

## **We are in this together!**

It's January, and a new start – with lots of fresh hope. For two years now, of course, we have struggled with the impact and effects of Covid-19 – the impact on our own hearts and minds, as well as on our parish, our city and wider society. And this is where the hope comes in again, hope that we will soon emerge with our joyful hearts still intact, and with fresh energy to build up again the helpful links we always had with other people, family and beyond family.

The hope at the heart of the Claddagh church and the parish around us is not just that we can stay out later in the evening and enjoy a bite of food... not just that we can more easily travel on the city bus and not have to keep our distance as strictly as now... No, our hope is that the people of the parish, and other Galway residents who have come to love the Claddagh church, can soon find that relaxed sense again of being truly at home especially when we are gathered with others for prayer and devotion.

From the earliest pages of the Bible, God is quoted as saying that *it was not good for a man to be alone*. It was in a relationship, in partnership and in a caring cohabitation with a woman that Adam was to declare he had found happiness. Neither the Jewish nor the Christian religion is about what you or I can do on our own, as individuals. Like its Jewish ancestor, Christianity is a religion of the family, of community and society. It is about the choreography of what we can do together, as couples, as communities and as local churches.

Sacraments of our faith are best celebrated together: we share the Holy Communion, publicly, in each other's company.

The Christian faith is about God's love for us & our attempts to give thanks and love each other, filled with compassionate care. Ours is a truly earthy religion: the Word was made flesh and the followers of Christ can do no less. Our faith in God is, after all, tested in our faith and trust in each other.

Let's now take heart and come together, carefully of course, but with renewed hope in our hearts, and celebrate the faith we share together, in our favourite church, in Claddagh, with joy in our hearts and that fresh smile on our faces!