

## *Thought for the week*

### PRAYER OF POPE FRANCIS



"We fly to your protection, O Holy Mother of God". In the present tragic situation, when the whole world is prey to suffering and anxiety, we fly to you, Mother of God and our Mother, and seek refuge under your protection. Virgin Mary, turn your merciful eyes towards us amid this coronavirus pandemic. Comfort those who are distraught

and mourn their loved ones who have died, and at times are buried in a way that grieves them deeply. Be close to those who are concerned for their loved ones who are sick and who, in order to prevent the spread of the disease, cannot be close to them. Fill with hope those who are troubled by the uncertainty of the future and the consequences for the economy and employment. Mother of God and our Mother, pray for us to God, the Father of mercies, that this great suffering may end and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Plead with your divine Son, as you did at Cana, so that the families of the sick and the victims be comforted, and their hearts be opened to confidence and trust. Protect those doctors, nurses, health workers and volunteers who are on the frontline of this emergency, and are risking their lives to save others. Be close to those who assist the sick night and day, and to priests who, in their pastoral concern and fidelity to the Gospel, are trying to help and support everyone. Blessed Virgin, illumine the minds of those engaged in scientific research, that they may find effective solutions to overcome this virus. Mary Most Holy, stir our consciences, so that the enormous funds invested in developing and stockpiling arms will instead be spent on promoting effective research on how to prevent similar tragedies from occurring in the future. Beloved Mother, help us realise that we are all members of one great family and to recognise the bond that unites us. Make us strong in faith, persevering in service, constant in prayer. Mary, Consolation of the afflicted, embrace all your children in distress and pray that God will stretch out his all-powerful hand and free us from this terrible pandemic, so that life can serenely resume its normal course. To you, who shine on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope, do we entrust ourselves, O Clement, O Loving, O Sweet Virgin Mary. Amen.

*Have a Wonderful Week*

## PARISH NEWSLETTER



*Fifth Sunday of Easter*

*10<sup>th</sup> May*

PARISH CENTRE

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### ***Letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the Faithful for the Month of May 2020***

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The month of May is approaching, a time when the People of God express with particular intensity their love and devotion for the Blessed Virgin Mary. It is traditional in this month to pray the Rosary at home within the family. The restrictions of the pandemic have made us come to appreciate all the more this "family" aspect, also from a spiritual point of view. For this reason, I want to encourage everyone to rediscover the beauty of praying the Rosary at home in the month of May. This can be done either as a group or individually; you can decide according to your own situations, making the most of both opportunities. The key to doing this is always simplicity, and it is easy also on the internet to find good models of prayers to follow.

I am also providing two prayers to Our Lady that you can recite at the end of the Rosary, and that I myself will pray in the month of May, in spiritual union with all of you. I include them with this letter so that they are available to everyone. Dear brothers and sisters, contemplating the face of Christ with the heart of Mary our Mother will make us even more united as a spiritual family and will help us overcome this time of trial. I keep all of you in my prayers, especially those suffering most greatly, and I ask you, please, to pray for me. I thank you, and with great affection I send you my blessing.

Rome, Saint John Lateran, 25 April 2020

Feast of Saint Mark the Evangelist



Don't be afraid of Jesus' light,  
which brings light to our daily  
darkness...

## Contribution to Parish

These are very challenging times for all of us spiritually, emotionally and financially. While we are having no public mass, the parish is not receiving any income from the normal church collections. We still have a lot of bills that need to be paid. We would suggest that each weekend you would use your weekly envelope, keep it in a safe place in your house and when restrictions are eased, we will organise some way of collecting these envelopes. Stay safe and mind yourselves.

## First Holy Communion & Confirmation

I am very aware that we are entering the 'high season' for First Holy Communion ceremonies. I am also conscious that 39 out of our 56 parishes have not yet celebrated Confirmation. In honesty it is difficult to see a huge change post the current restrictions, which expire on May 5th. With that in mind, as First Holy Communion ceremonies are already diaried for the weekends of May, I suggest they, like Confirmation ceremonies are now postponed until we get further guidance regarding large public gatherings. I want to thank our Principals and teachers for the great work they do in helping prepare our young people for the sacraments, work done in cooperation with the local parish and the families of the young people. I also thank Maeve Mahon, our Coordinator for Primary Education. This is a hugely regretful decision but it is important that while the ceremonies may be postponed, the preparation continues. In early May resources will be sent out by email from Maeve for parishes and for schools and available to families and the wider community on the kandle website.

## COVID-19 Diocesan Update - 5<sup>th</sup>. May

*"Mother of God and our Mother,  
pray for us to God, the Father of mercies  
that this great suffering may end  
and that hope and peace may dawn anew. Amen"*

(From Pope Francis' Prayer for the Month of May 2020)

I now feel it is time to reopen our churches in the Diocese in a responsible manner for a minimum time each day for private prayer.

The decision to close our church buildings was an act of solidarity and commitment to the national effort required to suppress the COVID-19 virus. I fully recognise the huge sacrifice that closing churches has been for parishioners and priests alike.

In order for an ordered and gentle reopening to happen and to continue to support the national effort in suppressing the COVID-19 pandemic, each parish would need to ensure a safe environment for both parishioners and parish staff. This will require serious consideration of the geography/layout of the church and putting in robust measures that will help facilitate *social distancing* and *hygiene*. In order for churches to re-open in a responsible manner, the following need to be considered:

- Signage: reminding people of social distancing, hand hygiene, minimum touching of surfaces etc.
- Availability of hand sanitisers in appropriate locations in the church & the safe use of same.
- Cleaning of the church: Can measures be put in place to ensure that surfaces are cleaned by our parish volunteers?

I think the phrase often used by Dr. Tony Holohan "*we will see how this plays out*" is a good analysis of the current situation. This gentle reopening of churches responds to the deep need for parishioners, some who have perhaps been cocooned for weeks, to call into their local church.

**Electronic Donation Facility:** While appreciating changes in personal financial circumstances at this time, a number of requests have been made by parishioners looking for ways to support their local parish and the diocese at this time. To this effect an electronic donate facility will shortly be introduced onto this Kandle.Ie website. This facility will offer the donor an opportunity to donate to any one of the 56 parishes or particular Diocesan collections. We deeply appreciate your support at this time.

Every blessing & good wish. + Bishop Denis