



Web: www.mary-mother-of-god.org

Feast of the English Martyrs

Good Morning Everyone,

I do hope and pray that you are keeping well and staying safe in spite of the continued lockdown and the ongoing closure of our churches for prayer and worship. It has been and continues to be a difficult time for everyone. Let us pray and hope that conditions will improve and that sometime soon we will be able to gather together once again in our parish church for the celebration of the Sacraments. Many are feeling empty and isolated without them.

I have been celebrating Mass every day in the church—albeit in an empty church— and I have remembered you and all of our parishioners in the intentions of the Mass and in my prayers each day. How I long for the time when I can hear the response “and with your spirit” coming back to me. Soon I hope!

I hope that you have been able to keep up with the celebration of Mass in one way or another. I’m sure many of you have been able to follow it from the many churches that stream their Mass live. A wonderful way of staying in touch and of receiving Spiritual Communion. It is something that we had been considering in our parish before the restrictions came about and then everything came to a halt. When the time is right we will get it done.

Unfortunately our website also became redundant and we have been working hard to get a new one up and running as quickly as possible. Hopefully in the next week or so it will be online and then communication will be a little easier. I’m sorry that staying in touch has been a little difficult over these last few weeks but I am so grateful for the many people who have contacted me to see if I am still alive and kicking which I am happy to say I am. Thank you also for the many offers of help I have received. You are very kind.

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The Cardinal, Vincent Nichols, has asked all his priest to pass on his good wishes and an assurance of his prayers to all the parishioners of the Diocese. These I send to you now—please remember him, and all the bishops and priests of our Diocese in your prayers. Life for us is not easy at this time as we are very restricted in our ministry especially to the sick and housebound and the dying. I have conducted more funerals over the past few weeks than I might sometimes have done in a whole year. Please pray for the repose of the souls of the many people and priests who have died recently. May they rest in peace and rise in glory.

On another important matter, and I have been encouraged by the Diocese to broach the subject, because our churches have been closed our income through Planned Giving has been seriously curtailed. Bills still have to be paid and in doing so we begin to drain our reserves. If you are able to continue your giving and if possible catch up on the giving for the past few weeks it would be a great help to the parish. If your passing the church at any time you can simply drop your envelopes through the letterbox of the house. I would be so grateful.

We have many appeals from charities coming in every day. From CAFOD—for the many peoples struggling to cope in poorer regions where the coronavirus is causing much hardship; from The Friends of the Holy Land—particularly in Bethlehem where the lockdown has caused serious difficulties because tourism, a major source of income, has come to a standstill; nearer home from the Manna Day Centre that is struggling to support and feed homeless people in London. There are many more. If you can help please do so. It can be done through the parish—simply put your donation in an envelope and either post it or pop it through the letterbox and we will then channel it to the right place for you.

There are many good points that have come from this time of relative isolation. More time for families to be together, to eat together and to pray together. The family prayer is so important and especially so in this month of May dedicated to Our Lady and especially Our Lady of Fatima. Do try and say the Rosary together as often as you can—every day if possible. Our Lady wants us to be closely united with Jesus and with each other. Stay close to Jesus.

I remember you always in my prayers and sincerely ask God that He will bless you and keep you safe each and every day. May the love of the Sacred Heart of Jesus surround us always and may the Immaculate Heart of Mary pray for us.

My best regards,

Fr John