

## PARISH OF INISHMAGRATH

### The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ Corpus Christi 14th June 2020

Fr Tom McManus – 964 8025

Neighbouring Priests: Fr T Mannion 964 3014 - Fr P Casey 916 4143 -  
Fr Loughlain Carolan 985 3012

Tune in to Church services at - [www.churchservices.tv](http://www.churchservices.tv) or  
<https://www.mcnmedia.tv> and search for your local or favourite church  
for Mass.

**Mass Leaflets:** Newsletters will be left in Church each Saturday morning.

**Envelopes:** Parishioners are asked to keep the envelopes until the churches are open again for Masses. If you want to pay by cheque, then the offertory contributions that go to the individual Churches can be paid to; Drumkeeran Church Account, Creevelea Church Account or Tarmon Church Account. The Dues can be paid to, Priest's Revenue Account. Thanks for your support and stay safe.

**Pray for:** Mary Farren, Co. Donegal, sister of Frances O'Brien, who died recently. May she rest in peace and our sympathies go out to her next of kin.

**Resumption of Church Services:** We hope to open up the Churches to public celebrations on Mon 29 June. To do that safely we will need to prepare properly. Next week I will include some guidelines in the newsletter. We could do with getting help to make it all a lot easier. It would be great if some of our younger parishioners would volunteer to help, that is those who have been confirmed last year and older. You don't have to come to Church when there are bigger congregations, you can come to the weekday Masses if you are anxious of contracting the COVID-19 virus or if you are not in good health. People will be asked to keep the physical distance inside and outside of the Churches from non-family members. Hand gel will be provided, so please use it. If you have a cough or sneeze do so as advised by the Health authorities. We look forward to meeting up again Please God.

**How has COVID 19 Impacted Women's Lives?:** The NCCWN – North Leitrim Women's Centre are carrying out an online survey of women living in Leitrim. They want to hear from women about how the current COVID 19 situation has impacted on their lives and the lives of their families. The challenges facing women and what supports are needed for women now and as we emerge further from lockdown. They also want to hear if there are any positives or lessons we can learn from this time. To take part in this online survey go to their Facebook page NCCWN – North Leitrim Women's Centre, phone 071 9856220 or email [info@northleitrimwomenscentre.ie](mailto:info@northleitrimwomenscentre.ie) for details.

### Seeing your Life through the Lens of the Gospel John 6:51-58

- ❖ Jesus tells us that to have life we need more than physical nourishment. How have you been aware of deeper hungers? What has met that deeper longing in you?
- ❖ Jesus tells us that it is not just something he gives us which will give us life, but himself in his life, death and resurrection. How has your faith in the person of Jesus fed you?
- ❖ Jesus speaks about 'drawing life' from Him. In day to day living what are the practices which support your faith and help you to draw life from Jesus?
- ❖ The Eucharist is one of the ways in which we draw life from Jesus. Recall with gratitude how the Eucharist has been a source of nourishment and life for you.
- ❖ Perhaps you can also think of examples of people drawing life from one another. From whom have you drawn life? Who has been able to draw life from you?

John Byrne OSA

### Reflection 1:

Over the past months, in all of us, there has been a hunger for freedom, healing, family and even food, a hunger created by the Coronavirus. But Jesus has in mind another kind of hunger, a deeper longing of the human spirit that is not so easily satisfied. It is difficult to put a name on the deep human yearning that goes beyond any physical hunger we experience.

In spite of what troubles life brings you, remember that you are not alone. The One who suffered and died for you is in you. He is as close to you as you are to yourself. He knows what it is like for you to live with disappointment, what it is like to live with that illness that saps your spirit and the hard knocks that life gives you.

We are what we receive - the Body of Christ. This means that the bread of life is not an individualistic thing or our solitary meal. The moment we receive it is not only a precious moment - a time for prayer - it is also a time to form community. The Lord who lives in you and me is none other than the Lord who lives in our next-door neighbour, in the homeless, the poor, the marginalised and the migrant; it is the same Christ who feeds all of us. There is one and the same body and the same Christ for all.

The Gospel from John today speaks clearly also: "Whoever eats me will draw life from me".

On this feast of Corpus Christi, the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, we believe that Jesus is God; we believe that God is Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We believe that Jesus has given Himself to us as flesh and blood to eat and drink - our food for the journey. We believe that his flesh and blood is given to us today and every time we receive the Eucharist. God Himself will transform us if we believe in Him and try to do His will.

## **The Deep End - Full Immersion.**

At the end of March this year, a host of Irish sports stars came together to urge people to 'unite by staying apart,' 'We're all in this together... Now it's time for us all to unite and rise to the occasion by keeping our distance and by staying at home,' they said in a video message. It seems like such a paradox: how can we be united when we are all so far apart? It is hard, when we are used to living in community, supporting others and being supported, to accept the idea that we can be apart, yet together.

It was a particular challenge for Christians across the globe, as the coronavirus outbreak saw Masses and Church Services cancelled and the faithful called upon to stay at home. Physically, we were separated from our Church community, but thankfully most of us were able to tune in to live-streamed Masses on TV, radio or online, where we could unite with the Church in prayer. For me, it brings to mind the experiences of all those who are unable to attend Mass for various reasons, perhaps because they are housebound or in hospital or living in a place where there is no Priest available, but who are nonetheless united in communion with the Body of Christ.

Every time we celebrate the Eucharist, we are 'apart, yet together.' In the Mass, we are united with the whole Church across the world - those in the Church building with us, as well as all those who are not. Today, the Feast of Corpus Christi, St Paul tells us: "Though there are many of us, we form a single body because we all share in this one loaf." In challenging times, we are united by Jesus, the living bread.

Triona Doherty

## **Reflections on Covid-19 from St. Patrick's College Maynooth**

Fr. Michael Shortall describes how his family dealt with the loss of a loved one during these strange times.

### **Grieving and remembering during the lockdown**

My father died during the lockdown. He didn't contract the COVID-19 virus; but his final weeks of care and dying, as well as our period of mourning, were all shaped by it. Some rituals had to be abandoned; others, because of technology, took on new forms.

In life, Dad took seriously the responsibility of going to funerals. Of course, there was the social aspect, the obligatory raising of a glass in honour of someone. But it was also to use an old phrase, a corporeal work of mercy: "to pray for the dead". This obligation can be especially strong in rural areas, like my home in northern Kilkenny. Because when someone dies, it's a community as much as a family that loses someone.

Now, our community couldn't do the same for him – or at least not in the same way. I can still see the big wooden doors of the church shutting behind us, allowing no-one in. To say we felt robbed or cheated can imply that there is someone to blame. There isn't. The restrictions were the right thing to do. Yet, we really felt the lack of it. The peculiarly Irish rituals surrounding the death of a

loved one weren't available to us, or our neighbours and friends, and most of all to Dad.

"We had a small funeral. Half the world was there," my mother said afterwards. People adapted as best they could, and technology helped hugely. It was striking how many people tuned to the live stream on the parish website. It especially helped my sister, who lives abroad and couldn't make it home. She was even able to participate, as she led a decade of the family rosary on her smart-phone, from three thousand miles away.

Many people have heard of the five phases in the process of grieving. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross famously named the stages as: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. But this can give impression that there is a right way to grieve. Experience tells that everyone has their own way of grieving and sometimes someone can get stuck. Getting through grief is a matter of managing or muddling through.

Instead of stages, recent research names four tasks to grieving. They are: recognising the reality of the loss; dealing with expressed and latent feelings; living in a world without the deceased and finally; the relocation of the deceased in one's life.

It would be a great social cost indeed, if these often-called 'strange times' changed our habits about how we support the grieving. It would, I believe, make it all the harder for those enduring loss.

Rituals, traditions and customs are vital. They may be the kind acts of a neighbour that leaves in a casserole or an apple tart left at the door; or they may be the religious rites of a faith-community. They provide a way to recognise the reality of grieving, in all its emotions and confusion. They give comfort to those who mourn. And in the end, they give hope for a new future.

Remembering is a key part of our Catholic rituals. When we gather to celebrate Mass, we are heeding the invitation of Jesus to: "do this in memory of me" (Lk 22:19). When we gather and remember his name, a promise was made that he would be with us (M 18:20).

So, by remembering in Jesus, we are bound to the one giving hope, for he has conquered even death itself (Rom 8: 31-39).

Nowadays death notices on local radio - which are very much part of rural life - generally end with a line saying that a memorial service will be held at a later date. As a family I know we are looking forward to when we can remember Dad, together with his community, in a spirit of hope.

Let us pray for all who have lost loved ones in this time, particularly due to the COVID-19. May they rest in peace.

Dr. Michael Shortall is Registrar of St. Patrick's College Maynooth and a lecturer in Moral Theology.