

CARE FOR ONE ANOTHER DURING THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Further advice of the Irish Bishops in response to the COVID-19 Coronavirus

The following instructions take into consideration the new norms issued by the Irish government to be in force at 18.00 today. Bishops are asked to promulgate these instructions in their diocese as soon as possible.

These instructions complement the advice issued yesterday by the Irish Episcopal Conference and remain in place until 29th March. It is likely that these restrictions will continue for some time after that, and instructions regarding the celebration of Holy Week will be issued in due course.

The motivation for these new restrictive measures is a sense of care for the common good and especially for those most vulnerable. Each Christian community should be acutely aware of the responsibility to care for those who are most at risk. For example, even where it may not be appropriate to visit the elderly, a simple telephone call to enquire about their needs could mean so much to them.

NORMS

All non-essential pastoral gatherings and meetings, such as formation gatherings, retreats and seminars are cancelled.

All Confirmations are postponed until further notice.

Every Catholic is entitled to a dignified Christian burial. Attendance at Funeral services and Masses should be limited to close relatives and must not exceed 100 attendees within the Church building.

Similarly, Church weddings and baptisms may be celebrated on condition that the attendance in Church does not exceed 100 people.

In these difficult and uncertain times, people find strength, consolation and hope in prayer. Churches should remain open for prayer each day.

In the current emergency situation, all are dispensed from the obligation to physically attend Sunday Mass. Parishes should inform parishioners of the local possibilities to participate in Mass via local radio and on line. It may be possible for some parishes to facilitate attendance at Mass while still observing the health authority's limit of 100 people.

This is an occasion for all of us – especially in families -to pray more intensely for each other and especially for those who have succumbed to the illness. We should pray also for those in the frontlines – especially doctors, nurses and medical staff and other carers, including clergy – that the Lord will protect them as they place their own wellbeing at risk in the service of all.

Extract from Saint Patrick's Breastplate

Christ with me,

Christ before me,

Christ behind me,

Christ in me,

Christ beneath me,

Christ above me,

Christ on my right,

Christ on my left,

Christ when I lie down,

Christ when I sit down,

Christ when I arise,

Christ in the heart of everyone who thinks of me,

Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,

Christ in every eye that sees me,

Christ in every ear that hears me.

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. Amen.

