

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE DOORS OF ALL CHURCHES AND CHAPELS IN THE ARCHDIOCESE ARE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC FROM 24 /3 / 2020

THIS SUNDAY

We keep Palm Sunday and we begin Holy Week, the most solemn week of the Christian year. Catholic parish clergy have been asked to keep Holy Week and especially the Sacred Triduum: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter, celebrating the appropriate Liturgies in their churches, though without a congregation.

Details of Holy Week Masses and liturgies are given overleaf.

HOLY WEEK

My dear parishioners, we are living in the strangest of times, both with regard to our personal daily living and the way we express our lives of faith.

I send my deep personal thanks to all those who through writing, email and telephoning have asked of my well being and that of Father David. At the moment he is at home with Jo, and so I have the strange experience of saying mass or the Holy Week liturgies, without another person being physically present in church with me.

That is when, as I look down St Francis' Church, I sense the spiritual presence of you all, and my belief in the Communion of Saints, unites me with you, and with the host of heaven.

I have said to some of you that, at the moment, parish life feels like having a bicycle without wheels. I sense that I have a framework, but also the frustration of seeming to be going nowhere.

For me, priestly life has always revolved around the altar and the parish community. To have these elements somewhat disturbed, as at present, is most distressing for me. I am sure that it is the same for you and for all the faithful.

God bless you all for the sacrifice you make of being absent from the mass offered here, and the consolation you receive from sacramental communion.

In spite of the limitations, indeed, the frustrations of these times, **there is a very real sense in which the spiritual health of any parish can be seen in the way this unique time of the year is kept.** In your homes and families and as you share in the Liturgies on-line, please endeavour to be with Our Lord in his Passion, so then to share in the joy of his Resurrection.

I hope that you and your family will have some blessed times together in spite of all the present difficulties.

FROM THE ARCHBISHOP: Dispensation from Easter Duties

Many of the faithful will be aware of their Easter Duties; that is to receive Holy Communion during the Easter Season and by custom, to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation beforehand. The Code of Canon Law (CIC 920) says each of the faithful is obliged to receive Holy Communion at least once a year.

This precept must be fulfilled during the Easter season unless it is fulfilled for a just cause at another time during the year. The requirement for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation comes from the need to be in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion (CIC 916).

Since 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 Bishops have asked that all should make a Perfect Act of Contrition at this time. Perfect contrition (or a Contrition of Charity) is true and real sorrow for our sins which is created when we realise the immense love of God for each one of us. We express this contrition when we realise how we offend God by our sinful words, deeds and omissions, in contrast to the immeasurable love and mercy that He always shows us.

This requires us to be contrite of heart for what we have done, know and be overwhelmed by the love and mercy of God for His children, and to approach this grace with humility and resolution not to sin again.

An Act of Contrition – there are others that you may know.

O My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do what is good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.

Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy.

ZENA GRINDLAY RIP

We offer our love and sympathy to Lynne Long, and all her family after the death on Thursday of Lynne's Mother, Zena Grindlay. Zena had been part of our parish, together with her late husband William, for many years. May she rest in peace.

Graveside Service 17 April 10.30am – Please pray for her

JAMES (JIM) BALL RIP

On Thursday evening, Jim Ball died at his home, surrounded by Maureen and family members. We offer our love and sympathy to Maureen and all the family. Jim and Maureen have both been part of the communities of their schools and of our parish for many years. May he rest in peace.

Graveside Service 9 April 2.00pm – Please pray for him.

GIFT AID SCHEME AND ENVELOPES

The new tax year will begin on Monday 6 April, so please use your new envelopes from that date. It is always good to welcome new contributors. If you would like to sign up for the Gift Aid Scheme by envelope or Standing Order, please contact Mr Tony Stokes (857866). Thanks go to Tony for all his hard work.

Sincere gratitude is offered to all supporters for your kind generosity over last year.

Over the period during which there are no public masses, please post your collection envelopes, Easter Offering, or any other donations, through the inside letter box at the Priest's House, thank you. God bless you for this generosity.

FROM THE SVP

The members of the SVP would like thank parishioners for their support for our recent appeal. The sum of £ 722-11 was raised. You can rest assured that this money will be used for those in need. We would also like to thank Fr Kevin and Fr David for their continuing support for the work of the society.

MAY OUR LORD BLESS YOU ALL DURING THESE DIFFICLT AND CHALLENGING DAYS, FATHER KEVIN