



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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ST PETER & ST PAUL, APOSTLES 28 JUNE 2020

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

The re-opening of our church has gone very well. We all owe a big ‘Thank you’ to the team of volunteer welcomers. They have seen that everything has been done smoothly, with due care and attention to all the required safety measures.

Our Lady of Grace church will be open during the coming week from **11.00 am until 7.00 pm, Monday to Friday**, and **11.00 am to 3.00 pm on Saturday**.



We are now able to move on to the next stage of opening. Last Tuesday Cardinal Nichols said:
I welcome the statement by the Prime Minister earlier today, that places of worship are now able to resume collective acts of worship from 4 July. This is welcome news for members of all religions in England...

As Catholics we now look forward to being able to celebrate Mass together again from 4 July. We have waited with patience and longing for this moment, understanding the importance of protecting the health of people in our

society. Now we are full of anticipation that we will be able again to take part together in the Eucharist, which lies at the centre of our faith.

The Bishops of England and Wales have since issued ‘Guidance for the Celebration of Mass’. The Guidance is carefully phrased. It recognises the need we have to take great care. Our own Bishop has stressed this too.



Bishop John Arnold is concerned that the coronavirus should not be passed on through churches. He says:

It could be suggested that people might perhaps try to attend a public celebration of Mass on any day of the week, emphasising that there is at this time no obligation to attend Mass even on Sunday.

Following that advice, **we shall start with weekday Mass** before attempting Sunday Mass. The Guidance from the Bishops is so detailed that we will need to try it out first on weekdays. **We will begin on Tuesday 7 July, with Mass then on each weekday at 12 noon.** Building on that experience, Sunday Mass can follow.

There is of course more to Sunday than simply being at Mass. Sunday is the Lord’s Day and it is to be kept holy. If Sunday is just another working day, we have lost something very precious. Sunday should be a day of rest and re-creation; a day of family, of community, of worship.

During the present pandemic the Sunday Mass obligation is not there. But we should still try to keep to the spirit of the Lord’s Day, ‘the Day of His Resurrection, the Day of Christians, which sheds its clear and gentle light upon our lives’.



Only a week ago, **Bishop Mark Davies** of Shrewsbury spoke about keeping Sunday holy:

From the beginning, Christians did this in the face of every threat. The Roman Governor Pliny records how Christians came together on Sunday in the hour before sunrise on what was then an ordinary, working day.

An ancient teaching document urged Christians to leave everything in order to assemble on the day of the Lord; and in that same era, Christians in North Africa were recorded as

*saying to the judge
condemning them to death,
'We cannot live without
Sunday'... From the
beginning of the English
nation, Sunday was so
distinguished as a day
different from all other days.*

The last thirty years or so have robbed us of the sacredness of Sunday. Most people, without any faith background, see Sunday as no different from the rest of the week. Christian families now have to face the question: What can we do to keep Sunday special? Because keep it special we must, even on a human, familial, cultural, recreational level.



Continue to follow Holy Mass via the media where you can. Earlier newsletters gave details of where to find live streamed services. You can find more details on the diocesan website too, as well as on the national Catholic website, www.cbcew.org.uk.



Plans are going ahead for the Sacrament of Confirmation. In future, the Bishop will confirm children in Year 8 of high school. Preparing the children will be a responsibility shared by parents, parish and schools.

To play our part as a parish, we will need a small team of catechists. These catechists will meet with small groups of the children for several times during the year. It will be something like the present system for first Holy Communion children.

Sister Lynda is a religious sister currently in St Patrick's parish in Rochdale. She has

considerable experience in preparing children for Confirmation. Sister will take parish catechists through what is needed. **All we have to do is to find the catechists!**

This will be a very important and valuable part of our parish life in the years ahead. **Fr Allen will be delighted to receive your offers of help in this vital work.** Don't be afraid to offer. Help will be to hand.



I must say a word about today's feast of St Peter and St Paul. It takes us on a journey to Rome! St Peter's basilica is open again. A huge fisherman's net hangs over the entrance. Inside, the marble floor is covered with bay leaves. As the feet of thousands of pilgrims crush the leaves, a lovely scent fills the air. The ancient statue of St Peter is resplendent in red vestments. And people throng in all day to pray at the tomb of St Peter himself.

Something similar is happening just a few miles away in the basilica of St Paul, by the side of the river Tiber winding its way to the sea. The rich mosaics in the apse are brightly illuminated as the chant of the Benedictine monks fills the air. And again, the throng of pilgrims around the tomb of St Paul.

It would be nice to join them, but we must be satisfied at being with those two great apostles in spirit. With **St Paul**, that fearless preacher who gave his *all* for Christ our Lord. He criss-crossed the world of his time and brought the good news of the Gospel to so many peoples.

With **St Peter** too, the Rock

on which Christ has built his Church: the Church led today by the successor of St Peter, our Holy Father Pope Francis; the Church which is a *communion* of those who proclaim their faith in Jesus Christ, along with St Peter and St Paul.

St Ambrose of Milan was fond of saying '*Where Peter is, there is the Church*'. He meant that we can't be a Church without Peter and Peter's successors. On this day especially, we thank God for the Faith that has come to us from the Apostles.



I spotted this recently in the *Harvest* magazine from February 1891:

Fr D Walsh of Prestwich writes to us to say that he has realized sufficient to be allowed to begin his new building, which will cost £2,000 [The present parish hall]. But unfortunately owing to the foundation striking on quicksand the liabilities will be considerably increased and a sum of at least £400 will have to be collected. A sale of work and drawing of prizes will be held for that purpose on February 27 and 28 1891.

The *Harvest* was a diocesan magazine. It cost 1d, one old penny – less than half a new penny. We must be grateful to those who have gone before us and from whose labours we now benefit.

Fr Dearman joins me in wishing you a happy feastday this Sunday.

Fr Allen

The latest **Caritas Beacon** can be read by linking with <https://www.caritassalford.org.uk/newsletter/>