

THOMASTOWN PARISH NEWSLETTER 19th April 2020

Parish Priest:**Fr. Dan Bollard****Mobile 087 6644858****Email:** dbollard@eircom.net**Website** www.thomastownparish.ie**Radio:** fm108**Parish Office:****Tel No 056 7793191****Opening Hours Tues. Wed. Thur. Fri. 10 - 1pm****Email:** thomastown@ossory.ie**Facebook:** Thomastown Parish**CHURCH SERVICES THESE WEEKS,****Here in Thomastown:** Mass will be celebrated on 108fm at 6pm on Saturday and 10am on Sunday.

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.

Please share this information with friends and family.

Mass Intentions next weekend: Martin Morrissey, Station Road (10am); **David O'Neill**, Johnswell Road, Kilkenny and formerly Castle Avenue (10am); **Edward Holohan**, Oldtown(10am); **Gerry Minogue**, Newtown Terrace; **Patsy Bolger**, Castle Avenue.**Mass Intentions next weekend: Mattie Lawlor**, Maudlin St. (6pm).**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:** the Taoiseach has said that Covid 19 restrictions are extended until Tuesday 5th May, and that schools will remain closed until further notice. Regarding the Sacraments of Confirmation – which was to be conferred in Thomastown next Sunday, 26th April – and First Communion – for which Saturday 16th May was set aside – the only thing we know is that we don't know. We must await directions from the Dept. of Education and Bishop Farrell regarding when the Sacraments will be ministered in our Parishes. This situation is disappointing for families because these occasions are times when the wider family comes together. Every parish is in the same situation.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. The offices are manned Monday-Friday 9.30am-5.30pm. Remember – social distancing doesn't mean social isolation – they want to help and support!**Accord establishes support phone line to help relationships during COVID 19:** To help support marriage and relationships in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, Accord has established a new relationship support phone line which will be staffed by experienced couples and relationships counsellors. This will be a free service, but calls are charged at a local rate. Accord's specialist in counselling (marriage and relationships), Mary Johnston said, “Accord is very conscious of those experiencing difficulties in their relationships and family lives as we are confined to home during this unprecedented period for all in society. The circumstances in which we are living now can increase stress and pressure on relationships and in families. To help address these challenges, Accord has established a relationship support phone line to enable callers to speak to experienced couples and relationship counsellors in order to talk through the difficulties they are experiencing”. The support line is open from 9.00am – 8.00pm Monday to Friday and will be contacted at 015313331.**House Churches:** For most Catholics, the word church conjures up images of stained-glass windows, altars, stations of the cross, wooden pews and large buildings with architecture ranging from Gothic to more modern styles. Most of us link church with building, often giving a sense of stability to our faith, as well as a special space to worship God and to meet with other Church members. We easily take church buildings for granted. It is hard to imagine a community without at least one Catholic church. But early in the life of Catholicism, church buildings were not plentiful. Where did the earliest Christians gather before churches as we know them began to be built? “Every day they devoted themselves to meeting together in the temple area and to breaking bread in their homes” (Acts 2:46a). Chapter Two of Acts of the Apostles offers a brief yet curious insight into the lives of the earliest Christians—those who either knew Jesus personally or who were convinced by Peter's preaching at Pentecost and afterwards. The verse quoted above suggests that the first Christians met in various homes to “break bread” (the oldest term for celebrating the Eucharist) and to deepen their faith. The New Testament provides several other references to house churches. These were evidently family homes where early believers would gather and ponder the life and message of Jesus and grow in their faith, supporting each other with prayer and Christian love. During the times of persecution for the first three hundred years of the Church's history people continued to meet and pray in their homes. Only in the fourth century did the people of God begin to build Churches. During times of persecution in our own history, in the Penal days, people met in their homes or at Mass rocks, scattered where the persecutors wouldn't find them. During these days we are returning to the house churches, as families can't come to the Churches and find, once more, a time for prayer in a family setting. The children for First Communion are encouraged to create a ‘sacred space’, maybe with a holy picture or statue, the Bible, some holy water, a candle or whatever else helps to create an ambiance for prayer. Perhaps we begin to rediscover the gift of house churches these days.**Envelopes:** While we reflect on house Churches, the reality is that we must maintain our Churches. If, without putting pressure on your family finances, you can afford to support the parish financially during these strange times, we would be very grateful. Please leave your envelope into the Parish Office letterbox. If you haven't envelopes, please put your name and address on the envelope and we will process it from there. Thank you.**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.)