

# THOMASTOWN PARISH NEWSLETTER

12<sup>th</sup> April 2020

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At the time of printing this Newsletter it is unclear what Church services will be offered this coming week on radio and television.

**Here in Thomastown on Easter Sunday:** Mass will be celebrated on 108fm at 10am.

As we continue with the restrictions due to the coronavirus,

**30 minutes prayer** will be held on Monday at midday on 108fm

**The Rosary** will be prayed on Wednesday at midday on 108fm

**30 minutes prayer** will be held on Friday at midday on 108fm.

**Next weekend** Masses will be celebrated on 108fm at 6pm on Saturday and 10am on Sunday.

Please share this information with friends and family.

**Deaths/Anniversaries:** **Kit Rafferty** (nee Stapleton), Chapel Lane, **Mary Canavan** (nee Burris), Dangan Terrace, **Ann Marie Hogan**, Castle Avenue, died recently; **Jim Lannon**, Dangan Terrace (10am Mass); **John and Mary Challoner**, Newtown Terrace, **Brid Fanning**, **Con O'Neill**, Grennan; **Bill and Jimmy Maher**, Durrow. May they rest in peace.

**Mass Intentions next weekend:** **Martin Morrissey**, Station Road (10am); **David O'Neill**, Johnswell Road, Kilkenny and formerly Castle Avenue (10am).

**The Parish Office** is not staffed on a regular basis these days. Best contact the Office, in this era of social distancing, by telephone – leave your name and number and we will get back to you – email, post, or leave a note into the Office letterbox.

**First Communions and Confirmation:** this weekend the Taoiseach has said that Covid 19 restrictions are extended until Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> May, and that schools will remain closed until further notice. We must await directions from the Dept. of Education and Bishop Farrell regarding when the Sacraments will be ministered in our Parishes.

Remember **Trocaire**. This is the Irish Church reaching out to people less fortunate than we are. We see harrowing advertisements on television of the challenges faced by many people in third world countries, so if you have been filling a Trocaire box and have money for Trocaire, please get it to the Parish Office, or send it directly to Trocaire.

**ALONE** has launched a national support line and additional supports for older people who have concerns or are facing difficulties relating to the outbreak of COVID-19 (Coronavirus). The support line is open Monday to Friday, 8am-8pm, by calling 0818 222 024.

**VICTIM ASSISTANCE** is a national charity that offers “emotional” and “practical” support to all victims of crime and those and their families that have experienced a “traumatic” incident. Contact them through the NATIONAL HELPLINE at 1800 277 477, the office telephone 094 9000251 or by email at [support@victimassistance.ie](mailto:support@victimassistance.ie). The offices are manned Monday-Friday 9.30am-5.30pm. Remember – social distancing doesn't mean social isolation – they want to help and support!

**Pope Francis' Prayer for Spiritual Communion:** I prostrate myself at your feet, Jesus, and I offer you the repentance of my contrite heart, and I humble myself in nothingness in your Holy Presence. I adore you in the Sacrament of your love; I desire to receive you in the poor abode that my heart offers you. While waiting for the happiness of a Sacramental Communion, I want to possess you in spirit. Come to me, O my Jesus, that I may come to you. May your love inflame my whole being. In life and in death. I believe in you, I hope in you, I love you. Amen.

(This prayer is one expressing the wish to receive Communion, at a time like the present when the Sacrament isn't available to us.)

**Easter Greetings:** I quote Bishop Larry Duffy, one of our Irish Bishops, in his letter to the people of the Diocese of Clogher, when he says: “This year, I think Holy Saturday best captures the mood and prayer of people. An ancient homily found in the Office of Readings asks: “What is happening? On this day there is a great silence over the earth, a great silence and stillness, a great silence because our King sleeps; the earth was in terror and was still because God slept in the flesh.” We wait and pray like Mary and the women at the grave, never losing hope in God's love. The Gospel reading at the Easter Vigil this year is from Matthew. Just like in his account of the Passion last Sunday, Matthew vividly places before us the power of God's actions, of great earthquakes accompanying seismic moments in time. And through it all, the women are told not to be afraid; to seek the Risen Christ, the One they are looking for. This Easter we are being challenged in many ways. But among the challenges there is one that as people of faith, people of hope and people of love, we cannot ignore. It is the challenge to find Christ in all that we do, in all the circumstances of life's journey. Yes, Christ, Crucified and Risen, is with us”.

Yes, it has been a strange Holy Week. Whereas in other years we come to Church to the Holy Week ceremonies, this year we stay at home and watch them on television or listen on radio. Many of us have been cocooning, children and young people studying at home, and missing their friends. Homes are being painted, gardens tended, and we listen to the bird song and have been watching the beautiful phases of the moon. A quote from poet Seamus Heaney from 1972 has been widely used. He said, 'If we winter this one out, we can summer anywhere.' “It came,” Heaney said, “from memories of cattle in winter fields. Beasts standing under a hedge, plastered in wet, looking at you with big patient eyes, just taking what came until something else came along. Times were bleak, the political climate was deteriorating. The quote showed a sense of reality, and an engagement with the world around him but with a sense of hope, even if it is tempered by realism.”

Perhaps that sums up where we are these times. Our sense of hope must be nurtured. We can manage the virus, if we do it together. We do it for one another. Please keep at it. We think of those who are ill, and their families. We think too of those who have become unemployed. A word of thanks to our experts, our hospital staffs, our good neighbours, our Gardai and undertakers, our people who continue to open the shops to provide essential supplies, those who do the shopping for us cocooners. Thanks too for embracing the disciplines that we need to keep the coronavirus at bay. Let's look forward to the Summer, but let's live in the present. This is a wonderful time to appreciate the present – God's gift to us. So, whereas Easter Eggs may be scarce, we have and can feel and appreciate each day, and each person. Put some shape on each day. Make a few phone calls to people who might appreciate a call. Don't spend all day listening to news reports. Laugh. Don't forget a time for prayer, whether mindfulness or meditation or whatever.

Have a HAPPY EASTER 2020.

Fr. Dan.