

DIOCESE OF CORK AND ROSS

Letter to Church Congregations in Cork City and Suburbs in regard to the Annual Eucharistic Procession 2020.

These early months for me as a new bishop have been ones of listening and learning. I continue to meet a group of representatives drawn from several randomly selected parish assemblies and parish pastoral councils to prepare for a more extensive consultation with parish representative bodies. I am really looking forward to a gathering of young people from all over the diocese which will take place on Sunday 26th April in U.C.C. Over twenty young people from different youth faith groups and parishes have been meeting regularly with me since last September in order to plan this event.

On Sunday 2nd February, I gathered with almost 300 religious women and men in the Cathedral to celebrate their witness to religious life and to meet socially. I have also been meeting with all the clergy in diocesan appointments and retired clergy to listen to their experience, pray together and discuss vital issues with them.

I have learned a lot from these meetings as well as from my pastoral visits to parishes most weekends. People and clergy raise many different matters with me and I realise that there is a wide range of views to take on board. One such matter which has been raised with me early on by many people is the Annual Eucharistic Procession which has taken place on the streets of Cork since 1926.

As I listen to parishioners and clergy throughout the city I hear a strong conviction that Daunt Square is no longer the most appropriate place to hold a prayerful and respectful time of worship of the Blessed Sacrament. This view is also held by the many people who have given their time and energy to the Procession through the years. Taking the Procession through the commercial heart of the city while the wider culture continues with its afternoon activities is also not appropriate any longer. I am hearing that it would be better to re-route the Eucharistic Procession away from the commercial heart of the city in order to ensure that people will continue to be part of a prayerful and dignified procession for many years to come.



Late last year, I established a working group to make recommendations to me about different aspects of the Eucharistic Procession including its liturgy, the logistics of the route and how to communicate any proposed changes that would follow. Following from these planning meetings, I can now let you know that the Annual Eucharistic Procession will take place on Sunday 7th June. This date had been chosen in order to avoid a clash with the Diocesan Pilgrimage to Lourdes which will begin on 12th June.

This year the Annual Eucharistic Procession will begin in St. Mary's Church, Pope's Quay and follow a route along Mulgrave Road towards the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne. The Procession will conclude with a period of guided prayer, a homily and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament in the Cathedral itself.

2020 will be the first Eucharistic Procession for the expanded city since the extension of the city boundaries in 2019 and all city parishes will continue to be represented. The on-going support of civic offices and public services of the city is assured.

While plans will be finalised in coming months, the working group and Procession Committee will continue to work together to revitalise and reinvigorate this cherished part of Cork's spiritual tradition. I am asking parishes to ensure a renewed support and participation at the Annual Eucharistic Procession and to involve as many people and different groups as possible for this year's Eucharistic Procession on Sunday 7th June.

Yours sincerely in Christ


✠ Fintan Gavin
Bishop of Cork and Ross