



**Most Reverend Alphonsus Cullinan
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First Holy Communion and Confirmation 2020

I hope that you are doing well in this current pandemic.

I have had several requests to make a statement about what is happening with First Holy Communion and Confirmations. Right now, it is simply impossible to gather together large numbers of people because of the threat of contracting the Coronavirus. I know it is a big disappointment for many to postpone these two sacraments. I am sorry that I can not give you definite dates. As you may know, the government will make another announcement about restrictions on the 5th May, but it is very unlikely that they will be lifted to such a degree to make large gatherings possible. I want to be clear that your First Holy Communion or Confirmation will happen when it is safe to do so and after consultation with parents, parishes and schools.

Many people who are finding the lock-down extremely difficult and painful. We do need to pray a lot.

I wish to thank parents, teachers and school staff, priests and our diocesan advisors for continuing to help children to pray and learn more about our Catholic Christian faith. A short time ago we celebrated the Resurrection of the Lord Jesus who says to us "I am with you always". While we cannot gather in a church, we can join together in our homes. At the start of Christianity, when Christians could not gather in a public church for fear of persecution, they prayed and celebrated their faith at home. The activities of the church were carried on through the domestic church and this is happening again now. Families are praying together, some have a sacred space in their home. Some light a candle and sit in silence for a few moments and then say a prayer, read a piece of scripture or join in the rosary. Many people are also following Mass or devotions through webcam, live streaming, Facebook, radio etc. In this way they come closer together and grow closer to God.

For anyone who feels lonely at home, please be assured that I and your priest and others are praying for you. God is always with us.

Every day I put out a "Message of Hope" on YouTube, which can be accessed on our Diocesan website. (www.waterfordlismore.ie) You will also find there resources for children, films to watch, etc.

Last year I received hundreds of letters from Confirmation children across the Diocese. I would be very happy to receive more letters this year, or maybe a drawing if you wish. We would be happy to make a big collage of all the drawings on our website. I also have a special YouTube clip for school staff and another one for children which will be on the website soon.

I wish you every blessing at this time, and I am certain that with God's help we will make the most of each day.

Yours sincerely,



Most Reverend Alphonsus Cullinan, DD,
Bishop of Waterford and Lismore.