



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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14th SUNDAY ‘OF THE YEAR’ 5 JULY 2020

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

Someone asked, ‘How can you self-isolate in a Catholic church?’ The answer came, ‘Just go to one of the front benches!’ It’s true, isn’t it? The front benches are seldom filled. Visitors to our church will have seen that a number of benches have now been roped off. This is to ensure that we keep the social distancing needed in these times.

Listening to what you say, people have experienced the lockdown in different ways. Some have found it very hard. Others have enjoyed having more time with family and children.

There is no doubt, the lockdown has affected the ways we interact with one another. It has had a big impact on family life, on work, on travel, on recreation.

The lockdown has also affected the way we worship. Tuning in to Mass on the TV or computer or radio isn’t the same as being physically present. But it has been a big help to very many. All credit to those parishes which have live-streamed.

Many of you have told me how you have shared in the

Mass and other devotions from so many places around the world. That is surely one of the many benefits of being a Catholic.



From this coming week we will have Mass again in Our Lady of Grace church. That is good news. Fr Dearman and I have found it very odd celebrating Mass with the church doors closed and our voices echoing round an empty church. Your photos mounted on the benches have been a real consolation, reminding us that we are all still very much a family.

The church has been open for private prayer from 11.00 am until 7.00 pm, Monday to Friday, and 11.00 am to 3.00 pm on Saturday. Thanks to the volunteer welcomers, all has gone without a hitch.

However, from next Tuesday, 7 July, Mass will be celebrated on each weekday at 12 noon. So the church will open at 11.45 am from Tuesday onwards, not at 11.00 am. For the time being, there will be no public Mass on Sundays.



Although we are resuming the celebration of Holy Mass,

things will not be quite the same as before. The coronavirus is still around and active. We must take care and act prudently. We must still observe the necessary social distancing. You have got used to that in past weeks. We must attend to the regular cleaning of the church. We must use a lot of commonsense as well.

Because of the need for social distancing, the numbers we can take in the church at any one time will be considerably restricted. Weekday Masses should be no problem. Seeing what happens on weekdays will tell us a lot about when we might open on Sundays.

Let’s remember that the Sunday obligation of attending Mass is not there during this time of emergency. As last week’s Newsletter reminded, we should still keep Sunday holy but there are various ways of doing this, according to our own situation.

No-one must feel under compulsion to come to Mass during this pandemic. You yourselves know the guidelines for the elderly and vulnerable. A prudential judgement is called for, which only each individual person can make.

Here again is a reminder of where we can find Mass and other devotions on the internet or media:

<https://www.churchservices.tv/whats-on-now>

www.walsingham.org.uk

EWTN from the internet and by satellite TV. On Sky, 588.

www.lourdes-france.org

*Locally, various parishes. Also **Salford Cathedral**, on its website.*



Last week, I mentioned our need for a small team of catechists to help prepare our parish children for Confirmation. These catechists will meet with small groups of the children 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 will take parish catechists through what is needed. **I'm happy to say that we already have two volunteers. We need a few more of course.** Don't be afraid to offer. Help will be to hand.

With best wishes to you all for the coming week,

Fr Allen



Bishop William Kenney is an auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham and a Swedish national. He has special concern for refugees and immigrants.

He has sent a timely reminder that, with the United

Kingdom leaving the European Union, people now have less than one year to apply for Settled Status. This applies to all EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK. If you know of any such people it would be a kindness to let them know of this reminder. Bishop Kenney urges them to apply as early as possible, and long before the closing date of 30 June 2021. He warns that while many people have found it straightforward, others have faced unexpected obstacles navigating the government's system or don't even realise they are required to apply.

The UK government requires European citizens who have made their homes in the UK to make an application or risk losing their fundamental rights to live and work here. Everyone, including children, needs to go through the process.



Caring for Our Planet: Thought for July - Clothing

'Clothes are increasingly being produced using oil, the same raw material as single-use plastic. The industry has a massive carbon footprint. What's more, according to Greenpeace, a large proportion of clothing ends up in landfill or is incinerated. This includes more than half the clothing given to charity shops or textile recyclers.

'During lockdown, when unnecessary shops were shut, many of us did not buy new clothes. We managed fine, digging out old garments from the back of the wardrobe and maybe mending rather than throwing things out. In future let's try and buy second

hand, repair and re-use more (even borrow from a willing family member or friend) and continue in a more sustainable way.'

Fr Dearman has written a series of reflections on the Lord's Prayer. These will be printed in the Newsletter.

Here is the Introduction:

We often say the Our Father together as a community prayer. As we are surrounded by so many familiar things it is not surprising if we sometimes say the words automatically, not thinking about their meaning. But it is none the less a sign that for all the differences between us we share a Faith in our one heavenly Father.

Since we know the words so well, the Our Father is a valuable asset for each one of us to use privately, as our own way of talking to our Father at any time, anywhere.

We often want to share things with our friends and family, but sometimes we have to wait for the right opportunity. How wonderful it is that we can speak to our heavenly Father right away and know that he is always listening!

Jesus often spent hours talking to his Father about what he was doing. He encourages us to do the same, but he also gave us this form of words to use in speaking to the Father.

Over the coming weeks we can reflect on the words of this wonderful prayer.