

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, Updated 27 March 2020

Greetings and peace to you, and I hope, a message of practical and spiritual support to you in our present circumstances.

Following recent orders from the Government to close all places of Worship, along with the instructions from the Scottish Catholic Bishops' Conference, Masses will not be celebrated in public with effect from Fri 20 March 20. There will be no further Sunday Masses, week-day Masses nor Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament.

Should you require Confession please contact Fr. Dominic on the Parish number: 01463 233519

Although this is an involuntary 'eucharistic fast' this can be an opportunity for further self-scrutiny, a time to deepen our obedience to the will of the Father, and to discern what the Spirit is saying to the Churches. It will be fruitful if we share our insights with each other, by whatever means. Please make acts of 'Spiritual Communion', when listening to Mass on radio, or watching & listening to it on television, or your smart 'phone or computer.

You may find these links helpful: The Eternal Word Television Network has a daily Mass on the homepage of its website. It can be accessed directly at <https://www.ewtn.com/catholicism/daily-readings>. Some Scottish Churches are offering televised Masses including our own Diocese from St. Joseph Parish Aberdeen, this can be accessed through the Diocesan website rcda.scot Other sites such as 'MCN Media' offer live streamed Daily Mass from St Francis Xavier's Parish in Falkirk, and from the Catholic Cathedral in Glasgow, as well as other venues at home and abroad. Similarly, you could explore 'Daily Mass Today' on 'google', where you should find several possibilities.

As well as all the splendid modern high-tech gizmos there is however another system, 'wonderfully made' – your mind! Your own imagination and memory are powerful tools for recollecting Masses and imagining the sights and symbols of faith. When accompanied by careful attention to the weekday and Sunday Mass readings we can find nourishing spiritual food. This is a time to extend our knowledge,

strengthen our will, and deepen our understanding- let the desert flourish. All of us should say The Lord's Prayer more frequently, and the petition 'Give us today our daily bread' might be pondered and reflected upon, indeed 'marked, learned and inwardly digested'.

Please encourage one another in prayer, and in offering acts of kindness. If we cherish and encourage each other, day by day, we will gain from our present bewildering and uncertain circumstances.

To ensure better communications with you, please would you inform Fr Dominic of your contact details, telephone numbers, emails and addresses. And, do not forget your names, both or indeed all of them!

I know that you will naturally look out for your neighbours. If there is an emergency please contact the Parish Office immediately, and we will do our best to respond as soon as possible. Routine visiting has stopped, both by the clergy and Eucharistic ministers, and also by the members of the St Vincent de Paul Society. We will try to adopt a telephone ministry and where possible by Skype, if you are into that kind of thing. Where there is any acute need for shopping or necessities please access the Parish Office and SVP Society. SVP will be remaining in contact with those whom they have been visiting regularly.

It would be good if younger parishioners [under forty perhaps?] would let Fr Dominic/Parish Office know of their willingness to be 'volunteers' for assisting in the practical care of the house-bound, for example, making deliveries of food and necessities, and perhaps with some small garden tasks, putting out the bins, or even dog-walking

It will be a disappointment to many that First Holy Communions, and Confirmations will be postponed, but everyone will understand the need for protection, as all large gatherings are to be avoided. For some this will mean a smaller, and much more intimate wedding. This can, of course, bring its own rewards as greater emphasis is on the actuality of the Sacrament and less on the Reception and festivities. Perhaps a later Anniversary could be the occasion for thanksgiving and rejoicing.

We have the opportunity to persevere in Faith, with an unwavering Hope in God's providential care, and with Love in our hearts and minds reflecting the Love of Christ, sharing as we do a Common life with Him.

God be with you all: Jesus, mercy; Mary, pray

Pray for us, as we pray for you.

May St Joseph sustain you in your prayers, and ever be our protector.

Every Blessing

Fr James