

The Presbytery,  
Dalton Street  
Claremorris,  
Co Mayo.

Dear Parents,

As you are aware and to your relief, we had finally been given the clearance by the Diocese, to commence with Communion and Confirmation Ceremonies. Because of this, dates, times and details were sent out to facilitate preparation.

Unfortunately, to my disappointment, it has all changed again. We have received an email from the Archdiocese highlighting the up-dated Government guidelines. I have attached the letter for you to read.

I am aware that we did not proceed last year with Communion as a number of Parishes did. This decision I stand by as been the correct one, the safety of everyone was paramount. Some Communions were held, gatherings were organised, parties took place and we were in lock down once again in October.

In reality, this looks like a referral to Autumn, but for practical reasons, I would suggest that as soon as is possible, be it the middle of the summer holidays, we have communion ceremony with the third classes only. Once there is clearance, that will take priority, and letters will be sent out.

I am conscious that our Confirmation candidates will be in First Year. It will be very challenging to re-schedule everything, but we are left with little choice, as this is Government guidelines.

Once again, I give my word that Communion and Confirmation will be priority when we get the green light to do so. It has been a very confusing and disappointing time for so many including myself, as having nine Communion and three Confirmation ceremonies to do, I also want this complete.

I wish you and your children every blessing at this difficult time.

Yours sincerely

Fr Peter Gannon.



admin@tuamarchdiocese.org  
www.tuamarchdiocese.org

Archbishop's House,  
Tuam,  
Co. Galway.  
H54 HP57

Telephone: (093) 24166  
Fax: (093) 28070

**Updated Government Advice on  
First Holy Communion and Confirmation Ceremonies**

13 May 2021

Dear Father,

Further to my letter of 30 April, I write today to bring to your attention updated advice on First Holy Communion and Confirmation ceremonies published on the government website gov.ie. The latest advice, in the section entitled "From 10 May," reads as follows:

*recommencement of in-person religious services. It is advised that other religious ceremonies such as First Holy Communions and Confirmations should not take place in May and June. Further advice will follow on resumption of these ceremonies when it is safe to do so*

You will note that this is much more specific than what was published on 29 April, and what was given by the Minister for Health by way of written response to parliamentary questions on Tuesday, 11 May:

*However, the public health advice remains that other religious ceremonies such as communions and confirmations should not take place at this time.*

I am very conscious of the confusion this has generated, and the debate among people with sincerely held, but differing interpretations on the best way to proceed. I am grateful to those who have contacted public representatives and others in order to resolve the confusion, and for communicating these efforts to me.

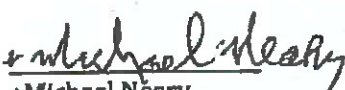
While some people contacted the Diocesan Office and respectfully asked that no such ceremonies would take place in June, an unusually high number of callers who were following the media debates, pleaded that they would proceed. I know that the latest advice from government will be a cause of disappointment for them, and to many of you who have begun to make plans. However, nobody wants to cause harm to or put others in a situation where they may become infected with the coronavirus.

Therefore, in light of the latest public health advice, I feel it is prudent to suspend all plans for First Holy Communions and Confirmations until further guidance is issued.

I thank you for your patience and understanding in what is a challenging and uncertain time. As soon as any further advice comes to hand, I will share it with you.

With the Lord's blessing and the protection of Our Lady of Knock,

Yours sincerely,

  
+Michael Neary  
Archbishop of Tuam.

