

ST MARY'S PARISH, HADDINGTON ROAD. DUBLIN

CONTACT LETTER TO FRIENDS AND PARISHIONERS DURING THE PANDEMIC



Dear Friends and Parishioners,

All faith communities are founded on three things, their founder or founders, their teaching, and their community. One of the pastoral challenges that has faced our church during the present crisis has been in keeping our faith community together in a very challenging situation and this is, course, true for the parishes and faith communities everywhere. We are in the words of scripture being 'put to the test',

There is a real possibility that communities will fragment and drift apart during this trying time and it may be difficult to bring them back to life again when this time of trial eventually passes, as it will. As we look back across the long stretch of salvation history, we will see that this is not the first time a faith community has been challenged in this way and in other ways. An important part of the history of Israel is the story of exile and, indeed, it was during these times of exile and exodus that these early communities came together, established their identity and their cohesion and articulated their faith. It was during the Babylonian exile that important parts of the Old Testament were written. As Psalm 137 has it:

*By the rivers of Babylon
we sat and wept at the memory of Zion.
On the poplars there
We had hung up our harps*

The time we are living feels very much like a kind of exile, as people are often cut off or severely limited in their social contacts and, for many of you who will receive this letter, you also find yourself isolated from the church community which is such an important part of your lives. This letter is an attempt by the Pastoral Team and the Parish Pastoral Council to reach out and to reassure people that we are still there and that we are in a very real way 'in this together'.

We continue to have daily masses and three Sunday masses, including the Croatian Community mass, online. The Francophone community, based in Haddington Road but which is very dispersed around the city, gets together online twice a month for a Sunday Celebration on Zoom, and Fr Josip keeps in touch with the Croatian community daily with a prayer on his Facebook page which holds that community together. None of this will ever replace face-to-face contact and sacramental communion but it is a real form of togetherness and community which will help to see us through.

SOME NEWS ITEMS



The Passing of a Parish Stalwart

The late Joe Prunty and his wife Agnes have been loyal members of St Mary's parish for many years. Joe was a regular at daily mass up to a short time before his death at the age of 94, at which time he drove himself up to the door of the church from the house. Living, literally, at the St Mary's gate to the church, Joe and his family were an important part of our community and of the wider St Mary's Road community, where he was respected and much loved. His funeral took place on Monday 5 October and his Month's Mind Mass will take place on Sunday 8 November at 11am. May he rest in peace.

Retirement

The principal of St Christopher's Primary School, Ms Annemarie Hogan has announced her forthcoming retirement. Annemarie was previously principal of St Brigid's Primary school before being appointed to St Christopher's following the merger with St Mary's Boys' School in 2018. She was very much the driving force behind this development of education in our parish and will leave a rich legacy when she retires, probably in February. The process of find-

ing a replacement has already started. This will be a big challenge in a large, urban school but an exciting one as the school is vibrant and successful with a clear vision for the future, thanks to all its staff past and present.

Parish Missionary to South Sudan - Sr Jacinta Prunty



One of the signs of life in a church is when it is genuinely missionary. This means reaching out to places where the gospel is little known or to places where the church is struggling. Dr Jacinta Prunty, a Holy Faith sister and daughter of Joe and Agnes Prunty, was previously the distinguished head of the Department of History in Maynooth University. She has been involved with her congregation's challenging mission in South Sudan on a part-time for several years. However, following her recent retirement, from Maynooth, she has taken up a full-time appointment in Sudan for the next three years. We wish her well and accompany her with our prayers in this very difficult mission.; It is an encouraging sign of life and vitality in our Church that gives us great hope.

Parish Pastoral Council

The PPC has continued its scheduled meetings, albeit in an online format, since February. It plays an important role on helping the parish face the challenges posed by the pandemic, in applying the various measure that have had to be taken both when the church closed down, and then all too briefly reopened with limited numbers.

One of the biggest challenges it faced was in addressing the obvious financial strains that the pandemic has placed on the parish, as it has on so many businesses and families in the country. It was very active in setting up the DONATE system that is now part of our website. This has had its initial glitches but it has been very helpful in bringing in some income for both the diocese and the parish.

During the months that we were open again people continued to contribute and even still there is a small flow of income both from parishioners who have very generously continue their regular contributions or by people who visit the church in the hours that it is open for prayers every day (10.30-15.00). All of this has allowed up to bring in somewhere between 35-40% of our usual income. It is, of course, a struggle that is part of the larger pandemic struggle and we are very grateful for the generous support we have received. We ask parishioners to continue this according to their means.

IN MEMORIAM

Recently Deceased

Kevin McGoran

Anniversary

9.30: Paul Hogan

Month's Mind

11am: Joe Prunty

Vocation is not evoked by your bundle of need and desire. Vocation is what God wants from you whereby your life is transformed into a consequence of God's redemption of the world. Look no further than Jesus's disciples – remarkably mediocre, untalented, lackluster yokels – to see that innate talent or inner yearning has less to do with vocation than God's thing for redeeming lives by assigning us something to do for God.