

PARISH OF INISHMAGRATH

Second Sunday of Easter - Divine Mercy Sunday

19th April 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 or <https://www.mcnmedia.tv> and search for your local or favourite church for Mass.

Mass Leaflets: And newsletters will be left in each Church each Saturday morning.

Accord: If you need to speak to an experienced Couples and Relationship Counsellor, please contact 01 531 331 open 9am to 8pm Monday to Friday.

Parish Finances: Use your envelopes, return them when Masses resume or you can request a standing order form to pay Dues and offertory directly to our bank account, quote your envelope number as the payment reference. Thanks.

A COVID-19 Community Outreach Champion: Is available in Leitrim to link local community groups and volunteers to those people cocooning or in need of support at this time. You can contact, Karen Dolan, on 0877167593 or email kdolan@ldco.ie. The Local Authority helpline is 071-9650473 and is open from 8am-8pm, 7 days a week.

Help Wanted: Now in the beginning of the growing season, the cemeteries need maintenance. Due to the COVID-19 restrictions the RSS workers are not on duty. If you have the means, maybe you could volunteer to get the grass cut in our local cemeteries, Thanks.

A Reflection at this time of emergency dominated by Coronavirus COVID-19. Lest we forget - should that be possible! Part 2 By Fr. Tom McManus

Maybe too we'll understand more what it means when someone gets sick. We were used to staying at home when we were sick. Now we have to stay at home when others are unwell. We will appreciate what it means for someone when their world shrinks around them to their town or townland, their postal address, to their house, to their bedroom, to their bed.

It was hard not to be emotional by the scenes of distraught children who couldn't touch their dying parent or console one another as they'd normally do. It was a special moment to see the Aer Lingus plane come into Dublin airport with the first consignment of "Personal Protection Equipment". Also, to see all those young doctors come back from Australia to answer "Ireland's Call" for help. The good things we've seen done during this time should not be forgotten. Those, whose work was taken for granted, now should be seen as so important to our very existence. From those who do the cleaning and do it well, to the students making protective masks using 3-D printers, to the carers driving country roads to visit elderly people living alone, to the postmen and women doing extra too, to the members of clubs volunteering their services in any way they were needed, to the doctors and nurses working long hours, to the Guards, some only after a few months in training, to the ambulance drivers, the civil defence, the journalists, the politicians, the shop workers and food suppliers, the teachers working on-line with their students and not forgetting the clergy who still pray for those in their care. We rely on scientists and medical specialists and as is stressed, every citizen to co-operate in defeating this common enemy, or in slowing its progress or in "flattening the curve". As I write 79 priests have died in the last few months in Italy, mostly in the area where the virus was rampant. They ranged in age from the 40s to the 90s. It

was sad yet uplifting to see Pope Francis walk alone as a pilgrim on the via del Corso to the Church of Saint Marcellus who interceded for the people of Rome in a previous plague as he prayed for the Italian people and for all who were suffering. Also to see him giving his Urbi et Orbi Blessing looking out towards an empty St. Peter's Square, yet, to the millions who were tuned in to see it all over the world. Also to see Archbishop Eamon Martin travel the side streets of Armagh with the Monstrance to say "God is with you, He hasn't forgotten you, He knows your anxiety and all will be well". As Christians we are privileged to know we can trust in a personal God who is there for us at a time like this and always. We have his word on that and we can trust in His promises.

We see how true it is that we are a global village. We see how dependent we are on others near and far for knowledge and experience and what to do and when or what not to do. We learn from others mistakes and our own. It challenges us to love our neighbour. There is the challenge for the authorities in all the countries of our world to ensure there are safe methods of animal husbandry and safe conditions maintained in what are known as "wet markets", where wild animals are on sale as cheap protein. We cannot afford to be negligent and allow these virulent viruses to jump the species barrier. We are "our brother's keeper, we have responsibility for how we care for our neighbour, whether just down the road from us, or on the other side of the globe. We saw how something like this can overwhelm the health services of "first world countries", like Italy, Spain, the U.S.A, the U.K and elsewhere. We see how vulnerable and weak we really are as humans and how we depend on the gift of faith in a loving God who is there for us, whose Son has promised, "I will be with you always", and "Do not fear". The Risen Jesus that first Easter came through locked doors to be with His first followers. He can be with us too in our homes this Easter, for "where two or three are gathered in my name I am with them". His greeting is the same for those who live in fear and anxiety today. He has defeated suffering, sin and death for us. As Pope Francis said in his homily for Palm Sunday 2019, there should be no such person as a sad, discouraged Christian because of what happened that first Easter.

In the midst of all the gloom there are sounds just now of hope and better days on the way. Nature is alive again and Spring does wonders for the cherry trees. The birds want to sing their little hearts out. As Christy Lefteri describes them in the war zone in her book "The Beekeeper of Aleppo"; when she writes, "The sound of birdsong never changes ...and whenever the bombs were silent, the birds came out to sing. They perched on the skeletons of trees and on craters and wires and broken walls, and they sang. They flew high above, in the untouched sky, and sang". We will soon see the swallows and swifts come back to nest in North Leitrim and hear the cuckoo beat the rooster in welcoming the new day and refuse to stop at quitting time.

It's only natural that we'd be concerned about our financial situation and the economic state of our country to cover the costs of this pandemic but as a wise neighbour of mine at home used to say "nothing lasts", or as the Middle Eastern poet wrote hundreds of years ago, "this too will pass away". A present day politician put it, "Better for now to be buried in debt than buried in a coffin". Our own poet Seamus Heaney had wise words for a time such as this when he wrote, "If we can Winter this one out we can Summer anywhere". Hopefully in that Summer we will hear the sounds of children at play again and the earnest shouts in our football fields and be able to respond to the Church bell that calls us to pray.

Holy Spirit, bring order again to the chaos caused in our lives and in our world. **Amen.**