

Statement from Meeting of Bishop Cullinan and the Senate of Priests of the Diocese of Waterford and Lismore.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you."

From the Book of Deuteronomy 31: 6

I address these words to you conscious of the current crisis with the spread of the Covid 19 virus. I do so in the context of our faith in Jesus Christ. God will not abandon His people. This crisis is a time of testing - the testing of our faith and of our community spirit. Please don't forget to reach out to neighbours who live alone, even a phone call can help. Mindful of the need to care for the body as well as the soul, Masses throughout the diocese will not be cancelled but will take place without the congregation physically present, therefore no public Masses. I wish to draw a distinction between spiritual health and physical health. By congregating large numbers of people in a church there may well be a threat of infection and harm to physical health. Your local priest will celebrate daily Mass offering it up for your intentions and indeed for the whole country. Please check our diocesan website for information regarding the various resources you can use each day. In this current emergency situation, all are dispensed from the obligation to physically attend Sunday Mass until and including Sunday, March 29th (this date is under review). Churches will remain open as usual for prayer.

While many are tempted to fear, people of faith can use this crisis to pray and strengthen their relationship with God. Please do not forget our medical personnel who are at the frontline as well as our priests who will continue to minister to the sick and vulnerable.

No matter where you are you can join spiritually with the offering of the priest each day. Below you will find the words of a spiritual communion which you may wish to use. Many parishes have Mass relayed by T.V. or radio and each day I will be posting a reflection and prayer on the diocesan website, which is www.waterfordlismore.ie. WLR FM radio will broadcast Sunday Mass, March 15th, with Bishop Cullinan at 9.00am.

As we approach the Feast Day of our National Patron the words of the St. Patrick's Breastplate are words to give us comfort and hope at this time:

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ before me, Christ behind me,
Christ beneath and Christ above,
Christ on my right hand,
Christ on my left,
Christ with me waking,
walking and sleeping,
Christ in the heart thinking of me,
Christ on every tongue speaking of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me

A Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I long for You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You have already come, I embrace You and unite myself entirely to You; never permit me to be separated from You.