



## **SUPPORTING THE FAITHFUL AND EACH OTHER IN PRAYER DURING THE TIME OF THE COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC**

Although we will be unable to celebrate the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass with the faithful in attendance, we must not forget the sacramental grace we received at our ordination as priests and deacons, and the strength which this grace gives to our prayer of intercession for the Church and the whole world, particularly in our daily offering and faithful celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours.

For clergy and religious, and indeed all the faithful who pray the Liturgy of the Hours, there is an intimate link between the consecration of the day through this prayerful offering of a sacrifice of praise, thanksgiving and intercession, and the offering of the Eucharistic sacrifice. Both are acts of worship offered to the Father, through His Son Jesus Christ and in the Holy Spirit. Both too are offered in communion with and commemorating the Blessed Virgin Mary and all the saints.

In this time of isolation for many of the clergy and faithful, it is vital that we remain conscious of being united as sons and daughters of God our Father, that we are members of the one Body of Christ, His Church, and that we share communion with each other in the Holy Spirit.

I ask you then to join me in using the days and weeks ahead to make our prayer more fervent in the Liturgy of the Hours and, with the intercession of Our Lady of Unfailing Help, St Wilfrid and all the Saints, to implore the Most Holy Trinity to deliver us swiftly from the current pandemic afflicting the world.

The temporary suspension of the public celebration of Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is an unprecedented and disturbing situation for us. It does, however, afford us an opportunity for solidarity with those who are elderly or suffering from long-term illnesses for whom separation from the Community of Faith as expressed in the liturgical assembly is the norm and who cannot be physically present at the celebration of Holy Mass with any regularity. It is also an opportunity for us all to rediscover our profound love for the Holy Eucharist, either through a longing to receive Holy Communion once again or, for the clergy, a longing to give Holy Communion to the faithful once again.

That said, it is more important than ever, during such a time of trial and uncertainty, that the voice of prayer never becomes silent and, most especially, that the Church's Liturgy continues to be celebrated, with the active participation of the faithful, in whatever way it can. I ask all priests to continue to celebrate Holy Mass daily, although without the assistance of the faithful, and to communicate to the faithful that you continue to do this and keep them in your hearts and intentions. I am sure that this will bring them much consolation and encouragement.

There are a number of ways in which the faithful can participate in Holy Mass. They could watch a celebration of Mass on the television or internet, making a Spiritual Communion at the normal time for Holy Communion, or prayerfully read the daily Mass Readings alone or in families, reciting some familiar prayers and making an Act of Spiritual Communion. The details of some helpful resources are described below.

#### **LIVE-STREAMED CELEBRATION OF HOLY MASS**

We are working towards live-streaming Sunday Mass from Leeds Cathedral which will be accessible through *Youtube*. I will communicate to you more details regarding this provision as soon as they are available.

In our diocese, the parish of St Edward's, Clifford (<https://www.mcnmedia.tv/camera/st-edward-king-confessor-church-clifford-wetherby>) and the parish of St Mary's, Halifax (<https://www.stmaryshalifax.com/>) both have live-streaming available. The parish of Mary, Mother of God, Wibsey, Bradford, also plan to have this facility from the weekend of 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> March.

Holy Mass is celebrated and live-streamed from the National Shrine and Basilica of Our Lady of Walsingham every day at 12:00noon. This can be watched live or later. These videos allow the viewer to participate in the Mass from home and, at the time of Holy Communion, they lead the viewer in an Act of Spiritual Communion. To view please follow the following link: <http://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream>

Daily Mass and other devotions can also be accessed through the EWTN television channel to which many people already have access. Their programmes can also be accessed online: <https://www.ewtn.com/>

The Holy Father's Daily Mass, celebrated in Italian with English translation, can be accessed on the Holy See's *Youtube* Channel. This can be found via the following web link: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxIsefy19g9A5SGWA4FvGIA/featured>

#### **DAILY MASS READINGS, LITURGY OF THE HOURS AND REFLECTIONS**

A good number of the faithful have access to the daily and Sunday Mass readings in personal missals. The faithful can also access the daily Mass Readings online in many places. One such website is *Universalis* which, in addition to the paid app used by many of us, allows access to the daily Mass Readings, Liturgy of the Hours and information on the Saints of the Day for free for the current day and one week ahead. The faithful could be encouraged, each day or each Sunday, to prayerfully read the day's readings and make an Act of Spiritual Communion. Please use the following link: <https://universalis.com/>. The Gospel Reading and a reflection for each Sunday is provided by the *Wednesday Word*. This can be accessed at: <http://www.wednesdayword.org/>

Many of us, clergy and laity alike, use *Magnificat* booklets in one way or another. The U.S. version has kindly made online access to its publication free for the time being. This provides a form of Morning, Evening and Night Prayer, the daily Mass Readings, a daily meditation and Saint of the Day. It can be accessed using the following link: <https://us.magnificat.net/free>

## **ROSARY AND STATIONS OF THE CROSS**

Please encourage the faithful, especially those who are isolated, to intensify their life of prayer in whatever way they can, for those who are ill, for health workers, for those in public office and those working to contain the spread of the virus, for the anxious, for our own families and communities, and for those who have died. In particular, I would recommend the recitation of the Holy Rosary and the Stations of the Cross.

A pdf document on how to pray the Rosary is attached. There are many versions of the Stations of the Cross available. One version, by Saint John Henry Newman, can be accessed at: <http://www.newmanreader.org/works/meditations/meditations5.html>

A leaflet with prayers appropriate for this time prepared by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (<https://www.cbcew.org.uk/>) is also attached. Most importantly, it contains one possible form of words for the Act of Spiritual Communion.

## **NATIONAL CALL TO PRAYER AND ACTION**

Churches Together in England have asked us to observe this coming Sunday, 22<sup>nd</sup> March, as a National Day of Prayer and Action. Specifically we are all invited to light a candle in our windows and pray at 7:00pm. We are all encouraged to continue to perform whatever acts of kindness are safe and possible for us to do. A letter from the presidents of Churches Together in England is attached.