

Dear Friends,

Happy Mother's Day, or Mothering Sunday, to be more precise. It comes from the custom of paying an annual visit to the "mother church", the cathedral of a diocese. Today, most of us won't have the opportunity to visit our own Church. That is painful, but something that we have to endure. Despite our natural instincts we have to socially distance and isolate. It is for the best. But we can still keep in touch. I've attached a little liturgy that you can use at home to keep Sunday holy and below is a short reflection from me and a prayer from Pope Francis. I will celebrate Mass in the Lady Chapel at 10a.m tomorrow for all of our parishioners. It's strictly private, so please respect that. We hope to have live streaming up and running early this week. I'll let you know when it happens for the moment, we must refrain from gathering and we must keep apart to beat this. The Church will be open for private prayer from 9-5p.m. Again, please keep apart and make use of the hand sanitiser provided.

It being the 4th Sunday of Lent, Laetare Sunday, the vestments will be ROSE coloured. All dressed up and no one to make fun of me.

Keep well and be sensible

Fr Chris and Fr Augustus.

PS. I don't intend to send a lot of emails (one a week) but if you'd rather not receive them please let me know and I will remove you from the list. Feel free to share as well, if anyone would like to receive them who isn't getting them let me know.

From the Gospel for the Fourth Sunday of Lent.

As Jesus went along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, for him to have been born blind?" "Neither he nor his parents sinned," Jesus answered "He was born blind so that the works of God might be displayed in him." John Chapter 9.

On that corner of the twitter sphere occupied by Catholics, I have seen this current situation described as a "great chastisement" from God. That certainly doesn't sit well with what Jesus says in this week's gospel of the man born blind. God, who is Love and Goodness, is not the source of this virus, or of any punishment. But it is the power of God that will bring so much good from even a terrible situation. This week I have experienced so many acts of kindness and expressions of concern. I've witnessed ingenuity and creativity - the men's group are continuing their Scripture Reflection meeting on Tuesday by using a conferencing app called Zoom. We keep apart but become closer to one another. I'm sure that you have witnessed so much too. In this very worrying and anxious time let's keep on praying and caring for one another and for those in need, that the works of God might be displayed in us.

Prayer of Pope Francis to the Blessed Virgin Mary.

O Mary,  
you always shine on our path  
as a sign of salvation and of hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,  
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.  
You, Salvation of the Roman People,  
know what we need,  
and we are sure you will provide  
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,  
we may return to joy and to feasting  
after this time of trial.  
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform to the will of the Father  
and to do as we are told by Jesus,  
who has taken upon himself our sufferings  
and carried our sorrows  
to lead us, through the cross,  
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Rev. Christopher Heenan. B.D; M.A.  
Parish Priest.