

NEWSLETTER  
JANUARY 2021:  
*Hope for a New Year ?*

*(This was published in 'Today's Good News'.  
Reprinted with permission of Fr. Donagh O Shea, OP)*

**Has God abandoned us?**

*Dear Donagh,*

*When I see all the suffering and the loneliness around me, especially all the old people isolated by the covid virus who can't see their family, I keep wondering has God abandoned us. Molly*

Dear Molly,

Many years ago my cousin was so seriously ill—and for so long—that no one expected her to live. Her weight had dropped to an alarming thirty kilos, and she began to resemble a corpse. But every day her boyfriend came and sat by her hospital bed for hours. She lived, regaining her health very slowly. She left the hospital, and was convalescent for almost a year. Every day he came to visit and sit with her. A few years later they were married. Fifty years later she died, aged seventy-five. He had a headstone erected at her grave, and a limestone seat beside it. Every day, until he died aged ninety-two, he came and sat by her grave.

'I Am Who Am,' was the mysterious answer Moses received when he asked God's name. In Hebrew there are no verb tenses such as exist in other languages, so the expression could have a present or a future meaning. I have seen it translated in a few languages as 'I will be who I will be.' And of course 'be' does not mean 'to be' in the abstract, but 'to be for you'. God's name, then, is: 'I am the One who will be for you always.' This is echoed in the final verse of Matthew's gospel: '[Jesus said] I am with you always, even to the end of the world.'

God has not abandoned us. Jesus is still Emmanuel, which means 'God with us'. We live in the presence of God who will never desert us. Love never goes away. It continues through the long years, through joy and sorrow, through sickness, old age, and death – and beyond. Don't lose heart.

Donagh

### **CHURCH OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER: CLOSED FOR PUBLIC MASS**

Thank God we were open for Christmas Day, even if it was for a limited number of people. There are so many more who would have chosen to join us for Mass at Christmas, but we were completely booked out: even if some decided not to take up their booking, We are back to celebrating Mass behind closed doors, again. We can only look forward with hope at being able to re-open soon, when the circumstances allow.

### **THANKS FOR GENROSITY AT CHRISTMAS**

We are very grateful to all who were so generous at Christmas: All our helpers and volunteers, for preparing the Church for Christmas and for ensuring that we could welcome people to a safe and clean environment. Thanks to all who were generous with Christmas Offerings and Christmas Dues: we depend on your offerings to pay the bills.

### **MASS ON WEBCAM**

Thanks to our generous sponsor – Parishioner Bob Deegan and to MCN who provide technical support- The Webcam facilitates live transmission of Masses etc. here in Claddagh Church. While it is a great facility, I know most people would prefer to be able to attend Mass in person.

### **FUNERALS, WEDDINGS ETC.**

Only with very limited numbers at present. No new Baptisms can be booked in until restrictions are lifted.

### **PARISH VISITS, SICK CALLS ETC**

House visits are banned at present, and this prevents us from normal Parish calls or visits. We will respond to any 'sick calls'. Please phone 091 582884

### **PRIORY OFFICE**

Re-opens on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> January.

### **WEBSITE ASSISTANCE**

Our thanks to Alan Fallon for his technical assistance with material for our website.