

## **Another week in the bunker - Thoughts for Low Sunday**

It was certainly a very odd Easter for all of us. I celebrated Mass in the early morning, about 7 O'Clock in an empty church. Later in the morning I watched the Mass with the Pope in Rome. At 11.30 many of you joined in the prayer service, courtesy of ZOOM. The internet has been a great boon at this time. Many of you, I know, are watching the Mass from churches all over the world, and finding it very helpful.

I thought this morning I would talk a little bit about prayer. Of course, the Mass is the greatest of all prayers. But there are many other ways of prayer. At a time like this we need to think a bit about when we pray and how we pray. The first thing to say is that each of us is different. There's no "ONE SIZE FITS ALL" when it comes to prayer. Cardinal Hume used to say "Pray as you can, not as you can't "

Prayer is all about our relationship with God. It is very important to be yourself when you are praying. In church, at Mass, we use prayers that have come down to us over the centuries. We use formal language, poetry and music. What we do here in Ashted on a Sunday is essentially the same as is happening in churches all over the world. In our personal prayer we can be free to be ourselves. We should speak as we are. You're not giving an official address to the Queen. You are talking to your Father in Heaven. He made you, He loves you. He knows all about you. There's no point in pretending. Just be yourself. If you're feeling depressed, or irritable then tell that to God. You really can't shock Him. Your conversation must be real, authentic. In Cardinal Newman's phrase, "Heart speaks to Heart"

Where to begin? I think we need to decide on two things. When will I pray, and where? Both are important. Don't set yourself a target that's unrealistic. Far better to aim at 10 minutes a day and stick to it than promise half an hour and never get round to it. Choose the time of day that will work for you. That will depend on your daily programme. It doesn't matter when you pray as long as you do pray.

You also need to decide where you are going to pray, Again it really doesn't matter where it is, as long as it works for you. I think I'll stop there for today. Next time I will try to talk about different kinds of prayer.

Let's now be still for a moment of silent prayer.