

# CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL GROUP OF PARISHES.

All Saints' Church, St Michan's Church St Werburgh's Church

# PARISH NEWSLETTER

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## Strange times!

From the Vicar:

I think it's fair to say that most of us would have to admit that we walk a very fine line between believing and not believing. There are times in our lives when we do seem to believe all these things we say about God when we read the Bible and sing the hymns in our own churches when they are open for worship. There are even times when we'd say, yes, we feel close to God, whatever that means. But there are also those times in our lives when we wonder whether or not we believe any of it at all anymore: God, Jesus, the church, discipleship -- all of it seems insignificant especially in the light of what is happening in our world with the spread of Covid 19. It's especially true of miracles, isn't it? The problem with miracles is that they don't seem to happen any more, so we're not sure we believe in them anymore. So we joke about the miracles in the

Bible. The one about the boy who came home from church and his mother asked him what he learned in Sunday school and he told her about Moses leading Israeli troops using the latest surface-to-air missiles against the Egyptians. And she says, "Are you telling the truth?" And he says, "No, but if I told you what the teacher said happened, you'd never believe me." We can't believe in the miracles, so we either joke about them or we try to explain them rationally and in so doing, try to fit them into the world as we know it. Certainly all things are possible with God and we want to believe it when we are sinking, and sooner or later most of us feel like we are, whether or not we want to admit it. We all have that sinking feeling at one time or another in our lives. That feeling you experience when you're waiting for the doctor's report on yourself or your loved one and sure enough, the doctor says what you were afraid he

was going to say. It's the kind of sinking feeling you get when all your friends are dying around you and you feel all alone. Yes, when we are sinking, we want to believe in miracles, but we're not sure they really happen anymore. We want to believe, but we're not sure we can. I know it's not easy to believe in miracles in our time. The problem with them is not that they don't happen. The problem is that they do. Just look at the dedication of doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, shop assistants, truck drivers, the Gardai and the PSNI, the prison service... the list is endless. The work of these people is a miracle in itself. They are selfless acts of kindness, compassion and dedication which is not normally appreciated except

now in our time of crisis. The question is do we have faith enough to see them and experience in them God's power and God's presence in our lives? I hope we do and may God bless all of them as they carry out their essential work for each one of us.

And may God bless you all and may you stay safe and well.

David

From the Curate:

As I write this, it is the morning of the 1<sup>st</sup> of April, April Fool's Day! I have occasionally enjoyed the odd prank or trick but this year the world seems strange enough! I hope you and your families are all keeping well at this time.

**“Stay at home but continue to pray, to love, to care for the vulnerable.”**

This is a joint statement from the Archbishop of Canterbury and the Archbishop of York. It is very simple, yet there is immense power in that simplicity. In order to protect our loved ones and our communities we must stay at home but we must not lose our hope, our love and our faith. We must look out for those who are in need and those who are vulnerable.

I was sent a piece of writing during the week that encapsulates the world we are living in. A retired teacher, Kitty O'Meara, an Irish-American from the city of Madison, in Wisconsin, turned to writing in an effort to curb her own anxiety amid the nerve-wracking news of the COVID-19 pandemic. The result, which she posted to her personal Face book page, has been widely read across the world offering hope that something good can come out of this collective state of "together, apart."

*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 heart-  
less 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.*

*Kitty O'Meara*

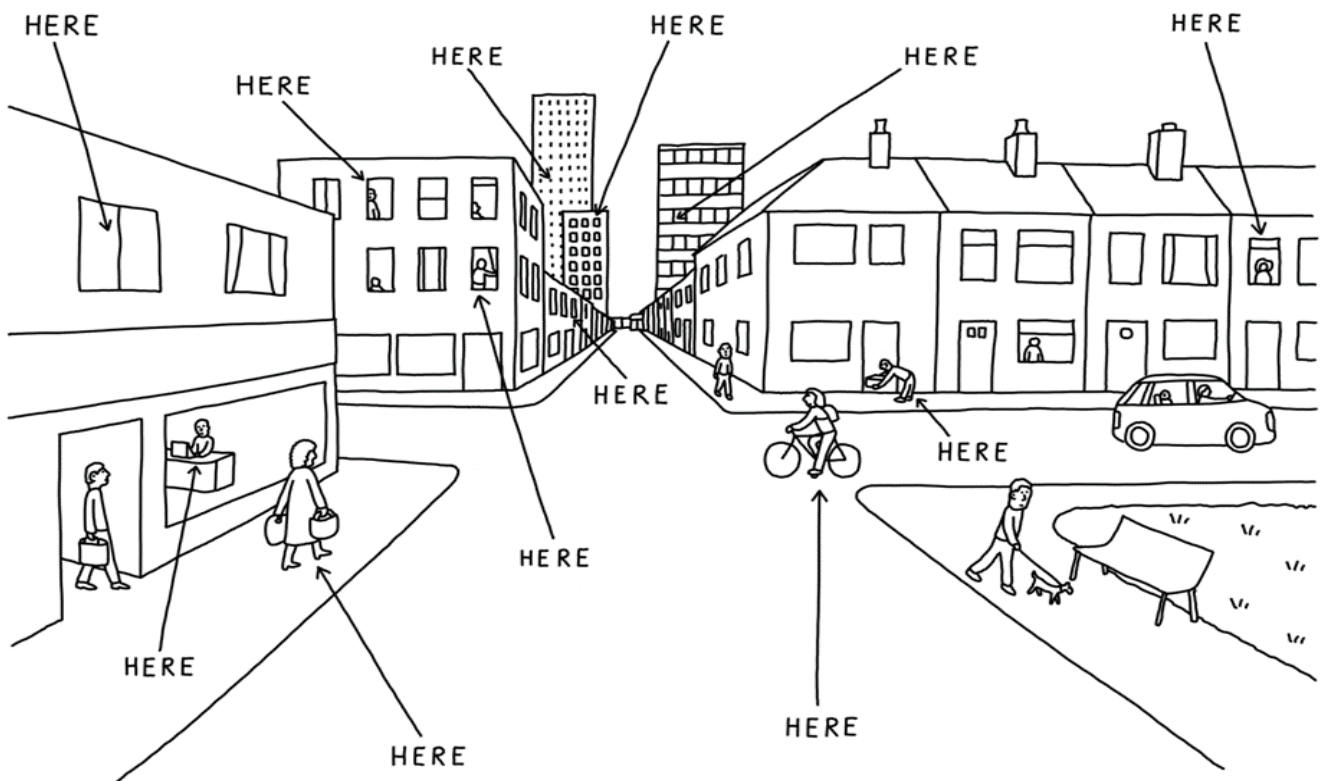
It has been very uplifting to see people across the world coming out to cheer and to clap for our healthcare workers, who are doing such an amazing job to combat this disease. On the road where I live people have been coming out as a community, showing solidarity with healthcare staff but also with each other, waving from their front doors and reinforcing the sense that we are all in this together. This Sunday is Palm Sunday, when the people of Jerusalem came out to cheer Jesus' arrival. The disciples were amazed at this. They had followed Jesus' instructions to fetch a donkey for him. They had not fully understood what was happening but they followed Jesus, having faith in him. We do not fully understand Covid-19, we do not fully understand the science behind battling this disease, yet we must follow the instructions that we are given, to fight this disease. Our Christian faith does not give us all the answers to Covid-19 but it does give us the answers to how we can live our lives and look after our community. I have recently seen footage of the people of Assisi singing together from their homes and it is from Assisi that this prayer comes from St. Francis:

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace:  
where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
where there is sadness, joy.

O divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek  
to be consoled as to console,  
to be understood as to understand,  
to be loved as to love.  
For it is in giving that we receive,  
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.      Amen.

God bless,  
Ross

## WHERE THE CHURCH IS



## Parish notes:

Following the decision to temporarily cease acts of public worship across the Church of Ireland due to Covid-19, there will be no services in St. Michan's Church or in All Saints Church for the foreseeable future. The buildings are closed but the church is more than a collection of buildings, it is a community of faith and, as such, the church never closes.

At this time we must follow the example of the early church and join together in prayer from our own homes. In order to keep in touch and pray together as a community, we are putting in place several ways to enable this. We will continue with this weekly newsletter, which will be emailed or posted out each week to parishioners.

Secondly we will be recording short services and reflections, which will be posted on our face book page: Christchurch Cathedral Group of Parishes. We also now have a YouTube channel, St. Michan's Church Dublin, which will have recorded services and reflections each week.

At this time, when we are all self isolating and many shops are closed, it can be difficult to access shopping or other services. If any parishioner needs any assistance or is in need of shopping or other supplies, please do not hesitate to contact the curate on 087-9892941 or email: [stylesross@gmail.com](mailto:stylesross@gmail.com). Shopping can be left on doorsteps and social distancing can be maintained.

Please note that all previously held email addresses have unfortunately been deleted from the system.

If you would like to be added to our email list and consent to us adding your name, please email Patricia at [office@stmichanschurh.ie](mailto:office@stmichanschurh.ie).

**If anyone would like to submit an article or other suitable items of interest or words of wisdom, please send them to:**

- The Curate  
[stylesross@gmail.com](mailto:stylesross@gmail.com)

- The Parish

[office@stmichanschurh.ie](mailto:office@stmichanschurh.ie)

# Prayers for us to say together at home!

Merciful God,  
we entrust to your tender care  
those who are ill or in pain,  
knowing that whenever danger threatens  
your everlasting arms are there to hold them safe.  
Comfort and heal them,  
and restore them to health and strength;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**

Gracious God,  
give skill, sympathy and resilience  
to all who are caring for the sick,  
and your wisdom to those searching for a cure.  
Strengthen them with your Spirit,  
that through their work many will be restored to health;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Amen.**