

Catholic Church of Mary, Mother of God

192, Nags Head Road

Ponders End, Enfield EN3 7AR

020 8804 2149 pondersend@rcdow.org.uk

Hello Everyone,

I do hope that you are keeping well and staying safe in the difficult and unprecedented situation that we find ourselves in at this time. It is just not easy for any of us and so I hope and pray that God will give you the strength and the patience to deal with things in a peaceful and loving way.

Many people have called or emailed me asking when our church will be open, can we get confession, are we able to spend time in the church quietly or, even more importantly, and will we be able to celebrate Holy Week and Easter? The answer to these difficult questions is no at this time. Our Bishops following the advice from the Government have said that our churches must remain closed and because of the importance of social distancing there can be no confessions or public celebrations of Mass and churches will not open for private prayer. It is very sad.

Priests will continue to celebrate Mass each day but privately. The Mass that I offer in the Lady Chapel is always offered for your intentions and for God's blessing on our parish and its peoples that His love and His protecting Spirit will keep you all safe and well. My love and my prayers always reach out to you because I miss you and I worry so much for your welfare.

The services of Holy Week and Easter will also have to be done in private and it breaks my heart to think that I will be celebrating Holy Thursday, Good Friday, the Easter Vigil and Easter Day on my own in an empty church. Its very sad, but I don't want to be too morbid about things, it doesn't help. On those days I will look around the church and imagine that you are there—we will pray together, sing together and celebrate together and we will love each other. We must stay united in our love and in our prayers.

Thank you so much for all the messages I have received enquiring if I am keeping well and assuring me of your prayers. Thank God I am okay and I pray that it may be the same for you. Your kindness and prayers are a great support to me.

This coming weekend begins Holy Week with the celebration of Palm Sunday and Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the cries of Hosanna. Let us, together, stay close to Jesus over the next few days and follow His painful journey through the Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, His crucifixion and death on Calvary and then His glorious Resurrection from the dead. Let us die with Him on Good Friday and then rise with Him on Easter Sunday.

One way you can follow Mass during the current crisis is to access those churches that stream their Masses on a Sunday and some during the week. On this website you will find a list of churches that offer this facility. Our own parish in Ponders End will certainly arrange for this to happen as soon as we are able. Also our previous website has been down for some time (this hopefully is only a temporary one) and again, as soon as we are able, we will have a more permanent one for ongoing information.

It is good that we have installed window in our church doors which means that even though you do not have access to the church at least you can look in. You will notice that we are following the seasons of the year. Last weekend we entered Passiontide and so our statues and crucifixes have now been covered. There will be change as we move through Holy Week and on to Easter. Keep watch if you are passing by. You will also so notice that there will be Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in the church so if you are passing why not stop for a moment, look into the church and say your prayer quietly before the Presence of the Lord. I know He would love to see you.

Try to follow the services if you are able either on the television or on the radio. We have some leaflets for the orders of service for Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter weekend. Just knock on the house door, keep a safe distance and I can hand you copies. They are free of charge. We also have a few copies of the April edition of Magnificat which you can have for half price.

We will try to keep you updated as much as we are able. So please keep checking in and out of this website. The address for you to pass on to as many people as you possibly can is:

netministries.org/churches/mmofgod

Please do keep in touch. I will always do my best to answer emails or texts as soon as I can. If I can be of any help at any time please do not hesitate to ask—but remember I am a little restricted myself with the need for isolating.

Please pray for me, for all your priests, our Bishops and our Holy Father Pope Francis. This is a difficult and worrying time for us as we try to keep ourselves safe (remember many of us are well over the age of 70) but at the same time doing our best to serve our people as best we can. We are always praying for you.

Remember in your prayers all those who have died recently including Eileen Daly, Keith Elven, Canon Eddie Matthews, Fr Bryan Jones, Anthony Sullivan, John Browne and Valentine Gardner.

Friends God bless you always and stay safe.

Fr John