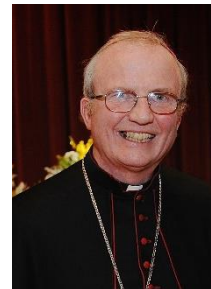




Pastoral Statement from Bishop Donal McKeown



The Coronavirus has created a lot of worry for many people. Matters are further complicated in this diocese by different approaches taken by the Irish and UK governments. As a Church in this cross-border diocese, we have two key pastoral priorities at this time. Firstly, we wish to take all measures within our control to minimise the spread of the virus. Secondly, and equally importantly, we want to offer widespread pastoral support and encouragement, rather than merely adding to fear.

A. Precautionary measures

1. Parishioners, clergy and pastoral staff should avoid being with others in public places if they show symptoms of illness, as identified by public health authorities.
2. The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed until further notice. The normal routine of weekend Masses is suspended.
3. Parish Confirmation ceremonies are being suspended until further notice.
4. Further guidance will be given at a later date regarding arrangements for First Communion.
5. Funeral ceremonies will be made available for all the deceased, in accordance with public health requirements. However, these should take place for immediate family members and not more than 100 people.
6. Marriage ceremonies will continue to be celebrated. However, those in attendance should be fewer than 100.
7. Baptisms will continue to be celebrated, again with no more than 100 present in the Church. The celebrant will take all appropriate measures to mitigate the possibility of virus transmission, in accordance with public health advice.

B. Pastoral response

1. Because of the widespread fear and uncertainty, this is a time when intense spiritual and pastoral care is essential.
2. Priests should continue to celebrate weekend Masses privately, remembering, in particular, all of those who are most affected by the virus as well as the dedicated services of health care workers and carers.
3. Churches should remain open and promote a prayerful environment through
 - a. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.
 - b. Ample opportunities for parishioners to pray, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation or seek spiritual counsel.
 - c. Access to ample supply of Holy Water for those who wish to take it for personal use. However, Holy Water should not be present in the holy water fonts
4. Those who are unable to attend weekend Masses in their parish are encouraged to mark Sunday as well as they can by participating in Masses which are transmitted by radio, television or webcams. A list of churches in this diocese with webcams will be available on www.derrydiocese.org.
5. Parishes are encouraged to maximise the use of devices such as webcams to develop and publicise a range of prayer moments during each day. These may include
 - a. The Rosary
 - b. Divine Mercy Chaplet
 - c. The Prayer of the Church (cf eg www.universalis.com)
 - d. Prayerful reflection on the weekday or Sunday readings.
 - e. Stations of the Cross
6. People should seek and create circumstances where people can pray together in family units and with friends. This may involve some of those under 5 above as well as other devotions of choice.

This advice will be reviewed daily in the light of public health advice from the relevant statutory authorities



Bellaghy Pastoral Response to Bishop McKeown's Letter

Masses as usual this weekend in St. Mary's and St. Joseph's.

DAY	ST. MARY'S BELLAGHY	ST. JOSEPH'S BALLYSCULLION
Monday 16th March St. Patrick's Day vigil	7.30pm	7.00pm
Tuesday 17th March	10.00am	

From Wednesday 18th March onwards

There will be no more public masses in our Churches until further notice.

Liturgical Plan available via Church webcam:

DAY	TIME	LITURGY
Sunday	10.30am	Mass from St. Mary's
Monday	7.30pm	Rosary (presented by Legion of Mary)
Tuesday	9.30am 10.00am – 7.00pm	Mass from St. Mary's Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Wednesday	7.30pm	Reflections (presented by Prayer Group)
Thursday	9.30am 10.00am – 7.00pm	Mass from St. Mary's Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament
Friday	7.30pm	Stations of the Cross (presented by the JP II students)
Saturday		Family Prayer Day

No congregation can be present at any of these events.

In the interest of well-being there will also be no meetings of any Apostolic Groups until further notice.

Parochial Hall

All activities cancelled during this period, until further notice.

We thank you for your cooperation in this difficult time and pray that you will all keep safe and well.

Chapel open for private prayer each day. Holy water and Votive Candles will available in Church porch for family prayer.

Parish Office/Monsignor Dolan

Notices and other requests; please contact by phone (028 79386259) or email (info@bellaghyparish.com) if possible. Notices will be published on website/parish Facebook.

Sick/Housebound

Visitation to parish homes, only in case of serious illness. Visitation to Hospitals, reserved to Hospital Chaplain's only. Visitation by Eucharistic Ministers is suspended.