

HOLY CROSS PRIORY LEICESTER

COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS – A PASTORAL MESSAGE

SUNDAY 26 APRIL 2020

Pastoral Message from Fr David Rocks OP to all the communities under the Pastoral Care of Holy Cross Priory

Dear Friends,

It has now been a month since we closed the doors of our church and since we were able to celebrate together. This afternoon I wandered around our church building, and saw all the signs of things that are waiting for your return – our new candle stands, the empty seats, hymn books, and much more besides. At this time they are poignant symbols of hope, that the crisis will ease, and that we will return, perhaps gradually, to celebrating and gathering as a community again. Until then, we are united in hope, and we are finding different ways to support one another in our life of faith and charity.

I was very pleased to hold a very positive meeting on the “Zoom” platform with many of you during the past week. From that meeting, we have been able to evolve a simple but effective “Covid-19 Pastoral Plan” that we hope to use to develop our pastoral care and evangelisation strategy during this time of crisis. There has been much effort to celebrate Masses and devotions on our Facebook livestream, and we are beginning to use other online platforms to interact with one another. These things will be developing in the weeks ahead of us, so please do get involved if you can.

As your parish priest, my thoughts and prayers are most especially close to those who are sick and housebound, and those ill in our hospitals and care homes. This is an especially worrying time for all of you, and a time in which you cannot have the reassuring visit from your priests, chaplains, or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Please do seek our pastoral support via telephone if you wish. We are also able to provide end of life sacramental support in emergencies, and telephone support to families. My thoughts especially also are with those families in our parish and beyond who are celebrating funerals of their loved ones in a quiet and simple way these days.

There are many in our parish community that work across the whole spectrum of service in the NHS. In these challenging times my thoughts are with you and your families. Indeed, many key workers across the whole of our city and county economy are members of our community of faith. Our Catholic schools continue to respond to the needs of our children and young people, meeting different challenges in these days. But in addition to all these wonderful examples of service, there are many of you working from home, seeking to care for your families as the uncertainty draws onwards. I also think often of the very many members of our community who are unable to join us online – sometimes issues of literacy or poverty. We cannot forget them, and we must pray that the Lord will give us opportunity to reach out to them when we can, and that we can gather together in church again soon.

In our Gospel for this Sunday, the disciples are caught in a post-resurrection time of confusion and bewilderment, struggling to make sense of the extraordinary situation in which they find themselves. The Lord travels with them in that confusion, explaining the mysteries to them, but they fail to recognise him, until he breaks the bread. It is important for all of us to recognise the real presence of the Lord in our family homes, in those who we love, in those who are suffering, and in those who are serving others. While we priests are not able to break the bread with you at the present moment, we have the wonderful privilege of breaking the bread for you. Each day at Mass I ask the Lord to make His Presence felt in each heart and home, so let the Lord who hears every prayer be recognised in your homes at this time, for he is truly risen and has appeared to us, his presence is among us and we bear witness to his glory.

Be intent on prayer, and whatever may happen will turn to our good.

Fr David Edward Rocks OP PP

Prior