

**FOURTH SUNDAY
OF LENT
22 MARCH 2020
MOTHERING SUNDAY**



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Secretary: Claire Bailey

1Samuel 16:1;6-7;10-13 The Lord looks at the heart rather than at outward appearance.

Ephesians 5:8-14 Christ shines on us as children of light.

John 9:1-41 The healing of the man born blind angers the Pharisees, who think that they themselves can "see", but are actually "blind". This "sign" is about Jesus as light of the world. The man born blind (us) first speaks of "the man called Jesus", then calls him "a prophet", then "if this man were not from God, he couldn't do a thing". Finally he calls Jesus "Lord" and "believes in him".

Letter from the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith. It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, at this time we must not gather for public acts of worship in our churches. This will begin from Friday evening, 20 March 2020, until further notice.

Our churches will remain open. They are not closing. They will be a focal point of prayer, where you will find solace and strength. In visiting our churches at this time, we will observe with great care the rules of hygiene and social distancing. However, the celebration of Mass, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, will take place without a public congregation. Knowing that the Mass is being celebrated; joining in spiritually in that celebration; watching the live streaming of the Mass; following its prayers at home; making an act of spiritual communion; this is how we share in the Sacrifice of Christ in these days. These are the ways in which we will sanctify Sunday, and indeed every day.

We want everyone to understand that in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed. This is, without doubt, the teaching of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2181). This pandemic is the "serious reason" why this obligation does not apply at this time.....

The second vital aspect of these challenging times is our care for each other. There are so many ways in which we are to do this. Being attentive to the needs of our neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us. During these disturbing and threatening times, the rhythm of the prayer of the Church will continue. Please play your part in it. The effort of daily kindness and mutual support for all will continue and increase. Please play your part in this too. For your commitment to this, we thank you. May God bless us all. **Vincent Nicholls and Malcolm McMahon OP.**

ARRANGEMENTS DURING THE SHUT DOWN : Although there will be no public liturgies for the time being, I shall continue to celebrate Mass in private at all the usual times (Monday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday). Only the Sunday Mass will be in the church. The others will be in The Priest's House. The church will be **open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays** from 12 noon to 1pm for private prayer. Please just walk in and avoid touching surfaces, door handles etc as far as possible. On Saturday Jane Little hopes to arrange Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament during the hour.

PRAYERS FOR MOTHER'S DAY: "May we be thankful to our mothers for all they did for us when we were babies, spending so much of their time feeding us, comforting us and keeping us safe....." "We pray for all mothers and grandmothers, who still love and care for us, teaching us, helping and comforting us, sharing our hobbies and our ideas, encouraging us and keeping us happy even though they may be tired. May the love they show for us be reflected in the love we show for others." (These were composed by two young parishioners).

REDEDICATION TO OUR LADY : This is due to happen next Sunday at midday. Alas we cannot have a public ceremony, but we can make our own dedication personally. Wednesday is the feast of The Annunciation. For help go to

Behold 2020 on the internet.

Let us pray for each other and keep in touch as far as possible.