



## Fifth Sunday of Lent



Don't forget to put your clocks  
forward on Saturday night.

### Message from Pope Francis

"Tonight before falling asleep  
think about when we will return to the street.

When we hug again,  
when all the shopping together will seem like a party.  
Let's think about when the coffees will return to the bar,  
the small talk, the photos close to each other.  
We think about when it will be all a memory  
but normalcy will seem an unexpected and beautiful gift.  
We will love everything that has so far seemed futile to us.

Every second will be precious.

Swims at the sea, the sun until late,  
sunsets, toasts, laughter.

We will go back to laughing together.

Strength and courage.

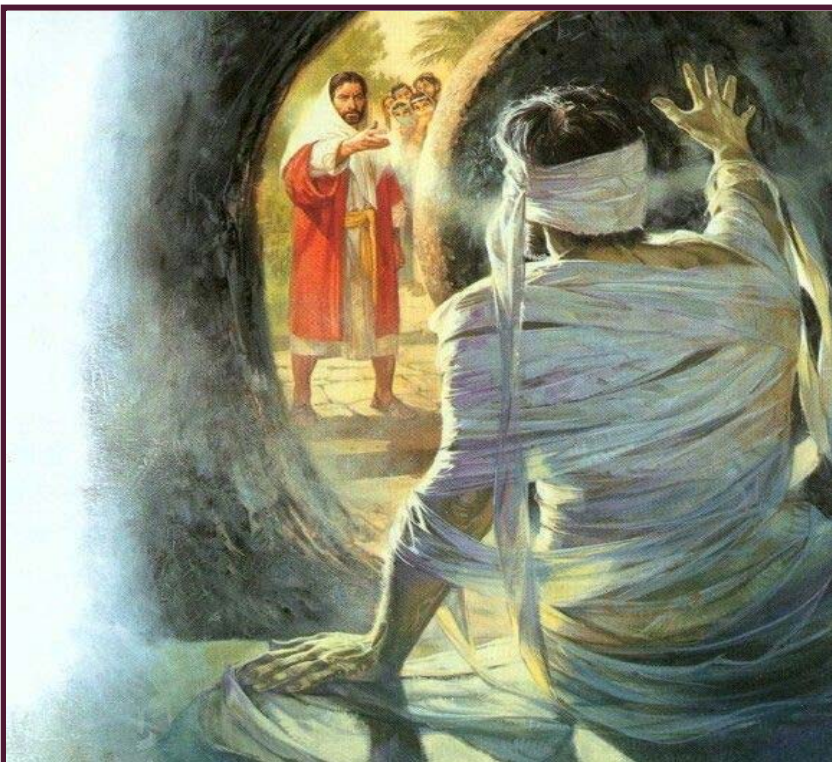
See you soon! "



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## Come forth Lazarus

In today's Gospel Jesus is surrounded by a culture of death. The disciples are afraid to go back to Bethany, the Jews want to stone Jesus to death, Mary and Martha are distraught over the death of their brother Lazarus, and Lazarus himself lies bound in the darkness of the tomb. It appears as if there is no hope. Jesus weeps for his friend and for those around him.

Yet, surrounded by a culture of death and despair, Jesus gives compassion and new life to those in turmoil. It is easy to say that nothing can be done when we are faced with difficult situations in our own lives. Yet Jesus says 'Lazarus, come forth' and to the people he says, 'Unbind him, let him go.' It is a message for all of us to come away from a culture of death; to help unbind one another and to allow ourselves to emerge from the tomb. We are called to take away the stone. Today's Gospel is a story of liberation. Jesus gives a new insight into the power of faith over death.

It is an active faith, one that urges us on to work for change and new life.

'What did you do while the planet was plundered? What did you do as the earth was unravelling? Surely you did something as the seasons started failing? Surely you did something as the mammals, reptiles and birds were all dying? Did you fill the streets with protest when democracy was stolen? What did you do once you knew?

## Priests of the Parish



**Msgr. John Byrne P.P.V.G.**  
Tel: 057 8621142



**Fr. Ciprian Matei C.C.**  
Tel: 057 8509998



**Fr. David Vard C.C.**  
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**Fr. Eddie Lalor C.C.**  
Tel: 057 8661605



**Fr. Tom O'Connor P.E.**  
(Parish Chaplain)

To contact the Priest on Duty:  
Parish Centre during office hours  
Tel: 057 8621142  
Outside office hours  
in emergency only  
Tel: 057 8621364

## Safeguarding

All safeguarding statements and policies can be viewed on our website and our Church Porches.

**Diocesan Designated Liaison Person**  
Mick Daly [dlp@kandle.ie](mailto:dlp@kandle.ie)

## Parish Centre



Office Hours Monday to Friday 9am-5pm  
Phone: 057-8621142 / 057-8660722  
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**MANAGER** Declan Kelly

Parish Secretaries Michelle Bartley  
Agnieszka Kaczmarek

Accounts Michelle Conroy

Sacristans Parish Church

Sr. Sybil and Sr. Julie

(Sacristy phone attended prior to Mass times)

All Masses and services from the Parish Church are live streamed [www.portlaoiseparish.ie](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie)



Secretary: Julie Conroy  
Monday to Thursday  
11am to 1pm & 2.15pm to 5pm  
057-8692154

Advertising deadline: 12 noon Wednesday  
Subject to availability of space  
E-mail: [linkup@portlaoiseparish.ie](mailto:linkup@portlaoiseparish.ie)

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## Miraculous Life

Sisters, Martha and Mary send word to Jesus to tell him that his beloved friend Lazarus is seriously ill. When Jesus hears this news, he remains another two days where he is before setting off to Judea. The story is puzzling to say the least! That Jesus delays rushing off to be with his good friends in their hour of need surely smacks of total indifference. In truth, Jesus' delay is essential to the story.

Jesus is about to deepen the faith of his good friends Martha, Mary and Lazarus and all those who know them. It is because he loves his friends and not

because he is indifferent to them that he allows Lazarus to die before returning. It is through Lazarus' death that Jesus is about to display indisputable proof of God. Jesus is about to work the ultimate miracle. Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

It is not just that Lazarus got his life back that makes this miracle so exciting, it's that everybody who witnessed it or heard about it had their lives changed as a result. The raising of Lazarus reminds us not only that we are to inherit eternal life, but also that our lives can be miraculously enriched by our faith in Jesus.



### *A Prayer for Healthcare Workers*

*during this time of the Coronavirus COVID-19*

Loving God,  
we place into your care  
all our doctors, nurses and healthcare workers.  
Give them courage of heart  
and strength of mind and body.  
Keep them safe from harm.  
May they know our deep gratitude  
for all they are doing  
to heal and help those affected by  
the coronavirus.

God of all consolation  
may they know your protection and peace.  
Bless them in these challenging days  
and bless their families. Amen.

## Coronavirus COVID-19

**A PARISH INITIATIVE**

**DURING THIS CRISIS**

**For the Elderly and  
Vulnerable in our Parish**

If you need any assistance during this time, to pick up prescriptions or to do some shopping, or would like to talk to someone we have a team of volunteers ready to help. Please call **085 2125978**.

## OUR PRAYERS ARE ASKED FOR THOSE WHO DIED RECENTLY

**Michael McEvoy,  
Mountrath Road**

**Joseph Ryan,  
Avondale, Abbeyleix Road**



**Gabrielle Nahaboo,  
(née Gannon)  
formerly Coote Street**

**Fiona Donoher, Dooradoyle, Limerick  
& formerly Cherrygarth**

**Philomena O'Neill  
The Green, Mountmellick Road**



**Peter McDonag  
Clonrooske**

**Maria McDonald  
Beladd**



**William (Billy) O'Brien  
St. Brigid's Place**

## MAY THEY REST IN PEACE

*Our sympathy to their families*

*Always With Us*

*"There are special people in our lives  
that never leave us even  
after they are gone."*

*Author Unknown*

## *Reflect*

Don't give up.

As we journey into the penultimate week of Lent there might be a tendency to let things slide.

We might be tempted to relax in our commitment. Long distance athletes speak about 'hitting a wall'.

A reference to the moment in a race or event where they feel they want to stop or have nothing left to give.

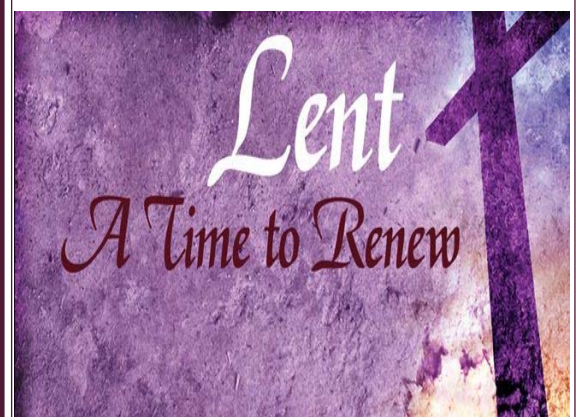
Somehow, they dig deep and find reserves of energy they need to

continue. We need to know that, as we journey towards Holy Week and dig deeper into our faith, somewhere in that despair or unknowing we can find the grace to continue...

There is a finish line and even if you think you cannot reach it, God is with you every step of the way.

God's mercy is deep.

It is only when we go deeper into our relationship with God that we experience the grace and strength to further our relationship with him.



**In Loving Memory of**

**SADIE BOHAN**

*Late of 34 St. Brigid's Place, Portlaoise.  
36<sup>th</sup> Anniversary occurs 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2020*



We cannot forget the face we loved or the memory of your smile or the countless things you did for us to make our lives worthwhile, It has been lonely here without you and grows lonelier everyday, The world has been a sadder place since the world took you away but we know you walk beside us and when our lives are through we pray that God will take our hands and lead us straight to you.

*Always remembered by her sons Billy, John, Michael, Maurice, Eugene, Dermot and Brian, daughters-in-law and grandchildren.*

*May Sadie Rest in Peace*

**In Loving Memory of**

**EUGENE CONROY**

*Ridge Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.*

*22<sup>nd</sup> Anniversary occurred 25<sup>th</sup> March.*

Eugene's anniversary will be remembered at the 10am Mass in St. Peter & Paul's Church, this Sunday 29th March.

*In loving care you rest above,  
In our hearts you rest with love.*



*Sadly missed by his loving wife Josie & family.*

*May Eugene Rest in Peace*

**LET US PRAY FOR THE MANY  
PEOPLE WHO ARE DYING  
ALONE, WITHOUT BEING  
ABLE TO SAY GOODBYE  
TO THEIR LOVED ONES.  
LET US PRAY ALSO FOR  
THE FAMILIES WHO  
CANNOT ACCOMPANY  
THEIR LOVED ONES  
ON THAT JOURNEY.**



Pope Francis, March 2020



**Acknowledgement**



*In Loving Memory of Concepta Phelan (née Breen), Attanagh, Co Laois (and formerly of Dr. Murphy's Place, Portlaoise) who died on the 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020. Concepta will be remembered at the 10am Mass in the Parish Church, this Sunday 29th March.*

Concepta's husband Pat, son Brendan and daughter Claire, together with son-in-law Barry and daughter-in-law Sandra, grand-daughters Isobel and Amelia, brothers Liam and Tom, sisters Moira, Barbara and Vera and extended family, wish to thank most sincerely all those who sympathised with them on the recent loss of Concepta.

To our neighbours, friends, family and those who travelled long distances to be with us, we offer our heartfelt thanks. Our sincere thanks to Fr. Eamonn O'Gorman P.P Ballyraggett, Co. Kilkenny, who officiated at Concepta's funeral mass at the Church of the Assumption, Ballyouskill, Co. Kilkenny. Sincere thanks also to Julie Dorgan, our sacristan and to Elaine and Teresa for their beautiful singing. Thanks to Funeral Director John Phelan, Durrow, for his professionalism, kindness and support. To Concepta's colleagues and friends in An Post Mail Centre Portlaoise, members of Portlaoise G.A.A and members of Ballyouskill I.C.A for their guard of honour, we thank you all.

A very special thanks also to Prof. Diarmuid Holohan and his team in St. Brigid's Ward, St. Vincent's Hospital, Dublin, and to the doctors and nurses working in St. Vincent's I.C.U for their kindness and care for Concepta.

As it is impossible to thank everyone individually please accept this acknowledgement as an expression of our sincere appreciation and deepest gratitude. The Holy Sacrifice of the Mass has been offered for your intention.

*May Concepta Rest in Peace*



## A Saviour Who Weeps

Do you ever cry? Of course you do. Even you big strong boys sometimes cry - even though someone may try to tell you that "big boys don't cry."

Have you ever fallen off your bicycle and hurt yourself so badly that you cried? Have you ever moved to a new school where you didn't know anyone and you were so lonely that you cried? Has anyone ever said something mean and hurt your feelings so badly that you cried? Have you ever had a friend that was crying, so you just cried along with them? I think that we all could answer, "yes" to at least one of these questions. We all cry, don't we?

Did you know that Jesus cried? The shortest verse in the entire Bible says, "Jesus wept." What are some of the things that made Jesus cry? I know of at least three things that made Jesus cry.

(1) The Bible tells us that Jesus cried when he prayed for others. It says, "While Jesus was here on earth, he offered prayers and pleadings, with a loud cry and tears." ([Hebrews 5:7](#))

(2) The Bible also tells us that Jesus cried when he saw people who were missing out on what God wanted for them. Luke tells us that as Jesus approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "I wish that even today you would find the way of peace. But now it is too late, and peace is hidden from you." ([Luke 19:41-42](#))

(3) Another time, the Bible tells us that Jesus cried when friends of his were hurting. Jesus had a friend named Lazarus who became very sick. His sisters, Mary and Martha, sent word to Jesus and asked him to come and heal Lazarus, but when Jesus arrived, Lazarus had already died. The Bible tells us that when Jesus saw Mary weeping because her brother had died, he cried too. That isn't all that Jesus did -- listen to what happened next.

Jesus went with Mary and Martha and some others to visit the grave where Lazarus was buried. It was a cave with a large stone across the entrance. When they arrived at the tomb, Jesus said to some of the men who were with them, "Take away the stone." Then Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" And Lazarus walked out of the grave. I imagine that when she saw that, Mary's tears of sadness turned to tears of joy.

We all cry, and I am glad that we have a Saviour who weeps too. I am glad that he loves us so much that he hurts when we are hurting. He feels our pain. He sees our tears and, who knows, perhaps he keeps our tears in a bottle.

Dear Jesus

It is comforting to know that when we cry, you cry with us. But it is even more comforting to know that you have power over death and the grave and that one day we will be in heaven with you - and then there will be no more tears. Amen.

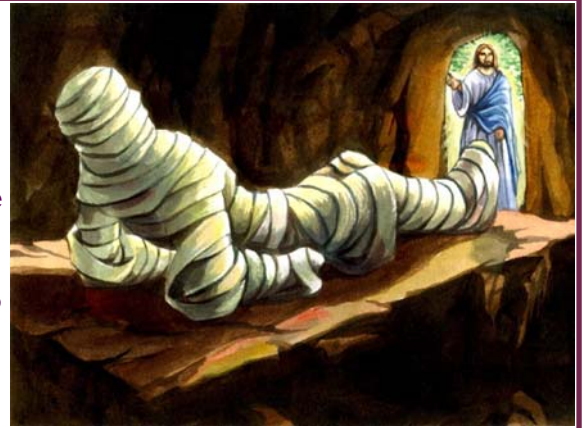




# Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies."

John 11:25



- \_\_\_ 1. To be physically ill; not well or healthy  
A. tomb B. asleep C. alive D. sick
- \_\_\_ 2. To stop living  
A. die B. live C. sleep D. resurrection
- \_\_\_ 3. To be alive or have life  
A. live B. sleep C. sleep D. die
- \_\_\_ 4. A man that Jesus raised from the dead  
A. Mary B. Lazarus C. Martha D. John
- \_\_\_ 5. Woman who poured perfume on Jesus and wiped his feet with her hair  
A. Lazarus B. Martha C. Mary D. tomb
- \_\_\_ 6. One of Lazarus' two sisters  
A. Lazarus B. Martha C. Deborah D. Elizabeth
- \_\_\_ 7. A place where someone is buried  
A. bed B. live C. die D. tomb



## Word search

L A Z A R U S E S L E E P M P  
 Q E N T R A N C E B D F L Y U  
 L J O A S O W D Y L I F E V L  
 F N I K T W E I X L G T O M B  
 X Y K S C Q E S F O E D Z N R  
 P R A Y E D P C F V R E E E D  
 B K Q W E S I I A E C A H V X  
 G L F K K N N P O A V T C V R  
 R L A Z U K G L G T O H G A E  
 I W O H F E E E Z R R H H V R  
 S F C R X J W S B J T T E S A  
 E H W Y Y N Y B N S R I U W A  
 L W B P O M A R Y A L S H M K  
 G C Q L W H J S M E E R A X G  
 B H A E U U Q H B J S I C K V

MARY

DISCIPLES

JESUS

GLORY

PRAYED

DEATH

ENTRANCE

LAZARUS

WAKE

LIFE

STONE

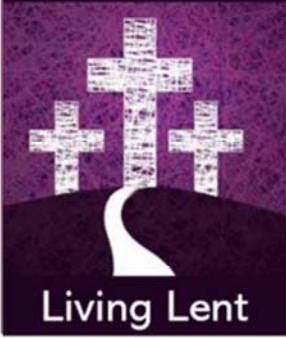
MARTHA

WEeping

TOMB

LOVE

BROTHER



# A Weekly Bulletin for Lent

## PART FIVE

### JESUS LIFTS US UP TO NEW LIFE IN HIM

#### Exploring the Celebration of Baptism:

#### Concluding Rite

After the Explanatory Rites, the newly baptised, their parents and godparents gather around the altar with the presiding priest or deacon. This represents the final stage in the journey of baptism, having travelled from the door of the church, to the ambo and, then, to the font. One day these children will complete their initiation into the Church through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. For now, from this day forward, the newly baptised are invited to gather around the table of the Lord with the Christian community, primarily in our Sunday celebration of Mass.

This rite begins with the praying of the **Our Father**, the prayer that Jesus taught us to pray. It is a prayer that held a very special place in the life of the Christian community from the very beginning. Because of our baptism it is now our prayer too.

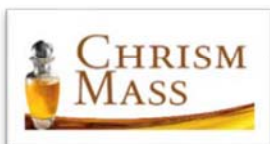
Through baptism we are children of God and can turn to God as our Father. This prayer reminds us that God wants a loving relationship with us. It tells us that our deepest hunger can only be satisfied by God – our daily bread. And it calls us to be people who seek and give forgiveness. This prayer, then, draws us closer to God but also to one another in our daily actions of love and forgiveness.

The **Blessing and Dismissal** at the end of the baptism reminds us that we go about the world with the blessing and company of God. Here, we pray in turn for the mother, the father and all who have gathered. The prayers remind us that it is in the home that faith will be taught (or caught!) and shared through word and action. They invite us to welcome God’s blessing into our lives and to live as faithful members of the Christian community. From this celebration, we are sent to live the faith we have professed and handed on, bringing the peace that only God can give to our homes and to our lives.

*Now that we have explored the Celebration of Baptism over these weeks, we invite you to reflect on this question: What meaning does my baptism have for my life?*

#### An Invitation to You from Bishop Denis

Having journeyed together, ‘Digging Deeper, Living Lent’, I warmly invite each of you to join me for our annual diocesan **Chrism Mass on Monday, April 6 at 7:30pm in**



**Carlow Cathedral.** The diocese is a family of parishes and on this night, we gather as a family, priests and people from our 56 parishes. This is a wonderful celebration rich in music and ritual. *Come early to get a seat and stay for a cuppa afterwards!*

THE SHAPE OF THE RITE OF BAPTISM FOR CHILDREN	
<b>Reception of the Children</b>	Welcome; Naming of Child; Sign of the Cross
<b>The Liturgy of the Word</b>	Scripture readings; Intercessions; Litany of the Saints; Anointing with Oil of Catechumens
<b>Baptism</b>	Blessing of water; Profession of faith; Baptism
<b>Explanatory Rites</b>	Anointing with Chrism; White Garment; Candle; Ephphetha
<b>Concluding Rite</b>	Our Father; Blessing and Dismissal



As Catholics we are asked to **ABSTAIN** from meat and to **FAST** on

**Ash Wednesday and Good Friday.** Some people are not required to fast; these include those who are sick, pregnant or nursing women and manual labourers according to need.

**WHO**

 **CATHOLICS 14+** ARE OBLIGED TO PRACTICE ABSTINENCE

 **CATHOLICS 18-59** ARE OBLIGED TO FAST

**ABSTINENCE**

 **NO MEAT**  **FISH IS OK**

**FASTING**

 **1 MEAL AND**   **2 SMALLER MEALS**

 **NO SNACKS**



## Weekly Gospel Link



### *The Raising of Lazarus*

This Sunday we hear another passage from the Gospel of John telling us key things about our baptism and faith.

By raising the brother of Martha and Mary, in this story, Jesus reveals something new about himself to his followers. He shows them that he has power over life and death. He tells them that he is the resurrection and the life and that whoever believes in him will never die for they will have eternal life. And, pivotally, he asks them: 'Do you believe this?'

*As we draw closer to Easter this same question is asked of you. Do you believe this? Do you believe that Jesus calls us from ways of death to a faith filled life? What does that mean for you?*

*See [kandle.ie](http://kandle.ie) for weekly reflections on the Lenten Sunday readings*



"How good it feels to come back to him whenever we are lost! Let me say this once more: God never tires

of forgiving us; we are the ones who tire of seeking his mercy. Christ, who told us to forgive one another "seventy times seven" (Mt 18:22) has given us his example: he has forgiven us seventy times seven. Time and time again he bears us on his shoulders...With a tenderness which never disappoints, but is always capable of restoring our joy, he makes it possible for us to lift up our heads and to start anew." in *The Joy of the Good News*, par 3

## Exploring a Practice for Lent:

### The Sacrament of Penance



As Catholics we are encouraged to go to confession as part of our preparation for Easter. This makes sense, given the journey of conversion and reconciliation we are undertaking in Lent. In this journey we are turning our hearts back to God.

In the sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation we meet the Lord who forgives us and loves us and invites us to a renewed life in him. The grace of this

sacrament, that pours the abiding love of God into our very being, is available for all. No matter how fearful, anxious or troubled we feel, no matter how serious the ruptures in our relationships with ourselves, God and others, in this sacrament we can turn to God for forgiveness and embark on a fresh start. For those not in serious sin, this sacrament offers another grace-filled encounter with Christ, helping us to grow closer to Him and to his Body, the Church. That is why the Church encourages frequent confession.

This sacrament is not so much about me and my sin and my past but more so about God and God's forgiveness and my future as a result of that forgiveness.

Parishes will offer a regular schedule for individual confession to a priest. Alongside this, during Lent many parishes will schedule a communal celebration of the sacrament which includes individual confession. This parish celebration can serve as an important step in our shared preparation for Easter.

**How to Go to Confession: A Practical Guide to Celebrating the Sacrament** The diocese has produced a pocket guide to confession that is available in many parishes and on [kandle.ie](http://kandle.ie)

## Digging Deeper - Living Lent Some Suggestions for the Week



- + Persevere in your chosen resolutions for Lent and remember their purpose is to bring you closer to God
- + Pray for adults preparing for baptism at Easter
- + Plant new life in a container or garden bed! Pollinator friendly herbs include chives, lavender, rosemary, oregano and thyme
- + Remember to 'Share with the hungry' and set aside some of your weekly shop for a food bank or donate the cost
- + Be a happy presence in your home
- + Give up television for an evening
- + Take some quiet time to do an examination of conscience ahead of going to confession. See [kandle.ie](http://kandle.ie) for examples of examinations



March 1	March 8	March 15	March 22	March 29	April 6	April 9-12
Stepping into Lent Together	We are called to recognise, listen to and follow Jesus	Jesus is the living water who gives us eternal life	Jesus opens our eyes to the Good News of our faith	Jesus lifts us up to new life in him	Together as a diocesan family for the Chrism Mass	Celebrating the Easter Triduum, baptising and renewing our baptism



# TIME TO THINK!

## A TIME OF TESTING

My friends,

While the name of the virus we are struggling to control is known as COVID 19 – the entire experience that we are going through might best be named PANDEMIC 20 – simply because it is now a global world-wide phenomenon, the impact of which is still beyond our imagination.

The advice of the medical experts is placing a myriad of restrictions on our lives so that so much we regarded as normal is now out of bounds. Spiritually, socially and mentally this will put many under pressures that we are not used to.

Every crisis is also an opportunity. So too with Pandemic 20. It can be a moment of grace in our lives.

It seems providential that we are invited to reflect today (5th Sunday of Lent) on the experience of healing, Lazarus the great friend of Jesus being transformed from death to Life, from illness to health. physical the Lord can heal us and help lift the scales of darkness from our eyes and our minds.

Because we do not know how long this will last our greatest risk is frustration. The clear message coming through to us on many levels is that sacrifices will need to be made by each of us to enable all of us work through this global threat.

Life has been good to us in recent times so that many of us are not used to the idea of sacrificing ourselves for others. Sacrifice is a choice. Sacrifice is a deliberate decision to put the needs of another before your own – and to do so out of love – not grudgingly.

Caring for small children who do not and cannot understand what a virus is will call for great patience from parents and older brothers and sisters.

For those on the frontline of this virus battle, the personal demand is very great indeed, they truly need our support and prayer.

Older people and those with underlying major illness are naturally concerned and some deeply anxious. Great sensitivity is needed to help them cope.

My friends, Pandemic 20 is in its infancy. Even the experts cannot tell us how long it will go on. It is important that we prepare ourselves for a long ordeal which will really test our spiritual mettle.

It will call for great resilience of mind and heart.

It will call for great fortitude to cope with the loss perhaps even of loved ones – young and old.

My friends, this is the beginning of a time of great testing of our faith. Despite our best efforts the personal loss of someone close to us, coupled with economic turmoil and uncertainty about the future, may lead to great spiritual devastation even the loss of hope.

So, we must be prepared, patient presence to one another will be essential – a patient presence filled by a sense of sacrifice of self for the other. Fortitude and resilience will be called for in great measure as we face setbacks on the way.

So, we need to pray – pray in whatever way comes easy to you and your family.

Begin with thanksgiving for one another.

Pray for strength and courage for the medical and health care personnel.

Pray for forbearance and patience with one another.

Our Psalm today is especially apt – “The Lord is my shepherd”.

**‘If I should walk in the valley of darkness no evil would I fear. You are there with your crook and your staff with these you give me comfort’.**

My friends, when a time of danger comes to our door, we need the grace of God to guide us in the right path and our Blessed Mother Mary to walk with us.

We continue to hold each other in our prayer.

**Kathleen O’ Meara’s poem, “And People Stayed Home” written in 1869. speaks volumes these day.**

**And the people stayed home. And read books, and listened, and rested, and exercised, and made art, and played games, and learned new ways of being, and were still.**

**And listened more deeply.**

**Some meditated, some prayed, some danced.**

**Some met their shadows.**

**And the people began to think differently.**

**And the people healed.**

**And, in the absence of people living in ignorant, dangerous, mindless, and heartless ways, the earth began to heal.**

**And when the danger passed, and the people joined together again, they grieved their losses, and made new choices, and dreamed new images, and created new ways to live and heal the earth fully, as they had been healed.**

**Fr. Paddy invites you to follow him on Twitter @frpaddybyrne, now over 17,000 followers or @AbbeyleixP or check out Paddy Byrne on Facebook.**



## Beautiful message from Bill Gates

### \*What is the Corona/ Covid-19 Virus Really Teaching us?\*

I'm a strong believer that there is a spiritual purpose behind everything that happens, whether that is what we perceive as being good or being bad.

As I meditate upon this, I want to share with you what I feel the Corona/Covid-19 virus is really doing to us:

- 1) It is reminding us that we are all equal, regardless of our culture, religion, occupation, financial situation or how famous we are. This disease treats us all equally, perhaps we should to. If you don't believe me, just ask Tom Hanks.
- 2) It is reminding us that we are all connected and something that affects one person has an effect on another. It is reminding us that the false borders that we have put up have little value as this virus does not need a passport. It is reminding us, by oppressing us for a short time, of those in this world whose whole life is spent in oppression.
- 3) It is reminding us of how precious our health is and how we have moved to neglect it through eating nutrient poor manufactured food and drinking water that is contaminated with chemicals upon chemicals. If we don't look after our health, we will, of course, get sick.
- 4) It is reminding us of the shortness of life and of what is most important for us to do, which is to help each other, especially those who are old or sick. Our purpose is not to buy toilet roll.
- 5) It is reminding us of how materialistic our society has become and how, when in times of difficulty, we remember that it's the essentials that we need (food, water, medicine) as opposed to the luxuries that we sometimes unnecessarily give value to.
- 6) It is reminding us of how important our family and home life is and how much we have neglected this. It is forcing us back into our houses so we can rebuild them into our home and to strengthen our family unit.
- 7) It is reminding us that our true work is not our job, that is what we do, not what we were created to do. Our true work is to look after each other, to protect each other and to be of benefit to one another.
- 8) It is reminding us to keep our egos in check. It is reminding us that no matter how great we think we are or how great others think we are, a virus can bring our world to a standstill.
- 9) It is reminding us that the power of freewill is in our hands. We can choose to cooperate and help each other, to share, to give, to help and to support each other or we can choose to be selfish, to hoard, to look after only our self. Indeed, it is difficulties that bring out our true colours.
- 10) It is reminding us that we can be patient, or we can panic. We can either understand that this type of situation has happened many times before in history and will pass, or we can panic and see it as the end of the world and, consequently, cause ourselves more harm than good.
- 11) It is reminding us that this can either be an end or a new beginning. This can be a time of reflection and understanding, where we learn from our mistakes, or it can be the start of a cycle which will continue until we finally learn the lesson we are meant to.
- 12) It is reminding us that this Earth is sick. It is reminding us that we need to look at the rate of deforestation just as urgently as we look at the speed at which toilet rolls are disappearing off of shelves. We are sick because our home is sick.
- 13) It is reminding us that after every difficulty, there is always ease. Life is cyclical, and this is just a phase in this great cycle. We do not need to panic; this too shall pass.
- 14) Whereas many see the Corona/Covid-19 virus as a great disaster, I prefer to see it as a \*great corrector\*

**It is sent to remind us of the important lessons that we seem to have forgotten and it is up to us if we will learn them or not.**

## **SERVICES VIA WEBCAM FROM OUR PARISH CHURCH**

Mass times for the coming week

**Monday—Sunday**

**10am** (behind closed doors)

We invite you to join in worship via our Webcam accessible at

[www.portlaoiseparish.ie](http://www.portlaoiseparish.ie)

and **Parish Radio 106.5fm**

[shalomworld.org/live](http://shalomworld.org/live)

### **CONFESSIONS**

Every Saturday after 10am Mass.

**Monday — Saturday**

Morning Prayer at 8am

Evening Prayer at 6.30pm

(with Benediction on Saturday)

Stations of the Cross at 3pm

Rosary at 9.30am, 7pm and 9.30pm

### **THE PARISH OFFICE**

Remains open Monday to Friday from 9am to 5pm.

Insofar as possible please contact by phone or email only

**Tel: 057 8621142**

**email: [info@portlaoiseparish.ie](mailto:info@portlaoiseparish.ie)**

There will be a limited access to the public from 10.30am to 11am for anniversary remembrances, Certificates, Mass cards etc.

### **THE PARISH CENTRE**

Unfortunately will close for the duration of the present crisis.

### **THE Link Up**

You will continue to be able to access the Link Up online on our website and our Facebook page.

We would love to be able to predict when normal service will resume but be assured 'this too will pass'! In the meantime keep in touch with the Parish please via our webcam and on Facebook and Twitter.

You will be remembered each day in our prayer.