



OUR LADY OF GRACE PRESTWICH

‘Stay with us, Lord, on our journey’

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5th SUNDAY IN LENT 29 MARCH 2020

My dear Parishioners and Friends,

What a strange week it has been! But thanks to great teamwork, the letter alerting our parish to what was happening was successfully delivered to homes on Friday and Saturday last week. **Our warmest thanks go to all who made this possible.**

Saying Mass with the doors of the church locked is heart-rending. Fr Dearman and I concelebrate Mass each morning (in Latin!) in front of an empty church. But no longer! **We now have a virtual congregation, because your photos are appearing on the benches.** Please continue to email your photos to me, individual or family, and we will soon have a full church! Tell your family and friends about this and get them to send photos too. If you have family members who can't send emails, perhaps you could send photos on their behalf?

Like many of you, Fr Dearman and I dislike self-isolation. There is, however, a positive way of looking at it. **Can we see our isolation as an act of sacrifice, an act of love and care?** The sacrifice of self-isolation ensures that the virus is not spread. It

gives an example of solidarity with others. It means we are following wise advice.

We can offer the sacrifices we are all making at this time along with the sacrifice of the Mass. Many of you are tuning in to Holy Mass every day. You will find details of where to find transmissions elsewhere in this Newsletter.

You will also find some very comforting **ideas about Confession and Spiritual Communion.**

Even though we can't come together physically, we can and must stay close. We can use the various means of modern communication. And of course, **we can stay close in prayer.**

I will be in the church every morning between 9 and 10 o'clock and in that time will offer Mass along with Fr Dearman. I will also be in church in the evening between 7 and 8 o'clock, to pray before the Blessed Sacrament for the needs of the parish and our local community. **Perhaps you will be able to join me from home for at least part of these times?**

Maybe these strange times can teach us a bit more about

how to pray. **There are two kinds of prayer: our personal prayer, and prayer together as a Church.** We can still join in the public prayer of the Church from a distance, for example by watching on TV or computer, or listening on radio, or reciting the Divine Office. Our personal prayer too is important, when we open our mind and heart to God and lift them up in our prayer. Public prayer without personal prayer runs the risk of becoming merely formal, lacking heart. Personal prayer without prayer together with the Church runs the risk of becoming introspective, egoistical. We need both forms of prayer.

Now that so many families are forced to remain at home, this is also a great opportunity to **discover the beauty of families praying together.**

Fr Dearman joins me in sending you love and blessing.

Fr Allen

PS Did you hear about the man who was fuming at having to self-isolate? He said that after giving it great consideration for over ten years, he was *definitely* going to join the gym tomorrow!

A Spiritual Communion

When we can't receive the Sacrament, we can always make what is called a Spiritual Communion. **We can use our own words, or words like these:**

My Jesus, I believe You are really present in the Most Blessed Sacrament of the altar. I love You above all else and I desire to receive You in my soul. As I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come into my heart at least spiritually. I receive and embrace You as if You have already come. I unite myself wholly to You. Do not permit me to be ever separated from You.

What about Confession?

This what **Pope Francis** said last Monday:

"I know that many of you go to confession before Easter ... many will say to me: 'But Father I cannot leave the house and I want to make my peace with the Lord. I want Him to embrace me How can I do that unless I find a priest?' Do what the catechism says. It is very clear. If you don't find a priest to go to confession, speak to God. He is your Father. Tell Him the truth: 'Lord, I did this and this and this. Pardon me.' Ask His forgiveness with all your heart with an act of contrition, and promise Him, 'afterward I will go to confession.' You will return to God's grace immediately. You yourself can draw near, as the catechism teaches us, to God's forgiveness, without having a priest at hand."

Where can I find Mass?

Many parishioners are daily attending Mass virtually in

many parts of the country, and even in the world, by the following links:

<https://www.churchservice.s.tv/whats-on-now> *This is a very good service which streams live Masses and other services.*

EWTN is a global Catholic network followed by millions of people around the world. *It relays daily Mass at 12 noon, 6.00 pm and 11.00 pm as well as many programmes of great interest. EWTN can be accessed from the internet and by satellite TV. If you have Sky, you will find EWTN on 588.*

www.walsingham.org.uk *live streams daily Mass and other devotions.*

*Pope Francis' daily Mass can be seen at any time of the day on **Vatican YouTube**. Link into **vatican.va** then click 'Vatican News', then the YouTube symbol on the right, then 'Mass at Santa Marta'.*

Our Lady's Dowry

On Sunday 29 March, we will take part in the nationwide re-dedication of England as the 'Dowry of Mary'. The Rededication is a reminder that we are part of a living tradition. It's a tradition that tells us something about the past but it also tells us something about now, because our faith - to be vibrant and real and powerful - is ever ancient, ever new.

The Act of Entrustment was included in the posting that went to houses in the parish last week. Please join in the Re-dedication at home on Sunday, if possible at 12 noon, when the Re-dedication will take place. If you have mislaid the Prayer,

you can find it on several websites, including **www.cbcew.org.uk**

In this time of uncertainty because of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is important that we place ourselves under the protection and guidance of Christ through Mary, our Mother.

Bishop John Arnold

In a message sent earlier this week, our Bishop said:

For my part, I promise to celebrate Mass for the priests, religious and people of the Diocese in the chapel at Wardley Hall each morning, Monday to Saturday, at 7.30am and to spend an hour in the chapel before the Blessed Sacrament Monday to Saturday between 5pm-6pm.

Our Primary School

It is good to read the appreciative messages that have come in regarding Our Lady of Grace Primary School. These are very difficult days. Complicated arrangements have to be made, and it's uplifting to read the positive comments of parents. Well done to all!

Parish Collection

*People have been asking how they might keep up their parish contributions in these days. Some will be on reduced incomes and so must suspend contributions. If you are still financially viable, you might consider signing a **monthly Standing Order** rather than using envelopes or giving in cash. These are the details should you wish to do this: Barclays Bank. Sort code 20-55-34. A/C no 60192309.*

Please keep safe and well!

