

# Red Box Appeals and COVID-19

## Impact on Appeals 2020



With the ongoing impact of COVID-19, it has been decided to cancel all remaining Appeals for 2020. This decision was taken during a meeting between Fr Dermot Byrne MHM, Fr Anthony Chantry MHM, Stephen Davies, Fr Kevin Hughes MHM and Fr Jan Klaver MHM on 21 July 2020.

Some parishes are beginning to celebrate public Masses at weekends. However, with the many safety restrictions in place, alongside people being anxious about being in public and gathering with others, it is unlikely that congregations will be back to 'normal' levels any time soon.

Even as Masses and congregations return, the parish focus will be on rebuilding the community, and so the opportunities for Appeals are likely to be minimal. There is also the very real risk of a second outbreak and ensuing 'lockdown' as we approach the Winter.

As at the middle of July, there have been 38 Completed Appeals in 2020. 99 Appeals have been formally cancelled. 109 Appeals are scheduled between now and December 2020.

We hope to book Appeals to take place from Easter 2021 (4 April). How these Appeals look and how they are carried out remains to be seen, with careful planning and some creative thinking needed.

### Cancelling 2020's Appeals

The Appeals Coordinators will cancel the remaining Appeals they have set up for 2020.

It is important to maintain a relationship with these parishes, and so in cancelling the Appeals the Coordinators will:

- Where possible, call the parish priest or parish office to cancel the Appeal.
- If the Appeal was also a 'supply' for the parish, the parish priest will be asked if they would still like supply. We will not guarantee that we can provide it, but we will try to provide this. We will also offer the option to get in touch with us in the coming months if they are seeking supply at a date other than that of the cancelled Appeal.
- For the weekend of the cancelled Appeal, we will encourage the parish priest to mention information about the Red Box and mission. We will supply some materials to help with this<sup>1</sup>.
- We will encourage the parish to book an Appeal at some point after Easter 2021.

The Appeals Coordinators will also speak with the Local Secretary of the parish to let them know what is going on. This is an opportunity to check how the Local Secretary is, and offer any support we can provide at this time. Where possible, the Local Secretaries will be called to enable this conversation to happen.

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<sup>1</sup> Including newsletter inserts, the graphic of the 'Think outside the box' postcard offering different ways to give, prayers, links to children's liturgy resource, links to online films

A week before the original Appeal date, the Appeals Coordinator will email the parish with a reminder about mentioning the fact the Appeal has had to be cancelled at Masses that weekend, and if possible to include some information about the Red Box in the parish newsletter, on the website, and in any other places they can share the material.

Around the same time, the Regional Community Fundraiser for that diocese will contact the Local Secretary and encourage them to raise awareness in any way that they can.

## Appeals 2021

When we can hold Appeals again remains to be seen. We are aiming to begin Appeals from Easter 2021. We will prioritise booking Appeals cancelled in 2020, as well as other Appeals which were due in 2020. If we still have capacity, we will then try to book Appeals due in 2021.

In advance of Easter 2021, we will develop processes which take into account any ongoing restrictions (for example, not being able to give out paper), and the increasingly cashless society, offering alternative ways to maintain a relationship with and support Missio and Mill Hill.

## Supply

If a parish is seeking supply, the Appeals Coordinator for that parish will seek to arrange a Mill Hill Missionary who is able to provide the cover. When trying to find a priest, the location of the parish and where the Appeler is based will be considered. Where possible, priests will travel as locally as possible, without having to stay overnight.

If accommodation would be needed in order for the supply to take place, it will be up to the Mill Hill Missionary whether or not they wish to provide the supply, and if so what sort of accommodation they are comfortable with (e.g. if the presbytery is an option). If for any reason paid accommodation would be needed, this should be covered by the parish.

Stephen Davies  
23 July 2020