will become more apparent, and bit-by-bit people will feel easier about volunteering.**

**At the end of the day, the crucial thing is that we better learn how to respect the relatively simple measures the HSE advise us will help keep us all safe in the context of Covid-19: that Social Distance Dance called 2 Metres, hand and respiratory hygiene, the wearing of face covering.**

**Bit by bit I hope we can reintroduce Readers and Ministers of Holy Communion.**

**On our agenda now is to see how we can do so safely.**

**My main focus for the weeks ahead is to catch up with the Sacraments of Confirmation, First Communion and Baptism. The backlog is a bit overwhelming. It presents what looks to me like a crucifying schedule:**

**6 classes for Confirmation,**

**7 classes for First Communion,**

**24 Baptisms that were due to take place in March and April, plus the unknown number of new Baptisms in the meantime.**

**All of this has to take place in the context of a maximum of 50 people on the church premises, with stewards and cleaners.**

**Without Natalie, I'm not sure I could face it.**

**I also dare to say that it can only happen if I remain upright and healthy.**

**The turn of events that occurred this weekend with regards to my back would not inspire confidence either.**

**Please pray for us both as we take on this overwhelming task.**

**Until next time.**

**Slán agus beannacht.**