

**WELCOME BACK EVERYONE.** I am very glad that we are now going to reopen our parish churches for public worship. It has been lonely saying mass to an empty church! I missed you all.

**I want to mention a number of important things related to the reopening and then some news about the rescheduling of First Holy Communion and Confirmation.**

**First** the date for reopening is the 29<sup>th</sup> June 2020. That means that the churches will be open to the public for mass from that day.

The first weekend masses will be Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> /Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> July and mass times will be the same as usual.

We do need to be aware that the corona virus has not gone away and so we need to be conscious of the need for social distancing and to adhere to the advice we have been hearing for months about hand washing and sanitising.

We realise that some will be nervous about coming back to church so it is a responsibility on everyone to be considerate of others when in church and to give each other space.

It will be obvious to everyone that because of the lockdown the parish's source of income virtually disappeared for three months. My thanks to all those who in recent weeks have been sending in envelopes. I am very grateful for that. But in spite of the generosity of some there is still a huge shortfall. I believe though that there will be many who just haven't had the opportunity to hand in envelopes and that we will catch up. We have started up the parish lottery again which will be a help. The first draw will be Wednesday the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2020.

When you return to church you will see a box inside the door or thereabouts into which envelopes should be put. We will also have a basket collection in the church, but we have to use some method which will not require anyone to touch the basket. We are considering a method that is common in other countries which is to

have the bag on a long pole which can be passed along by a collector without the need for anyone else to touch it.

## **Cleaning the Churches**

One of the conditions for reopening is that each church must be kept sanitised and the work of cleaning will have to be done by volunteer groups. The churches will have to be kept clean and this has to be done voluntarily. The bishop has said that if this is not done it will not be possible to keep churches open.

Bishop Nulty has also instructed every parish to set up a cleaning committee in every church area to look after the regular cleaning of the church.

If you can help in any way we want you to come forward and volunteer so that a rota can be arranged. It will not be possible for the parish to pay for professional cleaning, simply because we do not have sufficient income to pay for it. We are still spending more than we take in.

A group of volunteers has already been formed for Hacketstown Church, thank you all for that. That needs to be done in each of the church areas.

When you come into your church you will see that we have cordoned off every second seat, we think that three to a seat for the present will be sufficient distance.

Families or members of the same household can of course sit together. We have left three seats open at the front of the church and families can use those. I am thinking of occasions when families come together for anniversary masses or a funeral, but it is not only such occasions the seats are there and should be used.

Closing off every second seat has considerably reduced the capacity in each Church. We have calculated the reduced capacity for each church as follows:

Hacketstown: 72 (including the Gallery)

Knockananna: 50

Killamoate: 60

Askanagap: 30

That is a very reduced capacity so we suggest that some people might consider coming to mass on a weekday instead of a Sunday for the present. That would be a great help.

Depending on the numbers turning up some might choose to sit in their cars around the church and listen either to the outside speakers or on the radio in your car. I want to make sure that everyone is welcome and that no one feels that they are being turned away.

This has been a difficult time for everyone but thank God we have not had any reported cases of the virus in the parish.

I think the lockdown has changed everything and changed us as individuals. For some it has given them a chance to do things that they have been meaning to do but never get the time. For others it has meant a lonely isolation. Please God that is coming to an end.

It gave me time to get the webcam set up and working and also to get the radio working again both of which are wonderful aids for parish communication.

### **Online Donations**

The diocesan kandle website now offers a donate facility that allows parishioners to donate to individual parishes as well as diocesan collections such as Trócaire and Retired Priests.

The process is secure and straightforward and a number of donations have already been made. The diocese receives these donations at the end of each month and we are currently arranging for the donations received during May to be transferred to parishes.

It is worth noting that donations have been received for parishes

with and without their own donation systems so it is beneficial to all parishes to publicise this facility by encouraging people to visit [www.kandle.ie](http://www.kandle.ie)

## **Confirmation**

I am glad to announce that we have rescheduled the dates for confirmation. I know that the students had done a great deal in preparation and that they will be glad that they will be confirmed in August. The confirmands will be confirmed in each of their school areas instead of all together. The new dates are as follows:

**Knockananna Church: Saturday 15th August at 2.00pm; Killamoate Church: Sunday the 16th August at 2.00pm; Hacketstown Church: Saturday 22nd August at 2.00pm**

We are limiting the numbers who can attend to the confirmand, the sponsor and members of the same household. That means in effect, Parents, sponsor and family members from the same household.

Photographs cannot be taken in church nor in the grounds of the church because of data protection and child protection regulations.

## **First Holy Communion**

First Holy Communion has been rescheduled for all the schools I am glad that we are able to proceed with this as I know that the children have been looking forward to it so much. The schedule is as follows:

**Knockananna Saturday 8th August at 11.00am in Knockananna Church; Rathcoyle School Sunday the 9th August at 11.00am in Killamoate Church; Hacketstown NS on Saturday the 3rd October at 11.00am in Hacketstown Church.**

Because of the corona virus guidelines we have to limit the numbers attending to the child receiving First Holy Communion and members of his/her household. Please be considerate and adhere strictly to these guidelines. Photographs can not be taken in the Church

because of data protection and child protection regulations nor in the grounds of the Church.

Bishop Denis has recorded a message for the boys and girls who were preparing for their First Holy Communion in the coming weeks. That video can be watched at

<https://www.facebook.com/KANDLEi/videos/284722092537437/>  
and it will shortly be up on kandle.ie. please watch the recording and pass the message on to others who are not aware and would like to see and hear it