

# HOLY CROSS PRIORY LEICESTER

## COVID-19 CORONAVIRUS – A PASTORAL PLAN

DEVELOPED IN APRIL 2020

*"The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent Me to proclaim deliverance to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour."*

## OUR MISSION IN LEICESTER

*"As a Dominican Community, our mission is the evangelisation of the people in Leicester and the surrounding areas. This is realised with our key tasks of preaching and the pastoral care of souls. Through our mission, we aim to share with others the fruits of our contemplation, and thereby manifest God's mercy and compassion through our presence and sacramental activity. There are many people who need to hear the good news that we have been appointed to preach."*

## PREAMBLE

Faced with the pastoral challenges of the 2020 Covid-19 crisis, members of our Holy Cross Family met on Zoom to discuss what we have been doing and how we could enhance and develop our apostolate in response to the emergency situation. Rooted in our Dominican tradition, we build our responses on the four pillars of Dominican life – prayer, study, community, and mission.

## PRAYER

1. We recognise the immense value of 'livestreaming' our Masses on Facebook. Our aim in so doing is to keep our eucharistic communities together, worshipping at our usual times and seeing the familiar surroundings and ministers. In addition we are able to interact virtually in comments etc.
2. We welcome the virtual attendance of people from other places at these livestreamed services, but we are clear that our aim is not to broadcast to the world, but most essentially to our local community.
3. We will continue to take prudent steps towards improving livestreaming of Mass and other services.
4. We note the presence of so many parish communities in various forms of livestream, and we encourage those who find Facebook difficult to avail of these electronic means.
5. In our charity, we remain concerned for those who are impeded from practicing their faith in this way, and for those who find the absence of Mass and other services an immense burden.
6. We will use interactive platforms, such as Zoom, to bring the faithful together in prayer groups.
7. It is a source of profound regret to us that we cannot provide the same service of livestreaming to our regular congregation at Woodhouse. We hope to be able to continue our ministry there in other ways, and ensure the wellbeing of the faithful there.

## STUDY

1. Fr Matthew Jarvis has already moved his scripture study sessions onto a platform called Crowdcast, and has met with the RCIA group by Skype.
2. We will use a range of platforms to develop a programme of catechesis and faith formation using interactive platforms, in the hope of offering a range of options for faith development
3. We are concerned that children and young people also need some interaction. We will collate a directory of existing online resources for children and young people, and we will develop interactive resources for children and young people to be used with strict parental supervision.

## COMMUNITY

1. At the forefront of our efforts, particularly those online at present, is the wellbeing and safeguarding of children, young people, and vulnerable adults. Holy Cross is only safe if we make it safe. We will ensure strict supervision of all our online forums.
2. We recognise also that many members of our community are not able to avail of online resources, and we must find creative ways to keep in touch with them.
3. Some of the most vulnerable and isolated members of our community are not able to be visited in person, so as far as possible we visit by telephone (or related means). We are able to use the network of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to assist with expanding this, but all those doing this virtual 'visiting' need to have DBS checks.
4. We continue to develop our online presence to have social interaction, with various innovations. We will begin by having a social event with coffee after 10:30am Mass each Sunday, and see what else can happen, for example, a quiz night or other such initiatives. There is also the possibility of developing discussion on these platforms.
5. Financial viability – while we are obviously concerned about the loss of income, we are confident that our supporters are not going to 'see us short' in the long term. We will keep a close eye on this situation.
6. We will recommence our capital projects as soon as this is viable.

## MISSION

1. This is a time for all of us to be appreciative of the tremendous service that each of us provide to one another, and to understand ourselves as a group of people who preach the Gospel to one another, and are sent forth to the wider world to evangelise.
2. However, we need to ensure we do not disregard those members of our community who are unable to engage with us online.
3. We are very grateful for the ways in which we are able to reach out to patients in the hospitals and in care homes at this time, to provide vital sacramental support at the end of life. We are thankful that our colleagues in hospital chaplaincy are able to give us such a lead on this, and find innovative and virtual ways for us to provide pastoral support to the sick and dying and their families.
4. We are indebted to all schools, and especially to our Catholic schools. Our teams there are ensuring that our mission to very many families remains vibrant, whether children are learning at home or being cared for within the school setting. We thank all our children and young people for playing their part in our mission to overcome this pandemic.
5. As a parish community, we will continue to work with local response groups and organisations to respond to the needs of our city and county. These are principally:
  - Leicester Covid-19 Mutual Aid and its subgroups;
  - Open Hands Leicester (food bank and supplies)
  - Leicester Hospitals Charity (supporting our NHS and workers in the University Hospitals of Leicester)
  - Recovery Leicester and Recovery Assistance Dogs
  - Holy Cross Catholic Primary School also distributes surplus foods.
6. Our mission is one of hope in these times. Let's ask the Lord and His Blessed Mother to be close to each one of us and help us to see the way forward.

## PRAYER FOR PROTECTION

*We fly to thy patronage, O holy Mother of God;  
despise not our petitions in our necessities,  
but deliver us always from all dangers, O glorious and blessed Virgin.  
Amen.*