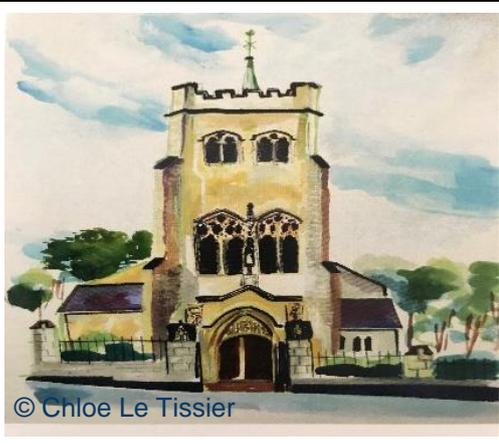


OUR LADY OF LOURDES HARPENDEN

29TH MARCH 2020
5TH SUNDAY OF LENT (A)



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COVID-19 NOTICE
THE CHURCH IS CLOSED

Self-denial is at the heart of Lent, and it is our choice how we respond to that call. This Lent however is different. Self-denial is being imposed upon us; we don't have a choice. In order to serve the common good different restrictions have been imposed upon us. And not just in our everyday life, but so too it is true in our life of faith.

Over the last couple of weeks, while we were still able to celebrate Mass together, we stopped doing certain things that were a part of participating the Mass. Then we were informed that Mass could not be publicly celebrated and, earlier this week, we were told that churches must remain closed. It seems as if some important parts of our life are slowly being stripped away. And, like many other aspects of living with this virus, it is unsettling, worrying and disconcerting.

Our celebration of the Mass feeds, and sustains us in so many ways. Through the scriptures we are guided and encouraged, through the Lord's Body and Blood we are nourished and strengthened, and in the community that gathers we find support and encouragement. The Mass gives us so much, now we have to find other ways to strengthen, preserve and nourish our faith.

One way in which we nourish our faith is by our familiarity with God's Word. Reflecting on the readings for Mass, this past week, it's as if they are written precisely for this situation, and they have been. We have heard messages such as: *'God is for us a refuge and strength'*, *'the Lord is my light and my help'* and *'God-is-with-us'*.

In our anxiety about Coronavirus, and what the future holds, we can be sure we are not alone, God is with us.

CHURCH CLOSURE

Very sadly, earlier this week, following direction from the government, the Cardinal informed us: 'that all churches must be closed, and remain closed'. He writes: 'It is essential that we all follow this instruction, painful and difficult though it is'. This will be disappointing for so many, and especially at a time like this when the church is the place we visit in search of peace and calm.

WATCH THE MASS

From this Sunday we hope to livestream Mass, via Zoom from our church, at 11.30am. Please keep an eye on your email, or the website, for details of how to log in. Another way in which we can be united.

FACEBOOK PAGE

While we are unable to gather together for Mass, it is important that we are able to continue to be in contact. Hopefully you will receive the parish newsletter, and just last week we have set up a parish Facebook page, Our Lady of Lourdes Harpenden.

PRAY WITH THE POPE

Tomorrow, Friday 27th March at 5pm UK time (6pm Rome), Pope Francis will pray on the steps of St Peter's basilica. Although the square will be empty, there will be a period of Adoration and readings from Scripture. The Catholic Bishops webpage www.cbcew.org.uk will carry the live broadcast of this event but you can also watch on Vatican News You Tube channel.

KEEPING SUNDAY SPECIAL

Although the obligation to attend Mass has been lifted, for the time being, it is a good practise to continue to keep Sunday special, it is still the day of Resurrection, the most important day of the week. It's an opportunity to use our initiative, and to consider how we don't simply allow it to become the same as other days of the week. That might be done by creating a small altar with a cross and candle and praying as a family at home, or by following a Mass that is

livestreamed, or reading the scriptures for the day, see <http://wednesdayword.org/sunday-gospel.htmor>.

FOR THE CHILDREN

In addition to what we do as families, it is good if the children can be encouraged to engage in activities which remind them that it is Sunday. There are various online activities inviting reflection on the Sunday Gospels: <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Kidz-Zone>; <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Resources-for-school-closures>; Two American websites, offer activities and crafts for children & families: <http://catholicmom.com/2020/03/21/when-you-cant-get-to-mass-15-at-home-resources-for-families/>

KEEPING LENT 2020

As the Coronavirus occupies our thoughts and prayers, it may be hard to observe this season of Lent. The worry and concern we experience will surely add to the nature of this penitential season. It may not be possible to continue all of the Lenten Activities, but it is good to hear that some of the Lent Groups are meeting virtually, or sharing reflections by email. Lent can be such a fruitful time, so it is important that we try and observe the spirit of the season in some way.

PRAYING TOGETHER

In times such as this, it is important that we 'pray without ceasing'. Each of us will pray in our own ways, at whatever time suits us. Although we cannot, physically, come together to pray we could try to pray at the same time each day wherever we are. So, each evening at 7.30pm it would be good if everyone in the parish could pause to pray, maybe to use a prayer that all the family knows, or perhaps a decade or more of the Rosary. In that way we can pray together with one voice for ourselves and our country, and all who are affected by Coronavirus.

THINKING OF OTHERS

There are presently many initiatives to assist those who are unwell, or who may be in need of one kind or another. And it is encouraging to have received offers of help from parishioners. Please be aware of the needs of those around you, and if you can't help, let us know and we will try to assist. If you have a particular need, don't be afraid to let us know, if we don't know we can't help.

MASS INTENTIONS

Canon Dwyer will continue to celebrate Mass in private, and he will offer some of the Masses already requested. Some will be moved to other dates. If you would like to move a Mass Intention please contact Melanie by email.

NEWSLETTERS

If you would like the newsletter sent to you electronically please send your email address to harpenden@rcdow.org.uk.

If you know of someone without a computer, please pass on a copy of the newsletter. If they would like the newsletter to be posted, please let the parish office know.

HELPFUL WEBSITES

There are many websites offering information and support at this time Among them are:

The Diocese of Westminster

rcdow.org.uk

The Bishops' Conference

cbcew.org.uk

The National Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham

Walsingham.org.uk

Lent in Isolation

lentinisolation.com

PARISH SURVEY

Two weeks ago, we saw the third presentation in our series as we continue to develop our parish mission of 'Seeking Christ Together' and your help is requested. We are conducting a parish

survey as it is essential that we obtain the views of everyone, irrespective of where they are in their journey so that we have a benchmark of views and opinions. We would like **EVERYONE** to complete this survey including all our young people. To make it easy we have devised numerous ways that you can access the survey, a paper version, on-line

at Survey.SeekingChristTogether.com, or from your mobile phone, if you have a QR-enabled camera, or a QR Reader app on your phone you can scan the QR code. Please note the on-line version allows more room for comments. Also please note that the survey does not ask for names and addresses and we are not interested in identifying respondents but



what would be truly helpful would be for everyone to be open and honest and even critical where it is thought to be constructive. Please ask any questions you may have after mass or email dr.harpendenlol@gmail.com.

Thank you, the DR Development Team

LUTON CATENIANS

Local Catenians are taking the lead to donate money to NOAH who will use it to support vulnerable families. At their recent Corona Response Group Meeting there was an example of the plight of three families with 13 children among them made destitute with no income. NOAH will support them and extend its services to others in the community. Parishioners are invited to join this initiative by emailing peter.ward11@nhs.net for information. Anything you give, no matter how small will be greatly appreciated. NOAH website is <https://www.noahenterprise.org/who-we-are/vision-mission-values/>

LIVESIMPLY

The parish LiveSimply Award asks us, as well as caring for "our common home" to continue to live "in solidarity with the poor". So, each month we contribute UHT milk to the local St Albans & District Foodbank, part of the Trussel Trust Network. They are now organising deliveries to those made vulnerable by the Coronavirus pandemic. We cannot at present collect UHT milk at church, but you can, if you wish to, make a small donation via their website at, <https://stalbandsdistrict.foodbank.org.uk>
Laudato Si

MAGNIFICATE ONLINE FREE

To help us follow the Mass, daily prayers, reading, etc. at home, and also keep up with the weekly church news we are offering free access to Magnificat online. For free access to Magnificat online, log in at www.magnificat.com/free

LOURDES ONLINE

Although the Sanctuary at Lourdes is closed, the Priests are still praying constantly at the grotto. You can watch, or for a small donation make a prayer intention or have a candle lit at the Sanctuary of Lourdes. Their website is <https://www.lourdes-france.org/en>

CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS ONLINE

Due to the Coronavirus many of the Catholic Diocesan newspapers have been put on one website www.ChurchPaper.co.uk so you can all stay in contact with the Church and Catholic community. There are over 600 editions of the following newspapers:

A&B News, Cardiff People, Catholic East Anglia, The Vine, UCM, Reach- Catholic Schools Paper, more newspapers are expected to be added in the coming weeks.

MASS INTENTIONS THIS WEEK

Saturday 28th March Lent feria
Anna Whittle RIP (Anniv)

Sunday 29th March 5TH SUNDAY OF LENT (A)
People of the Parish

Monday 30th March Lent feria
Mike

Tuesday 31st March Lent feria
Maureen Martin RIP (Anniv)

Wednesday 1st April Lent feria
Eddie Collini RIP

Thursday 2nd Lent feria
Michael Philippau RIP

Friday 3rd April Lent feria

Saturday 4th April Lent feria
Frank McConnachie RIP

HOLY WEEK

Sunday 5th April
PALM SUNDAY OF THE PASSION OF THE LORD (A)
People of the Parish

CONFESSIONS

There will be no Confessions

WALK IN THE PARK SUSPENDED

Owing to the coronavirus situation and with great regret, we have suspended our monthly walk in Rothamsted Park. Once the crisis is over we hope that the walks will resume; please email martindrsue@gmail.com if you would like to be kept informed of future plans.