

Greetings and every blessing to all in our MICC Community

As your school chaplain, I welcome this opportunity to share some thoughts and resources with you. We find ourselves in a situation where we must take each day as it comes and try not to think too far ahead. This is not always easy for us but we can make the most of this time with our families and find value in the stillness that has suddenly appeared in our usually busy lives. We pray for all the healthcare workers, that they may be kept safe and strong. We pray too for all who have been bereaved, that they may be consoled.

Understandably it is a worrying and uncertain time and the need to support each other is great, but remember our community and friendships are strong. Keep up online connections, look out for others and access supports as necessary while observing the HSE guidelines. We know that social distancing is not easy but it is for the good of all at this time and will save lives. We want you all to know that we are here for you if you need to make contact, all school staff want the best for you all.

Know that you are in my thoughts and prayers daily; we are all in this together. As we hope for the return of normality, we trust in the Lord that just as the sun rises each day against the dark of night that this darkness will too pass. *“Be still and know that I am with you.” (Psalm 46)* Stillness in simple terms means stop but I think there is a deeper meaning to ‘be still’ ... to stop worrying, stop trying to control things, to wait!

My wish is that you may all be safe, that you may all be well and that you may be at ease with stillness - Ms. O'Sullivan, School Chaplain

Resources:

Five Ways to Wellbeing: Some examples of how to make sense of it during challenging times...



1. **Connect...** Stay in touch with friends (on social media) but try to limit your social media time as it can be wasteful and distressing. Many of the platforms are filled with news, facts and even rumours related to the Coronavirus. Spending too much time scrolling through this information can make you feel scared and anxious. Take breaks from social media to connect with family members at home and talk to each other!

2. **Be Active....** Training is cancelled, and gyms are closed, however, that does not mean that you cannot get in some exercise. You could go for a jog or even walk the dog (within 2km limit!). These are great ways to clear your head. YouTube has lots of videos on easy to follow yoga, pilates and aerobic exercises that you could do at home. Local GAA groups and many sports/hobbies are staying connected online.

3. **Take Notice...** but be wise with your newsfeed. Some of us are very curious and want to know more about what is going on and may find it very difficult to disconnect from social media. If that is you, why not change up your newsfeed to receive more positive news? Accounts like @the_happy_broadcast on Instagram only posts positive news concerning the coronavirus and inspiring messages that can give you lots of good vibes and enlightenment. Or better still, find beauty in your people and surroundings! (see my video for possible inspiration!)

4. Keep Learning... For 3rd & 6th yrs, we understand how difficult the uncertainty you are currently experiencing is. Keep positive and keep learning...it will be put to good use so keep trying! To all students, no matter what year you are in, keep connected with your teachers and engaging in your work. When a break from this is needed, or spare time is found, there are many ways to learn and plenty of ways to lift your spirits during this time. Why not start reading a book that you have wanted to read for ages, listen to a Podcast or start watching a new Netflix series? Organise your day - <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/plan-your-day.pdf>

5. Give... Now could be your time to be creative, it's a great way of releasing stress. It can help you to switch off from the constant news updates. Doing some drawing/colouring can help you to relax and put your mind at rest. You do not have to have amazing artistic ability to colour. You could also try out some creative writing, painting, singing, playing an instrument or even cooking, do whatever works for you. Your presence to those who live with you is very important, look out for others and listen to where the needs may be. Help where possible and reach out with care and kindness. This experience is difficult for everyone, be aware and considerate. Show appreciation for the those that mind and love you and want to keep you healthy!

We all need support from time to time. This is found ideally in the people closest to you, however it is worth noting there are many services still available online:

NEPS – National Educational Psychological Service – Links to information here - <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/advice-to-young-people-while-schools-are-closed.pdf>

Childline provides free listening services to children and young people. The Childline helpline is open 24 hours every day. Online chat at childline.ie available from 10am to 4am
Freephone 1800 666 666 or Text "Talk" to 50101 for assistance www.childline.ie

Jigsaw help young people by providing mental health information for young people and their parents www.jigsaw.ie

SpunOut provides information for young people on mental health and many other topics. SpunOut also has an online directory of services. Contact: www.spunout.ie

Pieta House – Support for those in crisis – www.pieta.ie 1800 247 247 Text HELP to 51444

Stay Well & Keep the Faith

Mass is celebrated and broadcast from the Cathedral of St. Mary and St. Anne each day in Cork – www.corkandross.org

Rosary each night at 8pm on church webcam in Limerick - www.redemptoristslimerick.ie

Local links:

Facebook Live – Mass on Sunday at 10.30am – Fr. Tom Hayes - Enniskeane Parish Facebook

Facebook Live – Service on Sunday at 11.00am – Rev Cliff Jeffers – Fanlobbus Union Facebook

Facebook Live – Sunday Mass – 11.30am – Clonakilty Parish Facebook Page

Mindfulness:

The power of prayer is proven to instil compassion and calm but if it's not for you then maybe take a few moments in the peaceful present using one of the many Mindfulness apps; Headspace, Smiling Minds and Calm are popular and Padraig O' Morain has excellent resources on his website www.padraigomorain.com also www.moodwatchers.com is a good resource. Relaxation tips: <https://www.education.ie/en/The-Department/Announcements/relaxation-techniques.pdf>

I hope there is something here to help & we can still feel connected while keeping our distance!