



Easter 2020 Reflection

Almost as never before, nature seems in perfect harmony with Easter this year. The sun is shining, the weather is unexpectedly warm after the cold of the

past few weeks, the birds are singing gaily and have rarely been so audible, the daffodils and tulips are showing their magnificence, and the trees are about to burst into an explosion of colour and life. The timing couldn't be better. Surrounded by such glory, it is hard to imagine that the country, indeed the world, is in turmoil, brought to its knees by a virus, against which the best of medical treatment seems powerless. And since we humans are the only means by which the virus is transmitted to others, the most loving thing we can do for one another is to avoid physical contact, to practise social distancing, to stay at home. It is so counter intuitive.

In these days Christians would normally be celebrating the liturgies of the Easter Triduum, beginning with the Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, and the solemn Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday night. Because of the current restrictions these ceremonies can only be celebrated behind closed doors and accessible via webcam or on TV. The purpose of these liturgies is to connect us with God's great love for all humanity, and for the whole of creation, revealed in the life, ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

This year in a particular way the passion and death of Our Lord are being lived out in our midst. Most of us can only imagine the

situation in most of our hospitals: people very sick, many of them in intensive care, unable to see their loved ones; health care staff doing their utmost in extraordinary conditions to care for their patients, conscious of the risk to themselves and to their families. It is particularly difficult for families who lose a loved one in a hospital or nursing home setting at this time: unable to be with their loved one in their last moments, and with only the immediate family being allowed to attend the funeral. Nor can we forget the economic hardship and accompanying insecurity for so many people.

If Easter is about anything, it is about the presence of death in the midst of life, but it is also about witnessing to new life in the sadness and tragedy of death. The suffering and death of Jesus on Good Friday was real, and his followers were left desolated and abandoned. Somehow out of that experience of utter darkness they came to experience and proclaim resurrection faith. Generations of Christians, saints and sinners, have witnessed to Easter faith through times of war, persecution, hunger and sickness. This is our moment.

Christian faith above all proclaims that we are not alone, whatever we might be facing. God in Jesus Christ is with us, always giving us courage and hope and leading us towards new life. We live that hope by showing solidarity with one another, whatever sacrifice that might ask of ourselves. So many people are doing that right now, accepting in good spirit the restrictions on our movements and normal way of life, and reaching out in creative ways to those who are isolated, anxious or suffering. In doing this we are proclaiming our faith in and helping to create a better future for everyone. **Jesus Christ is risen! Alleluia, alleluia!**

Fr. Richard Sheehy

Items for the Parish Link can be e-mailed to parishlink@gmail.com or dropped into the Parish Office letter-box, marked 'Parish Link', by 5pm on the Thursday of week of publication.

A contact name and phone number is required for each item.

**Parish Office Opening Times: Monday to Friday 9.30am. - 12.30pm.
Ph: 8308257 or email saintcolumba@eircom.net**

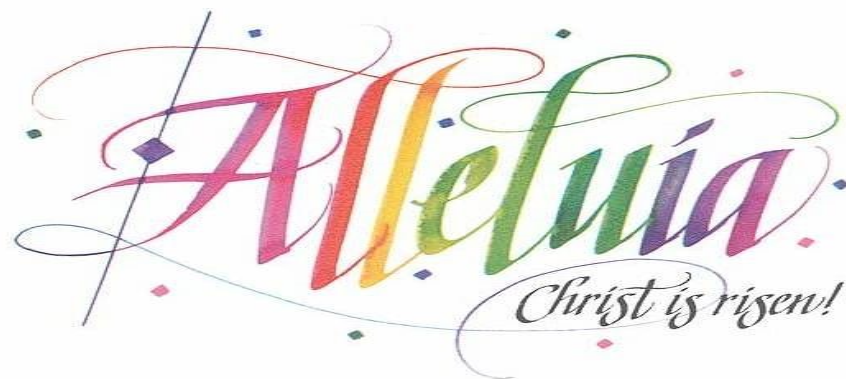
PARISH



LINK

Issue No 27/15

Parish of St. Columba Easter Sunday 12th April 2020



Mission Statement

St. Columba's parish is a vibrant and welcoming community of faith, continuing to give practical witness to the Good News of Christ, through worship and reflection, and through Christian service to the community.

The following is sent from our Former Parish Priest Fr. Jim Caffrey now a monk in Mepkin Abbey in the USA.

Loneliness in a Time of Social Isolation By Father Columba

When I lived and ministered in Dublin, we had a group of over 20 young people. We prayed and visited elderly friends in their homes and their nursing homes. One of my great friends was Gertrude, who was an eccentric 90-year-old German lady. Peter, one of the community, and I visited her weekly. Often on the weekends, we brought her out to the National Concert Hall or other places where she liked to go. Often Gertrude told us "I love you visiting me. It takes away the damned loneliness". Over the last few days I have thought a lot about Gertrude and our other elderly friends in Dublin. How difficult and lonely these times are for those who are already lonely and isolated. The elderly, yes, but also many others of all ages who live alone. So I want to make a simple suggestion. Make a list of all the people you know who live alone and decide to make contact with them regularly. Let them know that you're thinking about them and that they are not alone. You can do this by writing a letter, sending an email, or a text. Better still, phone them and talk to them. Use the phone, Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, Google Hangouts, or whatever.

What if you are feeling lonely and isolated yourself? Here are some tips you might find helpful:

- Think of helping someone else by making contact by phone or email
- Make a schedule or a plan for each day. Write it out and try to stick to it.
- Try to take some exercise if you're able. Getting outdoors, even for a short while, is helpful.
- Another way to enjoy the outdoors in your garden is to do some gardening. Plant some flowers, vegetables or herbs.
- Set up birdfeeders outside your window so that you can enjoy seeing the birds and other wildlife in your neighbourhood.
- On the Mepkin Abbey website we have many suggestions about how you can join others in prayer or pray by yourself. Watch Mass on line. You can say the Divine Office, the Rosary, or you can practice Lectio Divina.
- Sign up for an online course.
- Do something creative. Maybe you can write short stories or poetry, paint, create a family photo album, or search online for a new hobby.
- Do some home improvements. Take it one room at a time to clean and tidy maybe even paint or redecorate.
- Lift the spirits of others by passing around some of the funny cartoons or memes online. Even in a time of crisis, a sense of humour shared with others can be a blessing.
- Perhaps you have CD's you haven't listened to in a while. Dust them off, and enjoy them.
- Finally, if you feel worried about your mental health during this time, reach out for help. There are crisis lines available to help.

ALONE COVID-19 Helpline ALONE has launched a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus) in Ireland. Professional staff will be available to answer queries and give advice and reassurance where necessary. The support line will be open Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, by calling 0818 222 024, and hours may be extended to meet the demand.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation

Given the present extraordinary circumstances where everyone is obliged to stay at home and 'physical distancing' is mandatory, the Church is unable to provide the celebration of the sacraments in the normal way, including the sacrament of Confession.

For the moment, while we might not have the immediate assurance

of the Sacrament in the priest's words: "I absolve you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit," we do have the assurance of Christ's words: "Truly, truly, I say to you, if you ask anything of the Father, he will give it to you in my name."

If you desire to celebrate the sacrament of Confession, simply pray to God, asking for forgiveness for your sins, and say an Act of Contrition, with the true intention to confess your sins to a priest as soon as you are able, so that you might be healed and fully reconciled. Let us look forward in hope to the time when the present crisis has passed and we can once again resume normal Church life, including the celebration of the sacraments.



Prayer for a Pandemic by Cameron Belim

My we who are merely inconvenienced,
Remember those whose lives are at stake.

May we who have no risk factors,
Remember those most vulnerable.

May we who have the luxury of working from home,
Remember those who must choose between
preserving their health or making their rent.

May we who have the flexibility to care for our
children when their schools close,
Remember those who have no options.

May we who have to cancel our trips,
Remember those that have no safe place to go.

May we who are losing our margin money in the
tumult of the economic market,
Remember those who have no margin at all.

May we who settle in for a quarantine at home,
Remember those who have no home.

As fear grips our country let us choose love. During
this time when we cannot physically wrap our arms
around each other, Let us yet find ways to be the
loving embrace of God to our neighbours. Amen

RTÉ broadcasting For Easter2020

Holy Saturday 10.00pm Easter Vigil Mass.

Easter Sunday 12 April Mass @ 10am

11.00am Urbi et Orbi: Pope Francis' Easter Message. And his Easter blessing to the city and the world with prayer and encouragement by video link from within the Vatican. Translation and commentary by Fr Thomas McCarthy OP (RTÉ One).

Support Services for Older and Vulnerable People

COVID-19 community supports are now in place to ensure vulnerable members of the community are reached and helped at this time.

These comprise the local authority, Health Service Executive, County Champions, An Post, Community Welfare Service, An Garda Síochána, other State organisations, charities and other stakeholders.

These Dedicated helplines are focused specifically on ensuring that the cocooning elderly, vulnerable members of the community or those living alone can access deliveries of groceries, medicine and fuels.

Please try to ensure any vulnerable or elderly people in your parish help are aware of these services.

Dublin City Council

Helpline 01-2228555

Email -

covidsupport@dublincity.ie