

## **A PASTORAL RESPONSE TO THE PRESENT CORONAVIRUS CRISIS IN OUR PARISH**

On Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March Bishop Noel Treanor announced that from Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March all weekday and Sunday Masses in the Diocese of Down and Connor were being suspended indefinitely. The provision for Baptisms, Weddings and Funerals has now been updated regarding the latest D&C Directives dated 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

Given this unprecedented situation, here in the Parish of Carrickfergus and Whitehead the following arrangements are now in place from 24<sup>th</sup> March 2020:

### **1. OPENING OF CHURCHES FOR PRIVATE PRAYER**

#### **St. Nicholas' Carrickfergus**

Saturday evenings 5.30 pm – 6.30 pm

Sunday mornings 11.00 am – 12.30 pm

#### **Our Lady of Lourdes Whitehead**

Sunday mornings 9.30 am – 11.00 am

As per government guidelines, these periods are intended for **solitary private prayer only**. Parishioners are requested to observe Public Health Advice and keep a distance of two metres from others (apart from family) and to use the hand sanitisers and wipes provided at all times.

### **2. FUNERALS**

Funerals will continue. Funerals are strictly private and restricted to the immediate family of the deceased only.

These can be organised and discussed with Fr Peter Owens or with our parish secretary Natalie Gallagher (Tel: 028 93363269 or Email: [carrickfergus@downandconnor.org](mailto:carrickfergus@downandconnor.org)).

Please remember the requirement to limit the numbers attending – this is of the utmost importance.

### **3. BAPTISMS AND WEDDINGS**

No Baptisms or Weddings will take.

If you had a Baptism or Wedding due to take place in the near future, please make contact Fr Peter Owens or with our parish secretary Natalie Gallagher (Tel: 028 93363269 or Email: [carrickfergus@downandconnor.org](mailto:carrickfergus@downandconnor.org)).

### **4. EMERGENCIES**

All emergency calls will be answered in the normal way by Fr Peter or one of the other priests from our Loughshore Region Pastoral Community (Emergency Tel: 07940 002830).

## **5. MATERIAL ASSISTANCE**

This will be managed by our two Conferences of the Society of St Vincent de Paul, by members of our Parish Pastoral Council and by representatives of the Food Banks in Carrickfergus and Whitehead – all these can be contacted via the parish office  
Tel: 028 93363269 or SVdP Tel: 028 90351561.

## **6. FINANCIAL OFFERINGS**

The issuing of the Offertory Promise Envelopes to households has now had to be postponed in light of recent developments.

Alternatively, parishioners may decide to set up Standing Orders and this can be done in consultation with our parish secretary or with Patrick Quinn from the Parish Finance Committee (Tel: 07891 114892).

## **IN CONCLUSION**

Although all our lives are being dramatically changed by the present crisis, one reality does not change: the unconditional love of God for each of us personally and His call to all of us to reflect that love in how we treat ourselves and each other, not least in times of suffering, fear and anxiety. The words “Go, the Mass is ended” have a poignant resonance, now that all public worship has been suspended, but the Mass is still being celebrated privately, the Blessed Sacrament is still being adored publicly, and every man and woman is our brother and sister in Christ both in company and in isolation.

We make the words of St Patrick our own:

### **St. Patrick's Breastplate**

Christ with me,  
Christ before me,  
Christ behind me,  
Christ within me,  
Christ below me,  
Christ above me,  
Christ on my right hand,  
Christ on my left hand,  
Christ in my sleeping,  
Christ in my waking,  
Christ in the heart of all who think of me,  
Christ in every eye that looks at me,  
Christ in every ear that listens to me.