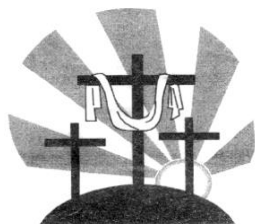


REST IN PEACE



Your prayers are requested this weekend for Sister Mary Daniel McCarry who died this week.

For the souls of the following whose anniversaries occur at this time:
Ellen & Joseph Donnelly; Dick O'Mahony; Larry Whelan; Samuel Clarke;
Deceased members of Hannify family; Charlie, Claire & Charles Kelly;
Aedan & Vera Waldron; Gretta Allen; Pauline & Jack Crump; John Kenny;
David Walsh; Katriona & Conor Maguire; Annie & John Kane and their son Jimmy;
Deceased members of the McDonagh family;

And for Vera Ward, Frances Fitzgerald & Irene O'Meara whose Month's Minds occur.

MAY THEIR SOULS AND THE SOULS OF ALL THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED THROUGH THE MERCY OF GOD REST IN PEACE. AMEN.

CHURCH COLLECTIONS

The amounts collected last weekend are:

DATE	GREEN BASKET	Share
20 th December 2020	€950	€765

The green basket is the collection for the support of the priests of the Diocese.

The white basket is the collection for Share, which meets the needs both of poorer parishes and of central agencies of the Diocese.

We thank you for your contributions to the Church collections and for your continuing support of all the collections.

WEEKLY BULLETIN



St. Mary's, Star of the Sea, Sandymount

Parish Office 6683894 / 6683316 – Monday to Friday 9.30 – 12.30
Fr. John McDonagh, Tel: 6684265 – Fr. Cormac McLraith, Tel: 6686845

www.stmarysstaroftheseasandymount.com

Happy Christmas 2020



May God bless you this Christmas
May the light of Christ shine upon us
May his presence dispel our fears
And may peace dwell in our hearts and homes

Dear Parishioners,

Our journey to Christmas 2020 was intended after long weeks of lockdown to afford us a respite of good family time and a lift to the businesses that depend so much on the pre-Christmas trade, and the follow up sales, to find their feet in a disastrous year. Instead we're overtaken by an alarming third wave.

Immediately after Christmas Day, the church remains open only for private visits and the celebration of the Eucharist very much limited again to the webcam 'experience.' Parents must wait yet longer again for the Baptism of their child while funerals are restricted to 10 persons in attendance. It's little short of tragic and yet the only real tragedy in town is that people die of this vicious virus and it is a happy Christmas that sees everyone, young and old, strongly determined to do all we can to keep each other safe.

How sad to hear this week of some thirty people, none wearing masks, without regard for social distancing, drinking in a shebeen. When most of the country are drained and strained by the efforts urged on us by Government it is hard to categorize such behaviour as anything other than gross selfishness that warrants naming and shaming.

That families in bereavement are limited to only ten persons at a funeral is heartless when the real problem was never with the twenty five in previous limitation but with the gatherings outside, however well intentioned, that greeted them as they exited the church. We have seen it in our own and in neighbouring parishes and one wonders why the government wasn't more focused in its analysis and direction. It is unfair on grieving families.

It is vitally important that we all heed the advice of the public health doctors and not allow the capacity of the health service to be exceeded. 'Happy Christmas 2020' is about our commitment to such matters and for Christians among us to do so expressly in the name of Christ. Happy Christmas everyone.

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We rejoice in the Masses of the twelve days of Christmas in the lovely nativity stories of the Gospels that we find in St. Luke's and St. Matthew's accounts.

Have you ever noticed how little is actually written about the birth. The account of Matthew takes up half a line: "she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus." St. Luke gives a two sentence account: "While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." For such a significant birth, a very short account.

In contrast, notice how much attention is given to witnesses of the great event; not the immediate family, surprisingly, but outsiders. We're invited to see the

event through the eyes of two different groups: the shepherds, the poorest of the poor in Luke's account and the wise men, from another world, in Matthew's. These wise men are foreign celebrities, people of substance who gain ready access to the palace of King Herod. These witnesses spanning the spectrum from poor to privilege take centre stage and it's their response to what they see and hear engages us. We too are somewhere on that spectrum invited, like them, to respond. And even in the isolation of Covid-19 this 2020 Christmas our hearts sing: "Venite, adoremus;" "Come, let us adore."

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The Church will be open until 6.00pm each day to allow you, perhaps as a family, to come to the crib and pray.

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Thanks for Christmas Dues Donations

A special thanks to all who have sent in Christmas donations in what we call Christmas Dues. Never was it needed more to replenish the Common Fund, the fund which allows priests to be paid. The Christmas and Easter Dues along with the First Collection at Masses supports that fund.

Since March and now again for the foreseeable future, collections at Mass are not happening. So the fund is dependant very much on the generosity of people in the Christmas Dues.

You will note too that Standing Order forms for the two funds supported by Mass collections in the past are available at the back of the Church.

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A Special Word of Thanks

A Special Word of Thanks to the people who have been so helpful during the Covid crises that is ongoing. We particularly thank members of the Parish Council who organised our response locally, the teams of cleaners at Masses both at the weekend and weekdays. Initially we thought it might last a few weeks but now nine months later we appreciate the level of commitment volunteers have brought to the task.

We also want to thank long serving volunteers particularly around the Sacristy and we respect the personal circumstances which call for them to step back a while. We thank Jimmy and Anne who, very reliably, have stepped up to the mark. We really cannot thank them enough.

A special greeting to the members of both Choirs. We're very proud of them in the service they give the parish and we hope it won't be too long before we can hear them again.