



# OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

**'Stay with us, Lord, on our journey'**

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## PENTECOST SUNDAY 31 MAY 2020

### **My dear Parishioners and Friends,**

When will we be able to re-open our churches? If it's left to the government, it will be 4<sup>th</sup> July at the very earliest. Yet well before that, schools can open, shops can open, garden centres can open. If ever we needed proof that this country (or at least its government) has lost its sense of priorities, here it is!

Some bishops and some pastors have already spoken asking for a reopening of the churches for worship: **Bishop Mark Davies of Shrewsbury** has described the opening of garden centres but not churches, as 'regrettable, relegating spiritual need to a dimension of the leisure industry'.

It's a fact that in England now you can have an abortion but not a baptism; buy a car, but not a votive candle; go to supermarket, but not a sanctuary; get divorced, but not married; buy weedkiller, but not receive absolution.

**A spokesman for the Catholic bishops** has said: *'The timing and the manner of the opening of churches touches profound sensitivities and spiritual needs. The government's*

*document and statements fail to recognise this.*

*'In dialogue with the Government, the Catholic Church will continue its engagement in this process and has already submitted a detailed plan, in full accordance with public health guidelines, for churches to be opened for private prayer. The Church is ready to play its full part in the task force, understanding that this includes the possible earlier use of churches for private prayer, as a first safe step towards their use for public worship.'*

On Monday last I emailed our local MP for Bury South, **Mr Christian Wakeford**, asking him to lobby the prime minister and ask for a speedy re-opening of churches. Apart from an automated acknowledgment I have had no reply as yet (Saturday). Would you consider also emailing or phoning or writing to Mr Wakeford, expressing our disappointment about locked churches and urging him to back our requests?

He can be contacted at his Constituency Office  
11 Deansgate, Radcliffe,  
Manchester, M26 2SH  
or his Westminster Office

House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA or by phone at 020 7219 6437 or by email [christian.wakeford.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:christian.wakeford.mp@parliament.uk)



We have just celebrated (Saturday 30 May) **the anniversary of the consecration** of Our Lady of Grace church. That was 64 years ago, in 1956, when the then bishop of Salford, George Andrew Beck, came.



**This Sunday is the great day of Pentecost.** We celebrate what is in effect the birth day of the Church. The Holy Spirit came upon the apostles, as Our Lord had promised, and 'bombed' them out of the upper room where they were hiding, giving them the courage to go out and proclaim openly the Good News of the Gospel.

This is a day to remember that **the Holy Spirit was given to us** when we were baptised and confirmed.

The gifts the Holy Spirit brings are still with us: **wisdom, understanding, counsel, fortitude, knowledge, piety, and the fear of the Lord.** Today we should ask the Holy Spirit to

renew those gifts in us. 'Come, Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful, and kindle in us the fire of your love.'



We are invited to join the **National Rosary Rally** taking place in dioceses throughout England, Wales and Scotland from 9am to 9pm **today, Pentecost Sunday**, 31 May, praying for an end to the pandemic.

In each diocese people are encouraged to pray the Rosary individually, or in families, or with online prayer groups **at any time within the specified hour. Our diocese has been asked to pray between 1 and 2 pm.**



Spare a thought – and a prayer – for the **children who were due to make their first Holy Communion** in the next fortnight. We should have had first Communions here at Our Lady of Grace on 6 and 13 June, followed by the parish Communion and party on Sunday 14 June. Given the uncertainties of the present time, it isn't possible yet to suggest future dates.

**Pope Francis** recently sent a message to children waiting for their first Communion, in which he said:

*Dear boys and girls, I invite you to live this time of waiting as an opportunity to prepare yourselves better: praying, reading your catechism to deepen your knowledge of Jesus, and growing in goodness, and in service to others.*

CAFOD provide a virtual **children's Liturgy** of the

Word which many families may find useful. They also provide many other resources:

<https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Children-s-liturgy>

Fr Dearman and I hope you are managing in these trying times. Some people are finding it harder than others, with a number of parishioners worried about their jobs. If you are struggling in any way, or know someone who is, remember we are always ready to help where possible.

Wishing you every blessing this Pentecost.

**Fr Allen**

### **Caring for Our Planet:** **Thought for June**

*As mentioned in last week's newsletter, it is five years since the publication of **Laudato Si**. When writing about this, **Bishop John Arnold** notes that we are now much more aware of extreme environmental events. Fires, floods and droughts have been in the news.*

*On a more positive note, he mentions the commitment of many, particularly school children, to take positive steps to combat climate change. There is more to be done and he calls on all of us to make a personal commitment to change in many small practical ways, finally reminding us of the importance of praying for God to guide us.*

CAFOD too has marked the anniversary by calling us to reflect on the world we want to see post-lockdown. They have a few suggestions:

- *I want cleaner air.*
- *More bikes, fewer cars.*

· *I want a united world, where we love and support our global family.*

· *I want a world where we appreciate nature and really care for the earth.*

· *I want to learn a new skill.*

*Our Lady of Grace is one of over 4,000 parishes in England now using **100% renewable electricity** and over **70% green gas**, thanks to an initiative of the Catholic Church in this country.*

### **Catholic newspapers**

A message from the editor of the *Catholic Universe* and *Catholic Times*:

*At the moment you are unable to collect your paper at Mass, but you can get it delivered direct to your home every week, post free. Please go to [www.thecatholicuniverse.com](http://www.thecatholicuniverse.com) or call on 0161 820 5722, we will arrange it for you.*

When the *Universe* arrives, **free copies are put on the presbytery steps, along with the latest Newsletter and Mass sheets.**

The *Catholic Herald* has now become a monthly, doubling its number of pages from 40 to 80. Copies of the *Herald* have not been received here during lockdown.



### **Where were you on this day, 31 May, in 1982?**

*It was a glorious sunny Bank Holiday Monday as **Pope St John Paul II** drove into Heaton Park with Bishop Thomas Holland at his side. A day to remember, when the Holy Father said Mass in our parish and ordained twelve priests; one of his major events in the first ever papal visit to Great Britain.*