

Dear Parishioners,

We are all facing a very challenging and uncertain periods as the fear of the corona virus epidemic is making its effect felt in our normal daily lives. Due to the circumstances surrounding this corona virus, unfortunately we have to stop all public services, especially the Holy Mass. The Psalmist in Psalm 121, invites us to turn to our Lord our God; in these moments we should not lose hope but instead evermore firmly rely in his providence. The Lord is our guardian; the Lord is at your side and you in his shade...

I am aware that few of our parishioners are doing prayerful sacrifices but as a community I request you all to join with me in a continuous chain prayer initiative. Only prayer can rejuvenate us and give us the vigour to overcome such difficult times.

This chain prayer should be done daily starting from 06:00 - 22:00 hrs. Each individual (can be children or even a family) will have a 30-minute slot. As it is a chain of prayer so please take initiative to fill the available slots. I would like you to include the following prayers in your chain prayer schedule:

1. Divine Mercy Chaplet
2. Holy Rosary
3. Spiritual Communion
4. Psalm 23: Lord is my shepherd
5. Gospel Passage

Please don't hurry through the prayers to complete it in 30 minutes; in as much it is a communal prayer initiative it also has a personal dimension. These prayers should nourish each one of us and infuse within us the Christian unity and brotherhood that which this world urgently needs. To join this prayer chain please use this link: <https://chat.whatsapp.com/JmTDS5HLDffHcTDyqHvjvd>

I would also like to start a practical initiative - a Help Desk for the needy. In these times there are people in our communities who face a variety of difficulties, so it is our responsibility to be charitable and supportive. If anybody is in need, please contact: 07586700914. I am very happy that some of our parishioners have volunteered for this purpose.

Only through our prayers and our charitable initiatives, will we come out of this miserable time, as a new and holy people of our God.

Keeping you all in my prayers,

With prayerful regards

Fr. George Thomas Chelackal,
Parish Priest
Mother of God Church, Leicester.

	<p>Mother of God Greencoat Road Leicester LE3 6NZ</p> <p>☎(0116) 287 5232 ✉mogparish@gmail.com www.motherofgodleicester.co.uk</p> <p>NRCDT- Registered Charity</p>	<p>Parish Priest: Fr. George Thomas gchelackal@gmail.com</p> 
<p>Our Schools: Christ the King Primary - 0116 2857261 - www.ctlk.org/p_Home.ikml English Martyrs' Secondary - 0116 2428880 - www.emschool.co.uk/</p>		
<p>Parish Hall Bookings: please contact 07586700914</p>		



29th March -
5th April 2020



Online Mass services from Mother of God Church Presbytery Leicester

Monday to Saturday Mass times
9:00 am Holy Qurbana (Malayalam)
5:30 pm Holy Mass (English)

Sunday Mass times
10:30 am Holy Mass (English)
4:00 pm Holy Qurbana (Malayalam)

[Please follow this facebook link to join the online Mass service](#)

We would like to let parishioners know, via our diocesan website and e-newsletters, details of any live-streaming Mass times and prayer in your church. St Barnabas Cathedral are live streaming Mass at 1 pm Monday-Friday and Sunday at 10 am. These services are also recorded.

A retreat service is attached for individual prayer for parishioners, which can be forwarded by email to those already on your list - downloadable at: <http://www.liturgyoffice.org.uk/Resources/Flu/index.shtml> along with other prayer services.



Please keep in your prayers all the sick and housebound people of the parish.

**Important Amendment to the Bishop's Letter
Sent Last Night to all the Clergy of the Diocese of Nottingham - 23/3/2020
Concerning the Prime Ministers Statement to the Nation - 23/3/2020**

Dear Brothers in Christ,

Following the PM's statement last night when he said that all places of worship were to close, it appears from the further written directive, attached as a web link pdf, and which can also be accessed from the web link below, that our churches may remain open for 'solitary prayer' (see page 4), but are closed for public worship. Please ensure that you reflect this important detail in everything you communicate to your parishioners and I would ask that all Area Deans ensure please that this clarification has been received by all your local clergy later this morning.

Web link to further written directive:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/874732/230320_-_Revised_guidance_note_-_finalVF.pdf

I will seek clarification as to what we may actually do with regard to Funerals, and get back to you as soon as possible. Meanwhile please contact the Funeral Director if you have a Funeral arranged. Thank you for everything you are doing in these challenging times to stay in communication with those to whom you minister. Do all you can to support them in prayer.

With prayer,

**Right Reverend Patrick McKinney
Bishop of Nottingham**

Today's Gospel Reflection

'Out of the depths I call to you O Lord: Lord hear my cry. Listen attentively to the sound of my pleading!' (Ps 129:1-2). In this, the fifth Sunday of Lent, the Church invites us to turn our attention to the realities that are perhaps the most 'scandalous' in human experience, the death of a loved one. In this Gospel we see all those who are being supportive of Martha and Mary at the moment of their brother, Lazarus' death.

Previously called "Passion Sunday," this Sunday marks the beginning of Passiontide, a deeper time of Lent. This is the third Sunday of the scrutinies for the preparation of adult converts, and the final Sunday of Lent before the beginning of Holy Week. The Liturgy of the Word of this day speaks of re-creation, resurrection, and new life.

Whether one attends the Ordinary or Extraordinary Form, the covering of sacred images can be practiced in both. The rubrics in *The Third Edition of the Roman Missal* states,

The practice of covering crosses and images throughout the church from this Sunday may be observed. Crosses remain covered until the end of the Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday, but images remain covered until the beginning of the Easter Vigil.

Year of Word Campaign - we now have opportunity to:

- a) Listen to the God who Speaks in a profoundly radical way.
 - b) Deepen our faith in God and in each other through increased Scriptural reflection.
 - c) Build on our relationships across all dioceses and create a renewed Church community together spiritually and scripturally.
 - d) Explore, learn and be more creative in the use of all digital media, reach people in new and dynamic ways, and maintain good communication with local Scripture Champions.
 - e) Enable more Catholics to listen to the God who Speaks throughout the Bible at all times and in all places, and not just in a crisis or in 2020.
- Keep well! Let us know about your live-streaming Mass times.

Inspiring quotes from Catholic Saints: "Anxiety is the greatest evil that can befall a soul except sin. God commands you to pray, but He forbids you to worry." **St. Francis de Sales**

300 Club Results: 15th March £50 B Stasiewicz (127). £25 E Waldron (234), D Avery (194).

22nd March: £50 S. Pachy (91). £25 B Stasiewicz (127), Mrs R Kennedy (142).

Prayer to Mary during Coronavirus Pandemic

O Mary, you always shine on our path as a sign of salvation and of hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.

You, Salvation of Your People, know what we need,
and we are sure you will provide so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting after this time of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform to the will of the Father
and to do as we are told by Jesus, who has taken upon himself our sufferings
and carried our sorrows to lead us, through the cross, to the joy of the
resurrection.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God.

Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial,
but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin. Amen



Thank you!

Our donations during 2019 amounted to

£710.99.

A huge thank you to all who donated to MISSIO through their red boxes, and various donations. We have helped Missionaries to bring the hope of the Gospel to struggling communities throughout the world.

Some Important Information Regarding Live Streaming of Liturgies, Funeral Developments, Limitations on the Ministry of Priests, Sacrament of Reconciliation & Easter Duties & Holy Week During the Coronavirus Pandemic

26th March 2020

Dear Brothers in Christ,

It was sad to hear of the death of Canon John Berry, who has served our diocese so generously for some 65 years, and I know you join with me in praying that he may now share fully in God's eternal love and peace. Canon John requested cremation. Details of his Funeral arrangements, which will be limited to immediate family in accordance with the particular rules of the Crematorium, will be distributed to you when they are known. We will hold a Memorial Mass for him when we are able to.

A few preliminary notes to guide us all, as agreed by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales:

Live streaming of Mass & other Services

1. Please promote on your parish website the live-streaming of Masses across our diocese, so that people can follow Mass. Diane Williams has been collating a list of these and will be sending you details later today or tomorrow.
2. Only those who live 'on site' (e.g. in a presbytery) should be present at any live-streamed liturgy. People must not travel to these services to fulfil a supplementary role (server, cantor, organist, reader, etc). The Decree from Rome (25th March 2020) makes clear that live-streamed Masses must not include concelebration and must omit the sign of peace.
3. Bishops may travel to their Cathedrals to celebrate liturgies, as these would be regarded, by the government, as essential work - particularly during Holy Week.

Funerals - Developments

1. Guidance given last week remains: no church services; only graveside and crematorium services. The local guidance of crematorium and cemetery authorities must be followed.
2. In conducting such prayers, priests must follow guidelines on social distancing.
3. Given the possibility of increased use of crematoria at the peak of the pandemic, I have, as you know, asked the Vicar Generals, in consultation with the Deans, to draw up a list of priests and deacons (not over 70 years of age or in a vulnerable group) to help cover this situation.
4. Coffins must not be taken into our churches for resting overnight before a committal as this will necessitate cleaning of our churches.

5. After the pandemic, Masses in *memorium* will be permitted in the presence of the ashes for those committed during this time.

Limitations on the Ministry of Priests

1. In the absence of your regular pastoral routines, which I know must be very frustrating, please do devote yourselves to the daily celebration of the Mass, the Office, rosary, and prayerful intercession for your parishioners. I know from feedback received that this is a great comfort and consolation to so many people throughout our diocese, as is your telephone and internet contact with them, especially the housebound and those on their own.
2. Those priests over 70 years of age, or in a vulnerable group, who may be feeling very frustrated at not being able to minister in public at this time might be interested in an NHS project which I have just heard about. NHS staff are trying to create a bank of telephone helpers to support their most vulnerable patients during this time, so as to keep them mentally well and out of hospital. The role is to provide short-term telephone support to individuals who are at risk of loneliness as a consequence of self-isolation. Volunteers will need to be DBS checked, which will take a little time, but you already have your DBS number which I hope, in these exceptional circumstances, will be transferable. If interested, do apply: <https://www.goodsamapp.org/NHS> Please do let me know how you get on; there may be other restrictions. But if someone applies and gives me feedback, we will all be better informed. It seemed to me a good and simple way for us as a diocese to be involved in serving the common good. It may be something that we could encourage religious and laity to be also involved in, once we have clear details.
3. Visits to homes for *in extremis* celebrations of baptism and anointing of the sick are permitted, observing the necessary hygiene and distancing regulations. The anointing should follow Bishop Mason's guidelines (see attachment) and using the Anointing of the Sick leaflet, kindly drawn up by Fr Michael Kirkham (see attachment), which is to be destroyed after each use. This ministry is considered an essential work, for which travel is justifiable.

Sacrament of Reconciliation and Easter Duties

1. In addition to the earlier guidance please note that **Confessions cannot be heard over the telephone. Services of General Absolution cannot be held** as this involves travel and the gathering of people. Requests for individual confession may be difficult to meet, given the demands of social distancing and church closures. It is deemed reasonable for a priest to refuse a request for these reasons. I recognise that people will be anxious about the fulfilling of their Easter duties. A note **explicitly dispensing people from their Easter duties is being prepared for the current extraordinary circumstances which highlights the efficacy of a perfect Act of Contrition**. I will distribute that to you as soon as I receive it. But, in the meantime I draw your attention to the Church's teaching which I would ask you to communicate to any particularly anxious parishioners.

The recent note from the Congregation for Sacred Worship, speaking about the pandemic, reminds the faithful (this would include priests who cannot get to confession) who cannot receive sacramental absolution, that 'perfect contrition, rooted in love of God who is to be loved above all things, expressed in a sincere request for forgiveness, insofar as the penitent is able to make it at that moment, and accompanied by the firm intention to go to confession as soon as is possible, obtains forgiveness of all sins, including grave sin (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1452).

2. As it is not possible for the faithful to receive Holy Communion at this time, and into the future, **the Bishops of England and Wales have dispensed the Easter Duties for the year 2020. The obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed during these emergency circumstances** of the lockdown, and for as long as they last. Please make clear to everyone that this pandemic is the serious reason why this obligation does not apply at this time. I would, however, urge all of us, clergy, religious and laity to develop ways in which we can renew and deepen still more our spiritual relationship with God.

Holy Week

1. The Decree from the Congregation for Divine Worship, dated 25th March 2020, has made clear that Bishops and Priests 'may celebrate the rites of Holy Week without the presence of the people, in a suitable place, avoiding concelebration and omitting the sign of peace. The faithful should be informed of the beginning times of the celebrations so that they can prayerfully unite themselves in their homes'. Live-streaming (not recorded) is encouraged.
2. **Prayer resources for Holy Week for families and for personal prayer:** The *Magnificat* resource, which is being offered free to download online, is recommended as an excellent resource.
3. **Palm Sunday:** In Cathedrals the second form given in the Roman Missal of the Commemoration of the Lord's Entrance into Jerusalem is to be used; in parish churches the third form is to be used.
4. **The Chrism Mass:** In England and Wales a scaled down celebration of the Chrism Mass is to take place in Cathedrals. Here in our diocese it will be streamed from St Barnabas Cathedral. A text is being drawn up to enable the clergy to be able to make a personal renewal of their priestly promises. This will be distributed to you when it is received.
5. **Mass of the Lord's Supper:** This is to take place in the Cathedral and in parish churches without the presence of the people. It will be streamed from the Cathedral. The washing of feet, which is already optional, is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass the procession is also omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is kept in the Tabernacle. Streaming of Watching on Holy Thursday night: St Chad's Cathedral, Birmingham, was proposed as a focus for national coverage, more details when known.

6. **Good Friday:** This is to take place in the Cathedral and in parish churches without the presence of the people. Special intentions, reflecting the pandemic, are being drawn up for inclusion in the Universal Prayer of Good Friday. These will be distributed when completed. The adoration of the Cross by kissing it is limited solely to the celebrant.
7. **The Easter Vigil:** This is to take place in the Cathedral and in parish churches without the presence of the people. The preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted, the Paschal Candle is lit, the procession is omitted, and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows. The Liturgy of the Word then takes place. For the 'Baptismal Liturgy' the Renewal of Baptismal Promises alone is necessary (Roman Missal, page 371, n.55). The Liturgy of the Eucharist then follows. An Easter Sunday Mass is to take place in the Cathedral and in parish churches without the presence of the people. Please note: those priests who have no possibility of uniting themselves to the Easter Vigil celebrated in a church are to pray the Office of Readings for Easter Sunday.
8. **Religious Communities:** Please note that the context concerning concelebration is twofold: the spread of Coronavirus in religious communities and the scientific evidence that the virus can be passed through the medium of the host, shared and handled by the concelebrating priests. Priests who live in the same residence may, of course, be present together at one Mass if they so choose, observing the requirements of 'social distancing', but the Rite of Holy Communion must reflect the provisions of the Decree and the reasons for it.
9. **Enclosed Communities:** The chaplain, observing the necessary hygiene and distancing conditions may celebrate Mass for enclosed communities, if that is the wish of the community. The community sacristan should prepare everything for the Mass. The chaplain should enter the sacristy and celebrate the Mass without contact with those inside the community. The celebrant should bring his own chalice and paten and host. After receiving his Communion, he should retire from the altar and a member of the community should distribute Holy Communion to the community from a separate ciborium. This should not happen for communities who have other visitors, such as care workers entering to look after elderly residents, where the risk of spreading the virus is greater.

I'm sorry that this letter is so long, but there have been two detailed Decrees from Rome to consider as well as the details of our own response as a Bishops' Conference. I have tried to bring this all together into one document which I hope will prove helpful to you. If I have missed anything, or you remain unsure about something, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me by means of Fr Jonathan.

You remain very much in my prayers,

+ Patrick

Right Reverend Patrick McKinney, Bishop of Nottingham