

Sacred Heart Parish.

Church of the Sacred Heart,
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Special Newsletter.

20th March, 2020

Dear Parishioners,

I know that the usual weekly newsletter is often glanced through quickly and I completely understand. **But, please take the time to read this very carefully.**

Never in all my years as a priest have I written such an unusual newsletter and I want to share with you two things: the implications of the Coronavirus for public worship and, secondly, how we can grow and maintain our lives as a worshipping and caring parish community. In a video message Cardinal Vincent pointed out that, for some time in many parts of the world, Catholics have been unable to celebrate weekly Mass and so their prayer deepens their longing to receive Jesus in Holy Communion when Mass does become available. In the present situation that same longing can grow within us.

From Friday evening 20th March there will no longer be any public celebrations of Mass in churches. Each priest is asked to say Mass in the church each day on his own without anyone else being present. Some of the parishes in the Coventry Deanery have live streaming and the details of this will be published on the Deanery website, which can be accessed through the parish website (address at the top) or the Deanery website: <https://coventry-catholicdeanery.org.uk/new/> **Please do visit the Deanery website** where you will also find full details of the Archdiocese of Birmingham Coronavirus (COVID-19) Guidelines for Churches.

Here in Sacred Heart we will continue to publish a weekly newsletter which will be available on our website, but is also emailed out via MailChimp. If you are reading this on the Parish website and don't yet receive the newsletter by email you can sign up on the website to receive it each week. **(Your email address is not revealed to anyone else)**

To help us to grow and deepen our faith in these unusual times, I would like to draw your attention to a number of resources:

Awaiting the Dawn. Each day, throughout Lent, we will be sharing a video with the daily readings from Mass, spiritual guidance from a priest and an act of spiritual communion:
<https://www.lentinisolation.com/>

And for a Sunday sermon *Torch* provides a new Catholic homily each week written specially by Dominican friars: <https://www.torch.op.org/>

Churches are not shutting down! Each day churches will be open for private prayer, so do, please, call in to spend some time with Our Lord. As I was growing up it was very normal for people to pay a visit into Church. We have a big church and so it is easy for us to follow the Government's guidelines on keeping a suitable distance apart. If you feel anxious the words quoted by Pope Saint John-Paul II can encourage us: *I look at Him and He looks at me, and though my gaze may wander, His never does.*

Continued.....

It was this very practise, that was pivotal in the conversion of Edith Stein, who died in Auschwitz and was to become St Teresa Benedicta of the Cross. Before she became a Catholic, whilst sitting by a fountain, she saw Catholics just going into Church to spend some time with the Lord. This astounded her - that God wanted such an intimate and personal relationship with us. If we all start doing this now, we could re-awaken that beautiful habit that everyone practised in my childhood **and keep that going for the rest of our lives.**

For the next week we will try opening the Church at the following times. I would like to leave it open all day but there does need to be someone around, so we'll see how it goes for the next week and then we might be able to extend the times in next week's newsletter:

Saturday 21st 9.30am -11.30am

Sunday 22nd 2.30pm – 4.30pm

Monday 23rd 9.30am – 12.00pm

Tuesday 24th 9.30am – 12.00pm

Wednesday 25th 9.30am – 12.00pm

Thursday 26th 5.00pm -7.30pm

Friday 27th 5.00pm -7.30pm

And as the weather improves there are also two benches in our lovely prayer garden.

During the week and on a Saturday evening or Sunday morning we have been used to being in Church for Mass. It's important not to lose the importance of spending time with the God who loves us. We can use that time not only to pray, but to learn more about our faith. Bishop Robert Barron's YouTube channel is full of Catholic teaching:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/wordonfirevideo/>

My friends, we are united with the Church throughout the world, we are united with the Communion of Saints in heaven, we are united with those who have died, now caught up in God's love and still journeying towards the fulness of heavenly glory. We are the Body of Christ and we can never be alone, for Christ Himself has made his home in us.

And as St Paul wrote to the Church in Rome:

***"With God on our side who can be against us?..Nothing therefore can come between us and the love of Christ, even if we are troubled or worried. For I am certain of this: neither death nor life..nothing that exists, nothing still to come, nor any created thing, can ever come between us and the love of God made visible Christ Jesus our Lord."* (Romans 8:31-35.37-39)**

If you know of anyone who is stuck at home and needs food to be delivered to them, please let me know. Together we can care for others.

I'm only a phone call or an email away, and so are you!

May God bless you all,

Fr. Tony.

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