

Statement from Fr Tony Churchill  
20<sup>th</sup> March 2020

My Dear Friends

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith. It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, at this time we must **not** gather for public acts of worship in our churches. This will begin from Friday evening, 20<sup>th</sup> March 2020, until further notice.

Our churches will remain open. They are not closing. They will be a focal point of prayer, where you will find solace and strength. In visiting our churches at this time, we will observe with great care the practices of hygiene and the guidance on social distancing.

However, the celebration of Mass, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, will take place without a public congregation, only **in Private** – Mass intentions will be celebrated as arranged.

Knowing that the Mass is being celebrated; joining in spiritually in that celebration; watching the live-streaming of the Mass; following its prayers at home; making an act of spiritual communion: this is how we share in the Sacrifice of Christ in these days. These are the ways in which we will sanctify Sunday, and indeed every day.

We want everyone to understand that in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed. This is, without doubt, the teaching of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2181). This pandemic is the 'serious reason' why this obligation does not apply at this time.

You will find more details about the pathway of prayer and sacramental life we are now to take in the accompanying document and on the Bishops' Conference website ([www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)). Our own bishop and I will provide further support, encouragement and information about our way of prayer together in the coming weeks. The second vital aspect of these challenging times is our care for each other. There are so many ways in which we are to do this: being attentive to the needs of our

neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us.

During these disturbing and threatening times, the rhythm of the prayer of the Church will continue. Please play your part in it. The effort of daily kindness and mutual support for all will continue and increase. Please play your part in this too. For your commitment to this, we thank you.

*'The Lord is my shepherd,  
There is nothing I shall want.'*

May God bless us all.

To access Masses online visit the following websites.

[St Mary of the Angels, Worthing](#)

[St Dunstan's, Woking](#)

[Sacred Heart, Hove](#)

[Sacred Heart, Caterham](#) - Mass (live and recorded), Adoration and the Rosary.

[St Paul's, Haywards Heath](#) will be streaming via Facebook.

Additional services will also be available further afield:

[The Shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham](#) offers a 12 noon online Pilgrim Mass each day, [Church Service TV](#) provides live streaming and recordings from churches around the country.

Vatican TV Live

Angelus news

EWTN