

# Bishop of Kilmore

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Bishop's  
House, Cullies,  
Cavan, Co.  
Cavan.

H12 P5W6

9<sup>th</sup> October 2024

**Dear Fr, Rev, Parish Pastoral Council member, Parishioner, Diocesan Pastoral Council member, Diocesan Staff member/volunteer,**

We have been discussing the scheduling of Masses for over a year and we now need to conclude these discussions to implement changes throughout the diocese on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024.

Our discussions in parishes and between parishes have been fruitful and have highlighted,

- the need to reduce the number of Masses,
- to fulfil the desire for larger congregations and richer liturgies,
- take account of fewer and aging priests and
- provide for holidays and possible illness of priests.

I am grateful for the discussions that have taken place in a synodal fashion supported by Diocesan Pastoral Council personnel in parishes and between parishes involving the Parish Pastoral Councils and representatives of church areas.

**It has become apparent that these discussions on Mass schedules require guidelines on possible future partnerships of parishes.**

Regarding those working relationships between parish, the current structure is governed by the Pastoral Areas which has worked well in some Pastoral Areas, and which can remain in place. The Pastoral Areas now need to be reviewed not only to provide an impetus to the finalisation of our Mass schedules but to take account of the administration of parishes, visitation of parishioners, the number of schools, churches, hospitals and nursing homes, the opportunities provided by the upcoming Lay Pastoral Ministry Programme, the time required to prepare for and celebrate Baptisms, Holy Communions, Confirmations, Marriages, the Sacrament of the Sick and Funerals as well as holidays for priests and parish personnel.

Accordingly, after some reflection on the recent discussions regarding our Mass schedules and our preparations of our Lay Pastoral Ministry Programme, **I propose the following working partnerships between parishes,**

Mullagh, Killinkere and Lurgan – as in their current Pastoral Area,

Killann, Kilmainhamwood & Moybologue and Knockbride – as in their current Pastoral Area

Kilsherdany & Drung and Drumgoon

Lavey and Laragh

Denn, Crosserlough and Castlerahan

Kilmore and Ballintemple

Annagh and Drumlane

Urney & Annagelliff and Castletara

Killeshandra and Carrigallen,

Ballinaglera and Killinagh

Dromahair and Drumkeeran

Kinlough and Ballaghameehan

Manorhamilton & Glenfarne

Derrylin and Kinawley

Ballinamore, Templeport and Kildallan.

**I ask that the discussions on Mass schedules now continue over the coming weeks in parishes, between parishes involving PPC's and parishioners with the above proposals for future parish partnerships in mind.** These discussions can proceed with the support of those who have completed the Synodal Facilitative Leadership Programme, our Diocesan Pastoral Council members and those with recognised facilitation skills – to avail of this support please contact me at the Diocesan Office.

Amongst the guidelines regarding the scheduling of Masses that have emerged from discussions are,

the need to reduce the number of Masses,

that each parish, where possible, reduce their Masses by at least one Mass,

while there may not be Mass in every church on every weekend that no church be closed,

all arrangements for Masses be easily communicated and remembered,

that there be sufficient time between Masses to be celebrated by any one priest,

that Mass times in parishes with a working partnership allow for at least one priest be free to provide for holidays and possible illness of priests and

liturgy groups in conjunction with Parish Pastoral Councils be established to ensure preparation for all Masses.

Finally, I ask that you communicate the decisions concluded to the Diocesan Office by **22<sup>nd</sup> November 2024** to ensure publication throughout the diocese before their implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2024, the 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent.

With thanks for your participation in these discussions and with prayerful good wishes for their conclusion that will deepen our appreciation of our Mass at weekends.

Yours in Christ,



+ Martin Hayes

Bishop of Kilmore.