

How has the Pandemic changed us?
An assessment of the impacts of Covid-19 on a Church of Ireland parish
(2020-2022).

Alistair Clifford Doyle

April 2022

Abstract

This dissertation serves as a study and a historical record of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic 2020/2022 on the people and ministry of a Church of Ireland Parish. It demonstrates how the pandemic changed us, God's people, 'the church,' and our understanding of the church. Based on empirical evidence drawn from qualitative research methods, primarily via questionnaires and interviews of the experiences of members of the parish of Kilternan, Dublin, the project adds to the body of work already completed in this area by providing a micro-study of a particular worshipping community.

The study uses the four-fold definition of religion, meaning, purpose, community, and rituals as a grand framework, together with personal observation, critical analysis, and theological reflection to examine and analyse the experiences of people as a result of living through this time. The study observes that the pandemic caused people to pause, reason, and seek understanding, provoking reflection upon their lives' meaning and purpose. The communities to which people belonged were altered and adaptation became necessary to maintain them. This affected all aspects of people's lives, occupational, social, family, and faith. The rituals that give life to how Christians enact their faith lives were modified and albeit changed, endured. As a result of these impacts, the study identifies in what ways Christian practice and identity have altered and shows the imaginative responses of the parish ministry team to the challenges of providing ministry, mission, and pastoral care during the pandemic event.

The study uses Tara Isabella Burton, Charles Handy, Viktor Frankl, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and George Lings as discussion partners. It also draws on the contemporary work of Leslie Francis and Andrew Village in the study of Covid-19 and the church.