



Bereavement & Loss Café

Dear Friends

It goes without saying that we can feel alone from time to time. We can feel alone in a crowded room, alone on a packed bus or wherever we are. Loneliness is not caused so much by the absence of people but rather by the absence of meaningful connection with the world around us. Loneliness is painful – it affects our mind, body, and spirit.

The church has always been a refuge for us when we feel lost and alone. It has been a place for us to go, to make and nurture those deep connections we long for – connections with God, others, our community, and ourselves. A place to step out of our day and into the presence of God – sit awhile, to light a candle to share in the celebration of the Eucharist.

A wonderful asset that has helped so many cultivate meaningful connections in our parish has been our Parish Centre. Since its opening over three years ago, the Centre has been, and continues to be, a haven for those seeking connection – whether they come to join a class or come for tea and a chat. The Centre plays a vital role in the wellbeing of our parish community and all credit goes to the Committee and Staff for the amazing job they do on a daily basis.

This weekend we also mark World Communications Day – the theme for this year is ‘Listen with the ear of the heart’ – When we listen like this, compassionately, we listen beyond words, and we try to listen to the entirety of the experience unfolding before us. We have been listening like this as a Parish Community and what we have heard and come to know is that one of the greatest causes of loneliness in our Parish comes from loss and bereavement. We have so many people who are walking the path of grief. To help support them, as best we can, I intend to begin a Bereavement & Loss Café on a Saturday mornings – initially once a month.

I hope that this drop-in café will be a welcoming space for people to come, meet and connect over a cup of tea or coffee. To prepare for this we have been undergoing some training with the Irish Hospice Foundation to help us create this safe and welcoming space that we hope will benefit many. We have yet to set a date for this to begin and I hope to have more details available over the coming weeks.

As we gather as a community of faith this Ascension weekend, let us remember that we are not alone – Christ is with us, and Christ invites us to be there for each other too. As we contemplate the Solemnity of the Ascension of the Lord, let us take to heart the words of Christ to his disciples – *I am with you always even to the end of time.*

May the Lord bless you and keep you always in His care.

Fr Martin