

## SITUATION REGARDING SUNDAY AND WEEKDAY MASSES

In common with the other bishops of England and Wales, Bishop Declan has issued a decree in light of the current Covid-19 situation. Within this decree it is clear that:

- The obligation of the faithful to attend Mass on a Sunday or Holy Day of Obligation is removed until further notice.
- The faithful may choose one of the following alternatives to attending Sunday Mass:
  - Taking part may include watching a Sunday Mass online, or on television, and so receive Holy Communion spiritually; OR
  - Reflecting on the Sunday Liturgical text, reading the Bible or saying the Rosary

Public Mass has unfortunately been suspended. Hopefully it will resume in early December, but we await confirmation of this. Statements on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/statement-from-the-president-and-the-vice-president-of-the-conference-on-the-prime-ministers-statement/> and <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/statement-on-the-four-week-national-lockdown-and-a-call-to-prayer/>.

The Immaculate Conception Church will be open for private prayer on Sundays and Wednesdays from 10:00am until 12:00 noon, while the Church of Our Lady and Saint Thérèse, Painswick will be open for private prayers on Sundays from 8:30am until 9:30am. People visiting the church will need to observe the following:

- Only private, individual prayer is permitted (no directed or group prayers)
- Those under 16 are welcome, but must be accompanied by an adult
- Those considered vulnerable should consider whether they feel it is safe for them to enter the church
- Those with Covid-19 symptoms, or any cough or cold symptoms must not enter the church
- If there are busy periods it may be necessary to wait outside the church until admitted by the stewards, and if there are people waiting then visits will be limited to 20 minutes
- At Stroud entrance to the church will be through the Walsingham door and exit will be through the main church door. At Painswick please observe social-distancing when entering or leaving
- Seating must be used as directed by the stewards and pews/seats will need to be cleaned after use. Not all areas of the church will be accessible.
- Social distancing must be maintained
- Hand sanitiser will be available and must be used upon entering and leaving the church
- Face coverings/masks need to be worn inside the church, unless exempt.
- There are no toilet facilities available at this time
- Directions from the stewards must be followed.

These measures should help everyone to have confidence in visiting our church, and also ensure that the permission to open our church is not withdrawn.

A possible form of prayer for use when Mass cannot be publicly celebrated can be found at <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/03/No-Mass-A4.pdf>. The following prayer for Spiritual Communion may be useful.

### **Spiritual Communion: Prayer of Saint Alphonsus**

*My Jesus, I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar.  
I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul.  
Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul  
so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.*

Sunday and daily Mass readings can be found at <https://www.universalis.com/mass.htm>. Sunday Mass and weekday Mass from Clifton Cathedral is available every day at 9:30am on our diocesan website [www.cliftondiocese.com](http://www.cliftondiocese.com). Celebrations from Rome can also be found on 'Vatican Media Live' on YouTube. Our Bishops' Conference website [www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk) is also a source for details of celebrations in our country and beyond.

Father Gary will be offering Mass privately during this time as 'the continued celebration of Mass ensures that the faithful can join in spiritual communion with the priests of the church.' Requested Mass intentions will continue to be offered, generally on or near to the dates requested.

## **OTHER INFORMATION**

While the parish administration continues, access to the parish office is restricted to appointment only. For those matters normally dealt with by the parish office please use the parish email or telephone 0784 249 5988 (Tuesday to Friday 10:00am – 3:00pm). The normal parish telephone number should be used to contact Father Gary.

**All parish groups and programmes are suspended until further notice.**

**There will continue to be a weekly newsletter available on the parish website.** Please make the details of the newsletter known to those who may not access the website.

**Prayer is always important.** Even when we cannot be physically close, prayer unites us. As well as traditional prayers known to us there are also resources online: [www.prayasyougo.org](http://www.prayasyougo.org) offers daily meditative prayer which some may find useful.

**First Holy Communion and Confirmation:** There is still no indication when it will be possible to prepare children for First Holy Communion or begin the programme for Confirmation in the normal way. If any parent or young person is particularly concerned about receiving these sacraments, they are welcome to discuss the situation with Father Gary.

**Baptisms and Marriages** cannot take place in the usual way at this time. For more information contact Father Gary or Deacon Steve.

**Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession) and Sacrament of the Sick:** Please contact Father Gary in any serious need.

**Funerals** may be celebrated within strict regulations. Arrangements may be made for a Mass *in memoriam* when congregations are allowed to gather safely.

**Pastoral Visits** by clergy or lay people cannot take place in the normal way at present. Father Gary is happy to speak with people by telephone.

**Parish Finances:** Some people previously enquired regarding parish finances, and how to contribute to the parish without the weekly collection. This is important as although our churches are closed for public worship, our parish continues to function and expenses continue to be incurred. Those who currently do not contribute via standing order and who would like to continue to support the parish financially during this time can use one of the following methods:

- Set up a standing order via online banking. Please contact the parish for the necessary details.
- Donate via the 'Paypal' button on the parish website. Donations can be gift-aided if applicable. You do not need your own paypal account to use this service. We believe that the cost to the parish for donating in this way is 1.4% and 20p per donation.
- Send a cheque to the parish office (although these may not be presented to the bank for some weeks).
- Wait until public Masses resume.

These methods are for donations to the parish. They are not for second collections, which are postponed at present.

**Please speak with Father Gary regarding these or other aspects of parish life or sacramental celebration.**