

Dear Parishioners,

As I write this the whole country seems to be buzzing with “re-opening” and many people have cheered up a great deal. It seems very different to the last 15 weeks and the terrible tragedy of the deaths of nearly 44,000 people in our country directly through the *Covid 19* virus.

Amongst many new moves from the government has been the news that Churches and other religious places of worship may re-open, under very strict conditions, for limited numbers of people to attend services. Last Saturday morning one of our parishioners rang me to ask “does this mean there will be the usual Sunday Masses tomorrow?” The answer I had to give was “No”.

On last Friday I had a ZOOM video call with the other Deans of the Diocese meeting with the Cardinal, and there was much discussion of the practicalities of how re-opening would happen and the Cardinal gave us much background to these latest moves from HMG. He was emphatic that we must not see this as a return to normal, for, sadly, we are still a long way from “normal” at the present time. These new possibilities are another stage of the journey that we are all on. The worrying pictures of people flooding the beaches at Bournemouth and other places the other week are, frankly, frightening.

The Catholic Bishops have negotiated very specific “guidelines” with HMG and also Public Health England. They are all aimed at protecting all who might attend Mass in the weeks to come. Preparing any building for this is a considerable task and volunteers will be key. Without volunteers we cannot open, it is as simple as that.

For the moment, St Joseph’s will not be open for, probably, another 3 weeks. We have managed, thanks to a small group of volunteers, to open both Holy Cross (St Andrew’s) at Much Hadham and Most Holy Redeemer at Sawbridgeworth for private prayer and it has been good to see small numbers of people coming to pray privately and quietly.

I chaired a meeting of the Deanery priests last Tuesday and we spent much time in discussion and information sharing. Some of our Churches will be open for Masses this weekend. Others need more time to prepare and hope to celebrate some public Masses the week after. The biggest unknown is what numbers of people will want to come. The capacity of all our churches will be considerably reduced by the 2 metre rule which we are all adhering to. For instance, Most Holy Redeemer will only be able to seat about 14 or so people at any one time. How will we cope if too many people turn up to one of our churches and have to be turned away? This is just one example of the problems that we are trying to work through.

The way forward that the Cardinal suggests is to remind people that there is still NO SUNDAY MASS OBLIGATION but that there will be times when people can come together for the celebration of Mass. Thus we all hope that many people will take the pressure of numbers off the Sunday Masses and make a special effort to come to one of the weekday Masses that will be celebrated. If everyone spreads out then there should be no problem. The Diocese have also developed a simple online “booking” system that will be of help to us all.

It is becoming clear that not every Church will resume public Masses this weekend, some clergy are extremely anxious as they fall into the "at risk" category through age or underlying medical conditions and are very worried about coming into contact with people. Many of you may feel exactly the same anxiety. I would like to assure you all that we are doing our utmost to keep you safe at this time. No one should feel compelled to return to public worship right now, the live streaming of Mass will continue daily for those who wish to remain at home and you will continue to be prayed for daily

It is early days for all this and time is needed to get things ready and up and running. It does not help that our largest church is out of action. However, we have been able to get most of the work done at St Joseph's in the last two months, whereas we had planned to have to close the church for 12 weeks or more before the virus struck us.

So, please keep your eye on the website, make an effort to tell anyone who does not have the internet what is happening - perhaps print this off and give it to them? Ring up friends who can't access the site and bring them up to date as well. As more news comes in and decisions are made we will do our best to spread the news.

Bishops John Sherrington, one of our auxiliary bishops, wrote to all the priests just a couple of days ago and we should particularly note his words...

"Certain groups of people may be at increased risk of severe disease from COVID-19, including people who are aged 70 or older, regardless of medical conditions. Individuals who fall within this group are advised to stay at home as much as possible and, if they do go out, to take particular care to minimise contact with others outside of their household."

I hope to write again to you all again before the end of next week to update you. Meanwhile, Fr Carlos and I continue to remember you all in our prayers and at our Masses and ask that you continue to do the same for us.

If you are under 70 years of age please do spend some time this week seriously considering whether you can offer yourself as a volunteer "steward" at one or more of our future open Masses, Sundays or weekdays! If you can, please ring Debbie in our Parish office (01279 654063) to let her know of your important offer.

With love and prayers,
Fr Peter

Fr Peter Harris
Parish Priest of Bishop's Stortford
St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford
Most Holy Redeemer, Sawbridgeworth
Holy Cross, Much Hadham
Dean of the Lea Valley Parishes
H E the Cardinal's Representative for Ecumenism in Hertfordshire

Parish Note Friday 3rd July and the Sunday Message from Fr Peter for Sunday 5th July 2020

Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

Fri 7/3/2020 4:00 PM

To: Bishop's Stortford - St Joseph & The English Martyr <bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk>

 1 attachments (17 KB)

Sunday Message from Fr Peter 5 July 2020.docx;

Good afternoon everyone

I hope that you are well.

Please find attached this weeks Sunday message from Fr Peter which details our current position on the re-opening of our Churches. This has also been added to our web site on the ' News' section.

The other evening whilst sitting at home all together as a family, our adopted ginger tom cat ' Tommy', who is a loveable character, strolled into our sitting room, taking centre stage. He purposefully first stretched out his front legs, followed by his hind legs resembling a gymnast on a warm up routine thus attracting our attention, then promptly sat down, surveying his audience and opened his mouth, emitting a completely silent ' miaow'. We interpreted this as he either wanted to be fed or wished to sit on one of us. Appearing to be the appointed 'volunteer', I dutifully went into the kitchen, followed by a now 'trotting' cat, to magic up a culinary feline delight. Upon my return, a family discussion had ensued on the rather bizarre question, ' If the cat could actually speak with a human voice, would he have an accent and if so, what would he sound like?'. This was met by much hilarity at first, but then followed an in depth family debate, with one member thinking that he would speak with a suave sophisticated Roger Moore tone, to another thinking that he would be a more high pitched Joe Pasquale or a cheeky ' Del-Boy' Trotter. Having spent the last 14/15 weeks (I've lost track now!) of being cocooned in our lock down bubble, now debating the vocal attributes of the cat, I thought for a moment that we had finally lost the plot, but then It actually reminded me of how we really do use non verbal communication all of the time and that actually, silence is hugely powerful, particularly when it comes to prayer. I actually really enjoy quietness, which is not always easy to achieve being blessed with an ' energetic' household, but, I have especially welcomed lately the stillness of being able to hear the birds sing in the garden above any passing traffic or aircraft noise, (apart from the very repetitious echo of the wood pigeon who sits on our chimney) and having time to calmly contemplate, listen, pray and give thanks from within.

Recently, I read an interesting article on 'silence' by Cardinal Robert Sarah who said;

"Silence is not an absence. On the contrary, it is the manifestation of a presence, the most intense of all presences. The real questions of life are posed in silence. Our blood flows through our veins without making any noise, and we can hear our heartbeats only in silence"

Hymns from Fr Carlos

Here are the Hymns for the Sunday Masses at 9am and 6pm:

Entrance Hymn - 472 - Open your ears, O Christian People - Verses 1 and 3

Melody and Lyrics: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XeScM4JfNBM>

(It may be worth having a quick listen, since it is based on a Jewish melody)

Communion Hymn - 643 - Gifts of Bread and Wine, Gifts We've Offered

Melody and Words: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U_HE_1-VcSI

Recessional Hymn - 713 - Sing of the Lord's Goodness
Melody and Words: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5R9PmGf3aE>

Zoom - Thank you to John and the 9am Music group for their continued kindness and generosity in sharing their time and talents each week. It really is very much appreciated.

Topic: Family Mass via Zoom during lock-down (music starting at 8:45am)

Time: Jul 5th 2020 08:30 AM London

Every week on Sun, until Jul 26, 2020, 7 occurrence(s)

Jul 5, 2020 08:30 AM

Jul 12, 2020 08:30 AM

Jul 19, 2020 08:30 AM

Jul 26, 2020 08:30 AM

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89508074176>

Meeting ID: 895 0807 4176

Link to Calendar invite is parishioners want to add it to their diary.

One tap mobile:

+442030512874,,89508074176# United Kingdom

Dial-in by phone:

0203 051 2874

The numbers are standard rate numbers (not free unless you have inclusive minutes), but they are not premium numbers.

Please keep in your thoughts and prayers the family and friends of Pattie Tzouliadis, who was well known and loved in the parish and sadly died recently.

Eternal rest grant until Pattie O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon her. May she rest in peace. Amen.

Please also keep in your prayers all those who are sick and housebound in our parish and their loved ones who care for them at this very difficult time.

Baptism Preparation Course by Zoom - For those parents who were unable to attend the last Baptism preparation course on 12 March before lock down and for any 'new' parents who have not yet attended a course or those who last attended 2+ years ago and wish for their Child to be baptised, Fr Carlos will be running a 'Zoom Baptism Preparation Course' on **Monday 6th July 2020 at 7.30pm**. Unfortunately, we are not yet permitted to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism itself, but, by being prepared, this is one step closer to when we are able to do so. If you would like to attend the course, please email the office with your name, your Child's name and their age and we will send you further details along with the Zoom link when available. If you would also like to receive a Baptism application form, we can email one to you.

Holy Cross - St Andrew's with Holy Cross will be open again this coming Sunday from 2.30pm to 4.30pm for silent prayer and reflection. Thank you to all of our amazing volunteers who have helped to make this possible.

Most Holy Redeemer - Thank you again also to our small trusty team of volunteers who have assisted to open Most Holy Redeemer on Tuesdays and Thursdays between 12pm - 1pm

First Holy Communion 2021 - Applications are now open for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion 2021 for those Children who live in the parish, which will take place on Saturday 8th May 2021 at St Joseph and the English Martyrs and on Sunday 9th May 2021 at Most Holy Redeemer and Holy Cross. The

preparation programme is only for those children who will be receiving the Sacrament within the parish and not elsewhere. It will start between November 2020 - May 2021 and will consist of 10 separate sessions. There will 3-4 sessions for Parents. The Children are expected to attend each session and the 9am Mass that Sunday. **Children should be 8 years old on or before 31 August 2021.**

What do I need to do to register my Child for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion 2021?

- Firstly check that your Child qualifies under the above conditions i.e. they will be 8 years old on or before 31st August 2021, that you live in the parish and your Child will be receiving the Sacrament in the parish and not elsewhere.
- Email the parish office on **bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk** requesting a First Holy Communion application form **for your child only** giving the **FULL NAME** and **DATE of BIRTH of your CHILD**.
- A personalised application form containing your Child's name and date of birth will then be emailed to you as a PDF document.
- Please print off the PDF form, fill in the remaining details requested on both sides of the form, sign and post back the hard copy in an envelope to 3, Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, Herts CM23 2ND
- When you have submitted the 'hard copy' of the form, please then email fhcstjosephs@gmail.com so that the First Holy Communion Catechist can send you an acknowledgment email and keep you updated of proposed sessions.
- The Cut off date for the hard copy of all forms to have been received at 3, Windhill is **Tuesday 1st September 2020 with no exceptions..**
- If your Child has any special needs, requirements, medical conditions or needs additional support, please ensure that your form is submitted as soon as possible. This is to ensure that we can contact you early and have plenty of time to better understand what support may be required and also make any necessary arrangements.
- If you have any questions re the application process please contact the Parish office - Thank you

Nags Head Community Book Share - *'Drop off any unwanted books, magazines or puzzles and they will be sanitised and quarantined for 3 days. They will then be on display in the smoking shelter for you to browse and take. Please obey social distancing rules at all times. to donate books simply leave them in a bag by the front door. You can access the 'Community Book Share' on any day and at any time. Just move the cones to the car park and put them back once you have finished. Thank you for your cooperation in making this community stronger'*. Dave, The Nags Head, Bishop's Stortford.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for July is for Families.

Let us pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance, and especially, that they may be protected by the State.

Pope Francis – July 2020

The family ought to be protected.

It faces many dangers: the fast pace of life, stress...

Sometimes, parents forget to play with their children.

The Church needs to encourage families and stay at their side, helping them to discover ways that allow them to overcome all of these difficulties.

Let us pray that today's families may be accompanied with love, respect and guidance, and especially, that they may be protected by the State.

Click To Pray <https://clicktopray.org/>

Click To Pray is the app of the Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network (including the Eucharistic Youth Movement). The app connects you with thousands of people who, in all the continents, are praying every day for the challenges of humanity and for the mission of the Church as the Pope proposes in his monthly prayer intentions. Pray, live and build a world which tastes of the Gospel. Give meaning to our live and put you prayer into action.

Click To Pray offers you three brief moments of prayer each day. You are invited to join the Pope's call to connect your heart with others seeking to serve the mission of Jesus, a mission of compassion for the world. Together, we make each day different. Live each day with a twist.

Click To Pray also lets you share your own prayer intentions for all to pray.

Today it exists in Portuguese, Spanish, English, French, German, and Italian. Another version is going to begin soon in Vietnamese and Chinese.

Catholic Universe and Catholic Times Readers in the Parish -If you would like to have the Catholic Universe or the Catholic Times delivered to your home every week, POST FREE. Please go to www.thecatholicuniverse.com or call them on 0161 820 5722 and they will arrange for you. Special Offer 3 Months: £18.00 or 12 Months: £72.00.

Thank you very much! - Thank you to all those people who have continued to support the Parish financially while the Church has been closed to the public. Many people have still posted their offertory envelopes through the Presbytery door containing a cheque or have changed to Standing Orders or made donations through online banking. or via our web site. Your support is greatly appreciated.

The Year of The Word - The God who Speaks

Meditate:

On this first day we can gather together Jesus invites us to rest in Him. He has been in lockdown with us and now, invites us to put all our worries, concerns and burden in his care. By giving it to Him we will truly rest.

Act:

With Jesus the burdens we carry are easy and light. At this times in particular we are called to help others carry their load. Try to do so with someone around you.

Apply for settled status as soon as possible- One year before the government's deadline for EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK to apply for Settled Status, a Bishop who has gone through the process is urging people not to delay in making their application. Bishop William Kenney, auxiliary Bishop of Birmingham and himself a Swedish national, says those who are eligible should apply well ahead of 30 June 2021. The 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. Bishop Kenney warned that while many people have found it straightforward, others have faced unexpected obstacles navigating the government's system or don't even realise they're required to apply. He is therefore urging people to get their applications in early and encouraging parishioners to look out for others who might need some support.

<https://www.gov.uk/help-eu-settlement-scheme>

Parishioners of the week - following my continued innate ramblings in the ' parish note' sent last week, I was amazed to hear from so many parishioners who contacted me to advise of the ' treasures' that they had collected as a child and also some who had either tried ' french knitting' or who had the most ingenious ideas of what to do with 19 miles of it (being the world record). Thank you especially to Chris for your memories and fabulous daily cartoons , to Marie, and David, Anne and Suzie who gave a huge list of suggestions on french knitting which made me smile, including winding it into a giant ball and using as a crash mat, loft

insulation, lines down the centre of the road, bungee jumping onto the said crash mat and using as a guide rope to find your way out of a forest. Patrick and Ruth reminisced on 'sherbet dabs'. I too remember having a sherbet fountain, inhaling through a liquorice straw a cloud of white dust packed into a yellow paper tube and also choking on part of a dip dab lolly encrusted in lemon sherbet, eventually sneezing it out(!) Thank you also to Mary who sent a great list of funny Church bulletin errors including 'At the evening service tonight, the sermon topic will be 'What Is Hell?'Come early and listen to our choir'. Please note that we are very blessed in our parish to have very tuneful and wonderfully talented choirs, so, thankfully this absolutely does not apply here! We truly miss our Choirs and their music greatly and look forward to the time when music is once again permitted to fill our Churches. Thank you everyone for your continued emails and phone calls, which are always very welcome.

Fr Peter and Fr Carlos continue to keep you all in their thoughts and prayers. Please continue to pray for them especially over the next few weeks as we embark upon the preparation for the opening of St Joseph's. If you are available and able to help with cleaning and or stewarding St Joseph's for when we do open, please do email the office or call with your name, availability and contact details. We really do need your help, so please do not be shy in coming forward! Thank you to those who have already volunteered.

I leave the final words on silence this week to St Teresa of Calcutta, who beautifully said;

"I always begin my prayer in silence, for it is in the silence of the heart that God speaks. God is the friend of silence – we need to listen to God because it's not what we say but what He says to us and through us that matters."

I hope that you have a very happy and healthy week

Best wishes
Debbie

Parish Administrator

(Mon- Fri 9am - 3pm)

Catholic Parish of Bishop's Stortford

*St Joseph and the English Martyrs, Bishop's Stortford
Holy Cross, at St Andrew's, Church Lane, Much Hadham
Most Holy Redeemer, Sayesbury Road, Sawbridgeworth*

3 Windhill, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 2ND
Telephone: 01279 654063

email: bishopsstortford@rcdow.org.uk

<http://parish.rcdow.org.uk/bishopsstortford/>

Follow our Live streaming on www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford

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