

A few words from Fr Joe as we prepare to come back to Mass

The liturgy of the Church is full of ways to express thanks, gratitude, joy, blessings and appreciation to God for all the gifts that we receive in this life, one word is sometimes used to capture all of this exuberance, that word is Alleluia! At Eastertime, we say it on the double, Alleluia, Alleluia, so I'm going to suggest that after all these weeks apart we say it three times, Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Alleluia

Our hearts are full of joy, and we can echo the sentiments of Psalm 122, "I rejoiced when I heard them say, let us go to God's house" "May peace be within your walls, prosperity in your buildings." To return to the house of the Lord, our parish church, Teach an Phobail, to celebrate the Eucharist daily is just wonderful. Like all new beginnings it comes in a context, the relaxation of guidelines as the lock down ends and the lift up begins in earnest.

As I write the anticipated number who can gather indoors, in any situation, is 50. Unlike shops where people stand and move around, we come to gather, to sit together, to pray, to praise God in word and song, and to worship as a community. Whatever the number it will be good to see you all again, face to face. During the week preparations are being made to make the church compliant with all the regulations governing places where the public gather. You can help us to make this return to public worship go well. A few pointers:

1. Come early.
2. Bring your own hand sanitizer, or use what is provided.
3. Look around the church, three colours are used to indicate available space. Sit in the Green zone, leave the Red spaces free, notice the yellow tape showing the 2 metres social distancing.
4. Follow the guidance of the stewards, they are parishioners like yourselves and happy to help you find an available space.
5. If you arrive and see the "FULL" notice at the door feel free to follow the Mass outside and come after Mass for Communion.
6. Don't crowd the doors entering or leaving, give everyone their space.
7. Please don't come every day, and when there is a funeral please leave the seats for the family and the mourners.
8. If you can come during the week, please do so and leave the space at weekends for others.
9. Remember that the Sunday Obligation is not operative during the pandemic.
10. There will be no baskets passed during Mass so please watch out for the collection boxes at the bottom of the altar steps. Feel free to donate online.

Thanks to everyone who has helped keep the parish alive and active during the pandemic and please remember in your prayers all those who were bereaved at this difficult time.