

Weekly Message from Fr William for the Fourth Sunday of Lent 2022

Dear People of St Mary's

I was asked to make available in writing the prayer guidance I gave in my homily last Sunday. So here goes. When you're calling on God for help in prayer, pray to him by name. And what is his name? Abraham knew God as *El Shaddai*, a semi-pagan name. Moses knew him as *Yahweh*, meaning 'I am', or 'He who is'. We now know him as *Father*, as *Son*, and as *Holy Spirit*. So pray to him as *Father*, as *Son* and as *Holy Spirit*. So I gave the following prayer that you could make for yourself, for your family and friends, and for anybody else you want to get into God's hands and under his protection, from those trapped in the horrors of war, to leaders like Zeleksky:

Jesus, be a constant companion to me throughout this day. Uphold me with your strength. Support me with your love.

Father, show me that I am your beloved son / beloved daughter. Give me your fatherly protection. Teach me to live from your fatherly providence.

Holy Spirit, come into my mind and heart. Fill me with your love. Fill me with yourself. Give me courage. Give me wisdom. Give me your divine assistance.

I've been consulting with the PPC about re-introducing the Sign of Peace at Mass. See weekly message 27th February. Advice from PPC is that I should reintroduce the Sign of Peace in some form, and I'm sure this is right. It's an important liturgical action, a sign of our oneness in Christ, just at the moment we offer ourselves with him and in him in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

We need to be aware that there are parishioners who do not want to return to a handshake or any other physical contact, at least for now.

The gesture that I'm now commending to the parish in the Sign of Peace is:

Hand on heart, and the words 'peace be with you'.

Hand on heart speaks of a sincere and heartfelt gift/intention. It also removes any ambiguity that the person's hand is available for a handshake. I think the simplicity of this gesture makes it also fitting as a liturgical action.

Before the Sign of Peace was dropped at the start of the pandemic, the priest's invitation was: 'Let us offer each other the Sign of Peace'. I will now invite the Sign of Peace with an alternative formula. This will help to remind people we're doing something different to before. The invitation will be: 'We now give peace to one another'.



Fourth Sunday of Lent, 27 march 2022