



All are welcome Pope Francis makes it clear that no one should feel excluded from God's love. All have a home in the church. "All are welcome" is a popular hymn of recent years. "Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safely live, a place where saints and children tell how hearts learn to forgive... All are welcome in this place."

The hymn speaks of inclusion and togetherness. But while its sentiments are beautiful, not everyone experiences them as true. There are some who, due to personal circumstances, believe they are not welcome in the church. Even when the circumstances aren't entirely of their own making, they feel excluded from full participation in the church. For the divorced and remarried, those who are LGBT, or in irregular unions, the church can seem a cold place. Traditional teaching on marriage and sexuality has made them feel rejected, with the result that, far from feeling welcome, many are alienated from the church and, sadly, don't want anything to do with it. In *The Joy of Love*, Pope Francis makes it clear that no one should feel excluded from God's love. All have a home in the church, he says. All are welcome. The church must help families of every sort, and people in every state of life, know that, even in their imperfections, they are loved by God and can help others experience that love.

It is important then for priests to assist those whose marriages have faltered and help them feel part of the church community. Francis outlines a process that could lead divorced and civilly remarried Catholics back to the sacraments, and points out that these couples "are not excommunicated and should not be treated as such, since they remain part" of the church.

While he upholds traditional teachings on marriage, Francis is a realist. The church, he says, has often foisted upon people an "artificial theological ideal of marriage" removed from people's everyday lives. At times, these ideals have been a "tremendous burden".

He cautions against stating that "all those living in any 'irregular situation' are living in a state of mortal sin". People in "irregular situations," or non-traditional families, like single mothers, need to be offered "understanding, comfort and acceptance". As must gay men and women. When it comes to assisting people, the

church needs to stop applying moral laws as if they were "stones to throw at a person's life". We must preach the ideal of marriage and family, but always show mercy, taking people's complex situations into account. Individual conscience is paramount and "needs to be incorporated into the church's praxis in certain situations which do not objectively embody our understanding of marriage".

"A big heart" - that must be the church's attitude to all, Francis says, "even those who have made a shipwreck of their lives". "We also find it hard to make room for the consciences of the faithful, who very often respond as best they can to the Gospel amid their limitations, and are capable of carrying out their own discernment in complex situations. We have been called to form consciences, not to replace them." Pope Francis, *The Joy of Love*.

The Catholic primate Archbishop Eamon Martin has described as "grossly disrespectful" and "almost cavalier" the manner in which churches were told this week that Baptisms, First Communion, and Confirmations should be deferred due to the Delta variant of Covid-19. "It's just very disrespectful the way this was done," he said. "A journalist's tweet. The Tánaiste dismissively saying 'oh, they're off, that was how we were told about the change in direction. The manner of communication in this case was grossly disrespectful. We are extremely disappointed by this," he said. All of it made him think it was time "for a proper dialogue about the place of faith and its expression in public life and that's something I'd be very very open to." A statement, posted on the Government website on Wednesday, stated that "religious ceremonies such as Baptisms, First Holy Communion and Confirmations should not take place at this time. Further advice will follow on resumption of these ceremonies when it is safe to do so. Speaking on **RTE** Radio 1's News Archbishop Martin said there was "a lot of frustration and deep disappointment and indeed anger". "We've been deluged with calls from parishes, I know that priests and others have been extremely disappointed by this reversal of the position that was written to us from the Taoiseach's office at the very beginning of June." It said such ceremonies could take place "in line with the gradual reopening of society from the 5th of July," he recalled. "A huge amount of preparation," had taken place for this "very important moments in journey of faith for young people and their families," he said. In **Northern Ireland** First Communion and Confirmation ceremonies were held very carefully, very safely, he said. However, the church had been "consistent in encouraging our parishes to adhere to public health advice at the moment is that these sacraments are de-

Remembered In Mass		
Donoughmore		
Sat 3rd	7 pm	Catherine Gavin & all the deceased members.
Mon 5th	10 am	
Tue 6th	10 am	No Mass
Fri 9th	10 am	No Mass
Sat 10th	7 pm	
Knockea		
Sun 4th	11 am	
Wed 7th	10am	Willie Connolly
Sun 11th	11am	Charlie Godfrey (20)
Roxboro		



ferred and we have to be respectful of that," "At the same time we would really love to know why did this almost cavalier approach to communication happen?," he said. In the Dáil on Thursday the Tánaiste Leo Varadkar said that (Nphet) did not recommend the cancellation of First Communion and Confirmations because "they were not supposed to be taking place anyway". Mr Varadkar rejected claims that in an "off-the-cuff" remark on Tuesday he had cancelled these ceremonies. He said his comment was an "on-the-record response to a question I was asked at a press conference. Those are the facts." As controversy continued over the prohibition of the religious events and claims the Tánaiste had been dismissive, Sinn Féin TD Chris Andrews said "that's no way to treat people" as he called for Mr Varadkar to "see sense" and allow the ceremonies to go ahead. The Tánaiste pointed out however that "what the CMO said yes-

Parish of Donoughmore/Knockea/Roxboro



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terday is that Nphet did not recommend the cancellation of communions and confirmations because, in the view of Nphet, they were not supposed to be taking place anyway." "They had hoped the ceremonies could resume after July 5th but that was not possible. The public health advice was clear that "people who are not vaccinated should not gather indoors. "Unfortunately, that's what communions and confirmations inevitably involve, people who are not vaccinated gathering indoors gathering indoors and, on some occasions, having family gatherings and parties afterwards and that results in clusters and the spread of Covid .The Tánaiste added that "that's the rationale behind the decision but I appreciate it a big disappointment.

Recently deceased. Our sympathy, to the families of Josephine (Louie) Reynolds Geraldine villas, Garryowen, formerly of Crabbstrand Ballysimon and Dick Donworth Knockainey .May they rest in peace.

www.dkrparish.ie website

weekly newsletter / Mass leaflet under the "Parish info" section

Parish Office open on Saturday 11-12.15pm