

**Parish of Malin (Clonca)**

**Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2020**

**Fourth Sunday of Lent (Year A Week 4)**

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**All Parish Masses, Sundays and Weekdays are cancelled until 29<sup>th</sup> March.**

**This is an occasion for all of us to pray more intensely for each other and especially for those who have succumbed to the illness. We should pray also for those at the frontlines – especially doctors, nurses and medical staff and other carers, including clergy – that the Lord will protect them as they place their own wellbeing at risk in the service of all.**

### **A Coronavirus Prayer**

Jesus Christ, you travelled through towns and villages “curing every disease and illness.” At your command, the sick were made well. Come to our aid now, in the midst of the global spread of the coronavirus, that we may experience your healing love.

Heal those who are sick with the virus. May they regain their strength and health through quality medical care.

Heal us from our fear, which prevents nations from working together and neighbours from helping one another.

Heal us from our pride, which can make us claim invulnerability to a disease that knows no borders.

Jesus Christ, healer of all, stay by our side in this time of uncertainty and sorrow.

Be with those who have died from the virus. May they be at rest with you in your eternal peace.

Be with the families of those who are sick or have died. As they worry and grieve, defend them from illness and despair. May they know your peace.

Be with the doctors, nurses, researchers and all medical professionals who seek to heal and help those affected and who put themselves at risk in the process. May they know your protection and peace.

Be with the leaders of all nations. Give them the foresight to act with charity and true concern for the well-being of the people they are meant to serve. Give them the wisdom to invest in long-term solutions that will help prepare for or prevent future outbreaks. May they know your peace, as they work together to achieve it on earth.

Whether we are home or abroad, surrounded by many people suffering from this illness or only a few, Jesus Christ, stay with us as we endure and mourn, persist and prepare. In place of our anxiety, give us your peace.

Jesus Christ, heal us.

**MALIN PARISH HAS NOW CREATED ITS OWN FACEBOOK PAGE WHERE YOU WILL FIND RESOURCES, NEWS AND PRAYERS. FACEBOOK MALIN PARISH**

**Details on the times of online Masses and Prayers for the Covid 19 Crisis are available on this site:**

**<https://www.catholicbishops.ie>**

**Mass Leaflets for each Sunday are available in the parish shops along with weekly Bulletins.**

**First Holy Communion: As it is evident that the current public health regulations are likely to run for some time, First Holy Communion has been postponed in all our parishes for the foreseeable future.**

**Mass is available every day on Radio Maria Ireland:** Radio Maria Ireland is an Irish-run Catholic Talk-Radio Station. Prayer, Catechesis, Uplifting music, Talks, Interviews and Testimonies – all commercial free – Listen via TV on Saorview - Channel 210 and Freeview - Channel 826; Download our FREE APP - “RADIO MARIA IRELAND”, streaming on [www.radiomaria.ie](http://www.radiomaria.ie) Please join our growing faith family!

**St Patrick’s Aghaclay and Star of the Sea churches are open every day for personal prayer.**

**The Priests of the Parish can be contacted by phone or parish email and are available to meet parishioners to chat, to offer any support or advice as needed.**

**Bishop Dermot Farrell: “Many events have been cancelled because of the Coronavirus. Faith, love, and especially hope, however, are not among them”**

“The Church is not a building, it is the community ... As a faith community we remember people who may need support ... God’s hope is in us” – Bishop Farrell

My sisters and brothers in the faith, dear listeners:

Dealing with the shared challenges of the COVID-19 global pandemic is a source of worry, anxiety and fear for every one of us. This is no longer a story where – motionless – we watch towns and cities in a distant country on our television screens. The severity of the situation calls us to be with each other in new and different ways rather than being entrapped by our usual ways of thinking and behaving. The relentless spread of the Coronavirus calls upon us to extend radically our frame of reference from the individual to a response centred on the common good. Modifying our behaviour and respecting the measures put in place can save lives. Know that our lives are in one another’s hands.

These days and weeks are a time for us to be in prayerful solidarity with each other. Turn to Lord in prayer. Our strength to take the necessary steps to fight this deadly virus will come from prayer, as well as from the support of our sisters and brothers. Trust that the Lord hears you and is with you. God will never abandon his people. He is with us, as He was with His Son in the darkest hours, although at times He is hard to see.

Although you made the difficult, but prudent decision, not to attend Sunday Mass today, remember the Church is not a building. It is the community. ‘Where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them’ (Matt 18:20). We attend to the sick by supporting them and by society acting in a sensible manner. It will be important that we look out for each other and especially the most vulnerable. Christ is in our sisters and brothers. To love those Christ loved, is to love those whom Christ loves: the stunning words of the gospel speak afresh to us today: ‘In so far as you did it to one of the least of these my sisters and brothers, you did it to me’ (Matt 25:40). As a faith community we remember people who may need support. Do what you can to help others, especially the elderly, the disabled, the poor and isolated. Keep your heart open to those who are ill and suffering. Take the necessary precautions; do not be reckless and do not risk spreading the disease.

Many events have been cancelled because of the Coronavirus. Faith, love, and especially hope, however, are not among them. The challenge posed by this aggressive virus will require the deepest outpourings of faith, hope and love, and the most rigorous exercises of justice, prudence, resilience, self-control and courage. We cannot lose hope at this unprecedented time in our history. God’s hope is in us, not just our hope in God. Genuine hope will keep us above the water as we face a range of difficult decisions and challenges. Don’t lend credence to lies or rumours, or give in to panic. These do not come from God. We pray because we place our deepest hope in providence of God – in a goodness and in a power that transcends our own capabilities. Prayer is hope in execution.

Just as our Lenten penance is meant to deepen our relationship with God and our solidarity with all who suffer as the Lord did, we can allow these sacrifices and inconveniences in our daily lives to direct our prayers toward those who have died and their loved ones, our attention toward those who are ill or facing financial hardship, our tendrils of compassion to move, invisibly, where we cannot touch, and our collective actions toward strengthening the common good. The Coronavirus poses a threat that knows no borders. As people of faith, neither does our love and concern for our neighbours.

Around this time of the year in Ireland there are some trees and shrubs, such as the Witch Hazels, Forsythia and the Cherry Trees where delicate flowers appear before the emergence of the tree’s leaves. The brief visit of these fragile flowers reminds us that life is beautiful, but fragile. Life is beautiful, but life is fragile. We all share a common home. We know from our experience of life that God can bring new life from the ashes of the most complex of situations. As we now enter the painful and prolonged uncertainty of grappling with the Coronavirus, we pray that this will be a shared undertaking for the benefit of all humanity, a time when we realize that we are one family living in our common home. Amen.

ENDS

· Bishop Dermot Farrell is Bishop of Ossory