



CLOYNE DIOCESAN CENTRE

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Preparation for the celebration of Christmas

Dear Father,

I write to offer some suggestions for the celebration of Christmas in the face of the restrictions required to prevent the spread of Covid 19.

Might I first convey my appreciation and gratitude to all the priests of the diocese who have adjusted your ministry to help people celebrate important sacramental moments. It is gratifying and encouraging for all.

Turning to the challenging task of celebrating Christmas safely. Find attached guidelines for religious services as issued by the H.S.E. It is your responsibility to ensure that these directives are observed faithfully. They are best read in conjunction with people who volunteer to assist you in ensuring their implementation.

In regard to the Mass schedule for Christmas, having consulted with the Council of Priests, who in turn have been engaged in discussion with their Parish Pastoral Council, it is clear **no one arrangement suits all parish communities**. Therefore, each parish will need to plan their Christmas liturgy schedule and publicise it as widely as possible over these weeks. The use of local print media is recommended.

While some parishes may choose to limit their celebrations for Christmas day to online broadcast most parishes will be offering extra Masses to facilitate as many people who wish to gather to celebrate the gift to the world of the Christ Child. Through the media I have appealed for people with Covid management experience to volunteer their assistance.

Despite our best efforts many will be unable to attend Mass on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. However, a special invitation might be extended to families with young children to visit the Crib. Special provision needs to be made so that they can do so safely.

I thank you in anticipation for the considerable work and demand this will place on you.

With prayerful best wishes in all your labours in the vineyard this Christmas.

Yours sincerely,

+ Wm. Crean

Most Rev. William Crean, D.D.,
Bishop of Cloyne.