



A Message from Fr. Gerry – Christmas 2020

This has been a most unusual year for us as a Christian Community. For so long we were unable to gather, as a community, for the Eucharist, the lifeblood of the Church. We had to adapt rapidly, and we did. Thank God for the Ministry of the Webcam, which came into its own.

It was also a sad year as we said farewell to our beloved Msgr. Seamus on 26th August. May he rest in peace. A fitting tribute from the Pastoral Council has been posted on our website, our Facebook page and is also on the Church porch noticeboard.

Many thanks to all of you who have continued to affirm me personally in my ministry during these challenging times – thank you for your letters, phone calls and emails of encouragement and appreciation. These messages were of great incentive in facing the daily realities of continued ministry in a new way. In particular, I knew, looking at the webcam in the empty church, that so many of you were with us virtually– that we were still a community and in communion, even if socially distant.

I'm also grateful to our Liturgy Committee, our Ministers of Word and Eucharist, to our Organist, Kevin, soloists, Faye and Roisin; and to our staff who have been working away in the background – to our sacristan Paul, ever present, to Maeliosa, keeping an eye on the finances, to Adrienne and her team of fantastic Guardian Angels, and to our indefatigable secretary manager, Therese.

Remember, together we have already celebrated the Easter Triduum in lockdown, praying remotely, for and with each other. The bonds of communion in the parish were strengthened by our response to this pandemic. Everybody was willing to lend a hand.

We also adapted quickly to the needs of parents who wished to present their children for their First Holy Communion. Thank you for making space for this to happen. The parents (and grandparents) were deeply appreciative of the celebrations that took place. They were smaller, simpler, more intimate, and more prayerful. The move from school-led to parish-led sacraments, a diocesan decision, found us ready. We already had the experience of Sunday Formation led by the Pastoral Council, which was a great success.

On a practical level, thank you for your donations to the parish and to the diocese. The sudden decline in income came as a complete shock, especially as we still have a debt in relation to the Pastoral Centre renovations and the Organ was crying out for urgent maintenance. Equally, the diocese experienced great difficulties at the loss of income.

During this Liturgical season of Christmas all Masses are transmitted by parish webcam. Archbishop Martin has assured us that the obligation to attend Mass is removed at present. I encourage you to come out for a walk and to visit the church, light a candle, pray at the crib.

The Christmas card includes the anticipated timetable at the time it was sent to the printers. Level 5 restrictions were still in place and Mass was celebrated behind closed doors. We are currently in Phase 3 and we can accommodate 50 people in the church. Some places might be reserved for parishioners who do not have access to the webcam. I encourage those without webcam to contact the Parish Office on 01-283 1593 and speak to Therese. I have no doubt that we will continue to mind each other, make space for each other, and oblige each other. Thank you again for the strong bonds of spiritual communion that we share.

*We wish you the peace
and joy of Christmas
and God's blessings
throughout the coming year*

Fr Gerry, and the Parish Pastoral Council

