



Dear Parishioner

Happy Easter. I hope that you and your family are keeping well.

I write to you at a time that is strange and challenging to all of us, with great change in our daily routine and worries for our families and loved ones. We are having to think creatively of ways to keep in touch with each other and that has led to a whole new set of challenges as some of us grapple with technologies that we previously tried to avoid!

This is true also for our parish family, whose routines and way of life have been affected in ways we could never have imagined. Fr Stephen, Fr Declan and myself are particularly disappointed not to be able to have direct contact with the sick and housebound in their homes, in nursing homes and hospital. Visiting them in their homes is part of our ministry that we particularly enjoy and, although we can keep in contact by telephone, this is a poor substitute for a personal visit and the sharing of the sacraments. It is strange to celebrate Mass each day with no congregation present in Church, and it goes against the grain completely to restrict numbers attending funerals. Having said this, complying with the public safety requirements and social distancing is critical at this time.

However, the use of technology, has made it possible for us to remain connected as a parish family. Many people been tuning into weekend and daily Masses and the various prayer services we have been hosting throughout the day. It is also so heartening to hear of families and people praying together in their homes, creating prayer and sacred spaces, and even praying together via WhatsApp. I encourage you all to continue to take time to pray.

If you wish to have an anniversary Mass offered or a Mass or prayers offered for any intention, please contact the Parish Office (contact details below).

I acknowledge and thank the many parishioners of our parish who work as part of the essential services. Many do so at great personal risk and cost to themselves and their families. Please be assured of our prayers.

Since March 17th we have been unable to gather in our churches to pray or to celebrate Mass, and this means we have not taken up our weekly collection which typically covers the day-to-day expenses of the parish. Fortunately, in our parish, we have reserves and, in the short-term, we have been calling on these to pay our bills. We have trimmed these expenses to a minimum. In the medium to longer term, using our reserves is not feasible for the day to day expenses of the parish. Ordinarily, our parish envelopes for the new tax year would have been delivered a few weeks ago. We paused this, given the prevailing uncertainty, and out of concern for the challenges and uncertainties people were facing.

Many people have, however, been asking about parish weekly envelopes and have expressed their desire to continue to contribute. It goes without saying that this is a sensitive issue at a time when, not only is health a great concern but, also, when many individuals and families are facing financial insecurity and anxiety. It is vital to make home and family our priority at this time.

For those who wish, and who are able to contribute, I am proposing a range of options. These have been discussed by the Parish Finance Council and we would like to stress that **whichever option you choose, please exercise caution on the amount you contribute and do not put yourself under financial pressure.** If you find yourself unable to make a financial contribution under the present circumstances, please continue to support our parish and its mission with your prayers.

Contribution Options

Parish Envelopes – Some of you may have envelopes from the 2019/20 box that you have not yet returned. Please feel free to drop those through the letter-box in any of the Parochial Houses. The new envelopes will be made ready within the next few days. We are currently considering ways of doing this while adhering to the social distancing guidelines and current public health regulations. Envelopes can be returned through the letter-box of the Parochial Houses or simply kept at home until normal services are resumed.

Standing Order – You may wish to set up a Standing Order from your bank which would allow direct payment from your account to our parish account, Cappagh Parish (sort code: 93-81-30 account number: 03 66 66 60). Most online banking platforms allow you to set up Standing Orders online, but we can provide you with a paper form if required. In turn, you may forward the completed form to your bank or return it to the Parish Office, 14 Killyclogher Road BT79 0AX. ***We would ask parishioners to ensure you provide your name and envelope number so that we can identify your contribution from our bank statement. If don't have a number or are unsure, please contact the parish office.***

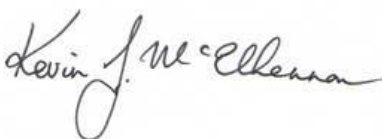
Online Banking – you may wish to contribute electronically via online banking using the parish account details as above. ***Again, please make sure that you include your name and envelope number.***

Website Donation – We are working with our website provider to introduce a “Donate Now” button on our parish website and will announce this at the beginning of May.

For any parishioners who are UK taxpayers and have not signed up for **Gift Aid** and who wish to do so now, a Gift Aid declaration can be downloaded from the Parish website – www.cappaghparish.com - This allows the parish to reclaim an extra 25% in tax on every eligible donation you make. Please feel free to discuss this with the parish secretary, Orla, or indeed with Fr Declan or myself.

The current crisis will pass, and we trust in the power and love of the Risen Christ who journeys with us during this Easter season and always. I thank you for your commitment and generous spirit and assure you of my continued prayers. I am looking forward to the day when we can gather again, safely, in our parish churches.

With every good wish and blessing to you and your family.



Contact:

Parish Office: 028 – 8224 3375 (email: info@cappaghparish.com)

Fr Kevin: 028 – 8225 8108 (email: k.mcelhennon@derrydiocese.org)

Fr Declan: 028 – 8225 1055 (email: declan.mcgeehan@derrydiocese.org)

Fr Stephen: 028 – 8225 2643 (Fr Stephen unavailable until after the current situation eases)

Urgent Call: 075 61 838 455

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