



PARISH BULLETIN

The Catholic Parishes of
St Augustine of Canterbury, Meir
St Filumena, Caverswall
& St Mary, Cresswell

22nd March 2020

4th SUNDAY OF LENT - YEAR A
"LAETARE SUNDAY"

12/2020/KS

St Augustine's (for Parish Office): 146 Sandon Road, Meir, Stoke-on-Trent. ST3 7DF
tel.: 01782 313734

St Filumena's: Blythe Bridge Road, Caverswall. ST11 9EA

St Mary's: Cresswell Old Lane, Cresswell. ST11 9RF

Parish email: augustineandmary@hotmail.com;

website: www.augustineandmary.org.uk or www.stfilumena.org.uk

Parish Priest: Fr Kazimierz Stefek *OSPPE* - mobile: 07939 205515

Parish Deacon (Meir/Cresswell): Rev Trevor Borthwick (*retired*)

Parish Deacon (Caverswall): Rev Peter Bowyer

Parish Catechist Gabrielle Halliday - mobile: 07764 245344

Safeguarding representatives: (for Meir) Rachel Davies - mobile: 07815 647060

(for Caverswall)

(for Cresswell) Julia McVey mobile: 07791 364850

A PRAYER BEFORE MASS

(by St. Thomas Aquinas)

Almighty and everlasting God, behold I come to the Sacrament of Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ: I come as one infirm to the physician of life, as one unclean to the fountain of mercy, as one blind to the light of everlasting brightness, as one poor and needy to the Lord of heaven and earth. Therefore I implore the abundance of Thy measureless bounty that Thou wouldst vouchsafe to heal my infirmity, wash my uncleanness, enlighten my blindness, enrich my poverty and clothe my nakedness, that I may receive the Bread of Angels, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, with such reverence and humility, with such sorrow and devotion, with such purity and faith, with such purpose and intention as may be profitable to my soul's salvation.

Grant unto me, I pray, the grace of receiving not only the Sacrament of our Lord's Body and Blood, but also the grace and power of the Sacrament.

O most gracious God, grant me so to receive the Body of Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, which He took from the Virgin Mary, as to merit to be incorporated into His mystical Body, and to be numbered amongst His members.

O most loving Father, give me grace to behold forever Thy beloved Son with His face at last unveiled, whom I now purpose to receive under the sacramental veil here below. Amen.

NEWS FROM THE PARISHES

- The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, having consulted the Ordinaries of the Dioceses (that is, our Archbishop Bernard Longley – see below a message from him) has decided that all public liturgies (all Masses with the presence of the faithful) should be suspended, beginning **from Friday evening 20th March 2020** until further notice. Because of this situation the obligation for the faithful to attend Holy Mass on a Sunday and Holy days of Obligation is removed.

As a result of this decision of the Bishops' Conference and Archbishop Bernard Longley,

there will be NO Masses in our three churches in the presence of people.

However, a Priest will continue to celebrate Mass on a daily basis but without the faithful. Even Deacons should not participate in these celebrations.

St Augustine's Church, at Meir, will be open daily between 10:00 and 12:00, but ONLY for individual private prayers, without any organised services.

- JOURNEY IN FAITH and SESSIONS OF PREPARATION FOR THE SACRAMENTS for Children in Non-Catholic Schools and non-Catholic children in Catholic Schools wishing to become Catholics – **SUSPENDED UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.**
- LENTEN BIBLE STUDIES – **Cancelled**

PLEASE PRAY

For those who are ill, especially: Pauline Adams, Janice Austin, Fiona Borthwick, Joan Brindley, Ruth Brock, Pat Bromfield, Egidio Coronato, Eamon Dooley, Pat Porter, Leon Stefek, Lisa Swift, Doreen Thomson, Pauline Tranter, Michele Yon, Evelyn Young, Beatrice Wright.



For those who have died recently – and those whose anniversary occurs around this time.

MOTHER'S SUNDAY – This Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Lent ("LAETARE Sunday), we commemorate Mothering Sunday. Mother's Day gives people the chance to celebrate their mothers. Unlike Christmas, Valentine's Day and Halloween, Mothering Sunday falls on different dates in different countries every year. In the UK, each year, it takes place on the fourth Sunday of Lent.



What are the origins of Mother's Day? The origins of Mothering Sunday in the UK begin in the Middle Ages, when children who had left their families to work in domestic service were allowed to go back to their home church – or "mother church" as it was known.

At first, the "mothering" aspect of the day had no link to maternal parents, as it does today. The journey home also morphed into a spring occasion for families to reunite. The custom then developed for children to pick flowers on the way home as a gift to their mothers. The date also became a celebration as the fasting rules of Lent were relaxed to allow revellers a long-awaited feast. So, it also became known as Refreshment Sunday, Simnel Sunday – after the simnel cakes traditionally baked on the day.

Let us show today our love and thankfulness to our mums by giving them cards and flowers and other nice things. Let us show little acts of love and kindness to those who care for us, nurture us and help us to grow, and on whom we depend whether we are five or fifty+.

Dear God, we give you thank for our Mothers and all who care for us like a Mother.

We thank them for caring for us, even when they're weary and worn-out,

for challenging us, even when we don't want it,

for playing with us, even when they wanted to get on,

for giving us comfort and encouragement when we are lost,

for helping us to become the best that we can be. Amen.

CORONAVIRUS AND SACRAMENTAL LIVES OF CATHOLICS

The suspension of public Masses in some countries brings home the clear and present danger COVID-19 – the coronavirus – might affect the sacramental lives of Catholics. It is a frightening prospect to face the possibility of being denied the sacraments if instructed to self-isolate, if quarantined in a hospital or due to state-sanctioned closure of our churches. The distress suffered by the faithful cannot be exaggerated if we are unable to go to confession, receive the Blessed Sacrament or extreme unction at the hour of death. If we find ourselves in such a situation, we should follow two traditional devotional practices – **the act of perfect contrition** and **spiritual Communion**. By observing strict conditions clearly set out by the Church, these devotions will enable us to receive the forgiveness of our sins, even mortal sins, and the consolations of eucharistic graces.

How to make an Act of Perfect Contrition?

Perfect contrition is that which fills us with sorrow and hatred for sin, because it offends God, who is infinitely good in Himself and worthy of all love. Through an act of perfect contrition, you receive pardon for your sins outside of confession, even mortal sins, on condition that you determine to amend your life and make a firm resolution to go to sacramental confession as soon as this becomes possible for you.

Perfect contrition is a grace from God, so sincerely ask for this gift throughout the day prior to making your act of contrition: "My God, grant me perfect contrition for all my sins".

1. In reality or imagination kneel at the foot of a crucifix and say to yourself: "Jesus, my God and my Saviour, in the midst of your agony, you remembered me, you suffered for me, you wished to wipe away my sins".
2. Contrition is "perfect" if you repent of your sins because you love God and are sorry for offending Him and causing the sufferings of Christ on the Cross. Before the Crucified Christ remember your sins, repent of them because they have brought Our Lord to His sufferings on the Cross. Promise him, that with His help, you will not sin again.
3. Recite, slowly and sincerely, an act of contrition focused on the goodness of God and your love of Jesus: "O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you, and by the help of your grace I will not sin again. Amen".
4. Make a firm resolution to go to sacramental confession as soon as practically possible.

St. Maximilian Kolbe wrote the following at the outbreak of the Second World War: "Whoever can, should receive the sacrament of penance. Whoever cannot, because of prohibiting circumstances, should cleanse his soul by acts of perfect contrition – that is, the sorrow of a loving child who does not consider so much the pain or reward as he does the pardon from his father and mother to whom he has brought displeasure".

How to make a Spiritual Communion?

Spiritual Communion is an earnest desire to receive Communion in reality, by which desire we make all preparations and thanksgivings that we would make in case we really received the Holy Eucharist. Spiritual Communion is an act of devotion that must be pleasing to God and bring us blessings from Him. Who cannot receive Holy Communion, should instead make a spiritual Communion. In order to make a spiritual Communion, it is necessary to be in a state of grace, just as this is necessary for Holy Communion.

The key to spiritual Communion is to grow in your heart a constant desire for the Blessed Sacrament.

1. If you are aware of serious or mortal sin, make an act of perfect contrition.
2. Imagine the sacred words and actions of the Mass or watch online or on TV.
3. Make all those acts of faith, humility, sorrow, adoration, love and desire that you usually express before Holy Communion.
4. Desire, with earnest longing, to receive Our Lord present – Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity – in the Blessed Sacrament.
5. Say this prayer of St. Alphonsus Ligouri: "My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire You in my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. As though You are already there, I embrace You and unite myself wholly to You; do not let me ever be separated from You. Amen."
6. After moments of silent adoration make all those acts of faith, humility, love, thanksgiving and offering that you usually express through prayers after Holy Communion.

St. Maximilian Kolbe undertook this devotion at least once every quarter of an hour and Padre Pio recommended receiving Our Lord in spiritual Communion throughout the day during one's various occupations, writing: "Fly with your spirit before the tabernacle, when you can't stand before it bodily, and there pour out the ardent longings of your soul and embrace the Beloved of souls, even more than if you had been permitted to receive Him sacramentally".

A MESSAGE FROM ARCHBISHOP BERNARD LONGLEY

Dear Fathers and Deacons

Dear Parishioners

I invite you to read this letter together with the two attached statements as they outline our present liturgical and pastoral practice in the light of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. These cannot cover every possible situation so I would ask you to exercise prudent pastoral judgement in respect of these guidelines.

I ask all recipients to share this information as widely as possible. I also ask clergy to make copies of this email and accompanying statements available for those who do not have access to them electronically and to leave them at the back of their churches.

Each bishop has been asked to write to his own diocese and so I offer the following guidelines as a clarification of the national guidelines for the clergy and faithful of the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

The measures outlined may seem very drastic, but they are a necessary and proportional temporary response to protecting the most vulnerable in our society.

O God, come to our aid;

O Lord, make haste to help us!

Care for Priests and Deacons

Those who are over 70, and those with significant underlying health issues, should take particular care at this time not to make themselves vulnerable to any risk. General contact with parishioners should be minimised so that the risk of transmission of the virus is significantly reduced.

Celebrations of Holy Mass

As of Friday 20th March, a major change is that **the celebration of Mass will not be public in any setting**. Can clergy please put a notice on their church door notifying people of this change, especially in time for this Sunday.

Priests will celebrate Mass privately each day. As they do so, the church will remain closed to the public – which includes all parishioners.

Mass intentions attached to these Masses will be honoured. As priests will only be required to celebrate one Mass each day, some Mass intentions will need to be postponed to a later date.

In line with the Bishops' Conference guidance, **only priests may be present for the celebration of Mass**. As even Deacons are not permitted to be present, I need to emphasise that nobody else may be present for the celebration of Mass.

The obligation for the faithful to attend Holy Mass on Sundays and Holydays of Obligation is removed until further notice.

Since all of the faithful will be asked to make a **Spiritual Communion** (rather than receiving Holy Communion) during this time, those confined to home who normally receive Holy Communion from Sunday Mass will also be asked to make a Spiritual Communion. This will mean they will not receive Holy Communion regularly as at present. Clergy may make visits to sick parishioners in accordance with the guidelines already given. Care should be taken to ensure social distancing of the most vulnerable is maintained, including the welfare of those who visit. I draw priests' attention to specific guidance already given on the anointing of the sick.

Live-streaming of Masses is advertised on the Diocesan website (www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk) and we expect the number of these live-streams to grow, including at St Chad's Cathedral in the near future. If clergy could inform the Communications team at Cathedral House if they can add to the facilities already listed, that would be appreciated.

At other times and wherever this is possible, **churches should remain open for private prayer**. This may include periods of Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament but the emphasis must be on private prayer and not gathering the people. I ask that there is no Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament since this constitutes a public service.

Baptisms, Sacrament of Reconciliation, First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, Confirmation, Matrimony

Please follow the guidelines given in the Bishops' Conference Liturgical Advice document.

Funerals

Regrettably, while public Funeral Masses must also cease, it is recommended that on the day of a Funeral, a Mass without the faithful may be offered by the priest for the intentions of the deceased and the family. This will be of some consolation to the family in the absence of a public Funeral Mass. I recommend that a later Mass with the faithful be celebrated when restrictions are lifted.

We live in difficult and unprecedented times. I, together with my brother Archbishops of England and Wales, will be reviewing these guidelines regularly and taking into account best advice. I shall update you on any changes that are necessary. In all we face, we know that the Lord never abandons his people.

In conclusion, as a Catholic community, we must treasure the power of prayer during these days: prayer for the world and its needs; prayer for our country at this time of uncertainty and sickness; prayer for the families and communities to which we belong, not only in terms of health but also for the many concerns of livelihoods affected; prayer for ourselves.

Merciful God,

come to the help of your people.

Be our shelter in this time of peril

and strengthen the bonds of our community.

Bring healing to all who suffer the ravages of disease

and assist those whose skill and art can put an end to this affliction.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Assuring you all of my prayers for you at this time and asking for your prayers for me and those who work with me for the good of the Archdiocese.

Yours devotedly in Christ

† Bernard Longley

Archbishop of Birmingham

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MASS INTENTIONS FOR THE WEEK

HOLY MASSES WILL BE SAID AT ST AUGUSTINE'S WITHOUT PRESENCE OF PEOPLE

St. Augustine's MEIR	
22nd March 4th SUNDAY OF LENT "Laetare Sunday" Year A	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Albert Dawson RIP 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
23rd March Monday <i>Lent Feria</i>	<i>Mass Intention</i> – People of the Parish 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
24th March Tuesday <i>Lent Feria</i>	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Neville Mountford RIP 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
25th March Wednesday SOLEMNITY OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE LORD	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Pamela Ravenscroft RIP 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
26th March Thursday <i>Lent Feria</i>	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Frederick John Toplass 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
27th March Friday <i>Lent Feria</i>	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Rev Peter Bowyer Int 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
28th March Saturday <i>Lent Feria</i>	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Gerald Peter Dovey RIP 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer
29th March 5th SUNDAY OF LENT Year A	<i>Mass Intention</i> – Dorothy Preece Ints 10:00-12:00 – The church is open for individual private prayer



CONFESSION

BY REQUEST

WHEN THE CHURCH IS OPEN – Daily 10:00-12:00

MASS INTENTIONS

PLEASE HAND IN AN ENVELOPE

(WITH SUGGESTED DATE AND CHURCH PREFERENCE)

TO A MEMBER OF THE CLERGY