

Fourth Sunday Of Lent (Year A)

Sunday 22nd March 2020

DEAR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith. It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, at this time we must not gather for public acts of worship in our churches. This will begin from Friday evening, 20h March 2020, until further notice.

Our churches will remain open. They are not closing. They will be a focal point of prayer, where you will find solace and strength. In visiting our churches at this time, we will observe with great care the practices of hygiene and the guidance on social distancing.

However, the celebration of Mass, Sunday by Sunday, will take place without a public congregation.

Knowing that the Mass is being celebrated; joining in spiritually in that celebration; watching the live-streaming of the Mass; following its prayers at home; making an act of spiritual communion: this is how we share in the Sacrifice of Christ in these days. These are the ways in which we will sanctify Sunday, and indeed every day. We want everyone to understand that in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed.

The second vital aspect of these challenging times is our care for each other. There are so many ways in which we are to do this: being attentive to the needs of our neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us.

During these disturbing and threatening times, the rhythm of the prayer of the Church will continue. Please play your part in it. The effort of daily kindness and mutual support for all will continue and increase. Please play your part in this too. For your commitment to this, we thank you. Your own Bishop and Parish Priest will provide further support, encouragement and information about our way of prayer together in the coming weeks.

*"The Lord is my shepherd,
There is nothing I shall want."*

May God bless us all.
Vincent Cardinal Nichols

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP
Vice-President

A MESSAGE FROM FATHER BARNABAS

Encouragement; how can we be encouraging one another at this time? Firstly, by being Good neighbours to those around us. Who needs help? Who can I phone so that they don't feel alone? The Parish Office has an answerphone and keeping in touch will be more important as time goes on.

Because Masses have been cancelled I will attempt to have videoed a Sunday Mass each week to be put online. This will be for both the Forest and Newent. Let me know the names of those who are sick so they can be included in the Prayer of the Mass.

In a time of National Crisis do people turn to God? Will God use this disaster to draw people to Himself? Please God, he will! Let us bless us at this time, even from a distance.

VIEWING THE MASS ONLINE

It is hoped that we will be able to video a Mass each weekend and upload the video to our **Vimeo** channel. Please check the church website for details of links to these Masses.

OPEN FOR INDIVIDUAL PRAYER OUR LADY OF VICTORIES, CINDERFORD, AND ST MARGARET MARY, COLEFORD

Both Churches are to remain open for individual prayer at the following times, Cinderford open times are everyday including weekends 8am - 4pm and Coleford open times are Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 9am - 4pm, Saturday 6pm - 7pm. Please respect anyone already inside the Church and take great care to practice hygiene and social distancing guidelines to enable everyone to remain safe from the Coronavirus. Thank you.

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

In response to the current situation a Lydney Community Support Group is being established to coordinate help and support in the local community. This weekend 4,000 postcards are being hand delivered to Lydney homes asking people to offer their time to assist people who need it in the local area. The postcards also ask people if they need help and if so, to contact the dedicated phone number 0754 897 3012 which has been set-up for this purpose. Lydney Community Support Group will link-up people who want help with people who are offering help. Does anyone know of any similar schemes in Cinderford, Coleford and Newent that we can signpost people to please? Email or call Kristyann on either 01594 562593 (Tuesday - Friday 9 - 12) or at the Parish Office if you do!

Responsorial Psalm: The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.

Gospel Acclamation: Glory to you, O Christ, you are the Word of God!

Communion Antiphon: The Lord anointed my eyes; I went, I washed, I saw and I believed in God.

