

St George, Bickley

Spiritual Resources for use during the Coronavirus Pandemic

For the entirety of the period during which the public celebration of the liturgy is suspended, the Mass will continue to be offered daily at 12pm - and this will be live-streamed via [our Facebook page](#). We regret that, in line with bishops' guidance, the church is now closed to public access. The Angelus bell will continue to ring at 8.00am, 12 noon and 6.00pm, and this is a prayer you can pray at these times from the comfort and security of your own home as well:

The angel of the Lord brought tidings to Mary,
and she conceived by the Holy Spirit.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee;
blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb, Jesus.
Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,
now, and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Behold the handmaid of the Lord,
be it unto me according to thy word. Hail Mary...

And the Word was made flesh,
and dwelt among us. Hail Mary...

Pray for us, O holy Mother of God,
that we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ.

Let us pray. Pour fourth, we beseech thee, O Lord, thy grace into our hearts; that as we have known the incarnation of thy Son Jesus Christ by the message of an angel, so by his cross and passion we may be brought to the glory of his resurrection.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.



Fr Richard will be in church each morning at 8.00am to pray the Office of Readings and Morning Prayer, and at 5.45pm to pray Evening Prayer (5.30pm on Saturdays, with the Office of Vigils; no celebration of the Liturgy of the Hours in church on Mondays - although the church will be open as usual, and Mass will be said at noon.) You can find the text to these services, as well as the readings at Mass, on the [Universalis website](#): there is also an app available for download to your smartphone or tablet. The Order of Mass in use at St George's will be uploaded to our website separately.

Whether or not you are able to participate digitally in the Mass, you are nevertheless encouraged to make a daily Spiritual Communion, as follows:

When I can't get to Church

This short prayer pattern (*adapted from a Salesian resource*) follows the shape of the Mass and allows you to participate in a homely prayer. It invites Jesus into your home and into your lives for the coming week. It is designed for families and couples, but it can also be used by individuals who have had to self-isolate and anyone who cannot be at Sunday Mass.

Saint Mary Mazzarello, founder of the Salesian sisters, found it difficult to get to church sometimes through work or illness. Instead she would sit by the window in her attic, from where she could see the parish church and bring her parish church into her home. This prayer helps you to do the same.

(You might want to light a candle and play some quiet instrumental music before starting, in order to change the atmosphere for a while.)

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit
Lord, I want to gather in my mind all those who have touched my life for better or worse during the last week. I can imagine their faces, their words and the events we have shared, and I realise you have been present through it all. *(Pause)*

We recognise that the last week has not been perfect and we need to accept some responsibility when we have made mistakes in what we have done and not done. *(Pause)*

Lord have mercy; Christ have mercy; Lord have mercy

God's mysterious presence has been hidden in the events of life and we need to recognise that and count the blessings of the last week. *(Pause: some people may wish to remember special blessings from the last week)*

Let us pray. Lord, you have promised to be with us always. Thank you for staying with us this week, in all that has happened. Help us all to keep looking for you in the people and events of next week, so we can find your wisdom and mystery deep in the life of everyone we meet, and in ourselves! Amen.

Then think of a favourite story from the Gospel to guide you through the week ahead. Put yourself into the story and talk to God about its message for you and those you love for the week ahead. (Pause)

Think next of those who are in need. Let your prayer reach around the world. Pray for the planet, for its people and for those who suffer both near and far.

Lord, hear us. **Lord, graciously hear us.** *(Pause)*

Lord, I give you my life, my worries, my dreams. I put my plans and my difficulties, my family and my relationships into your hands. I trust you to make sense of what will happen to me in the week ahead. Stay with us all and keep us safe in your love. We ask this through Jesus our brother and our God. Amen.

(Pause) Be still and aware that God is in you, with you, knowing you as you are. Like two people who know each other well, just sit with God, who knew you even before you were born. In your mind just sit looking at God who always looks at you with love. Allow Jesus to speak to you, heart-to-heart. (Pause)

**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come;
thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation;
but deliver us from evil.**



Lord, join my life to your life. Help me see that every week brings its own fragments of death and resurrection. Help me to see that pattern of dying and rising working within me. Join my life to your life-pattern so that I can let go of whatever might trap me from being full of life and loving kindness. **Amen**

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon, and inspire you to a life of love and truth. **Amen**

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A Pastoral Letter *from the* Archbishop of Southwark, *the* Most Rev'd John Wilson

'Our help in is the name of the Lord, who made heaven and earth.'

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ,

I wanted to write to you personally as we face the threats posed locally, nationally, and internationally by the COVID-19 Coronavirus. For so many people, including those in our parish and school communities, this situation brings uncertainty and fear. It has the capacity to bring out both the best and the worst of our human nature. Working together, in the strength of God's grace, we must seek to ensure that the very best of our common humanity triumphs, especially for the health and well-being of the weakest, the poorest, and the most vulnerable.

The Lord Jesus commanded us to love one another and to serve after His example (*Jn 13.12-15; 13.34*) Now is the time for our love to be displayed more deeply and our service to find heightened expression. Our calling as disciples is to be salt and light to the world (*Mt 5.13-16*) in witness to the Gospel of Christ.

Few of us will have witnessed circumstances such as those we are presently experiencing. It is crucial that we take the necessary measures to maximise the welfare of every person and follow the guidance and requirements of our Government and Statutory Agencies...

A major change is the cessation of public celebrations of the Mass and the dispensation of the Obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days. We will, however, endeavour to keep our churches open wherever possible so that those who wish can visit to pray before the Blessed Sacrament.

The imposition of these restrictions has not been taken lightly. As we know, the Mass is the hallmark of Catholic faith and practice. For there to be no public celebrations of the Mass, either on weekdays or Sundays, will be an immeasurable loss to all who cherish their participation in the Eucharistic Sacrifice. For now, we must draw close to Christ in other ways, taking consolation from the fact that the Mass will continue to be celebrated each day in our parish churches to *'advance the peace and salvation of all the world.'* (EP III) It will not, however, be possible for the faithful to attend these celebrations.

To continue to mark the significance of Sunday as the Lord's Day, I would encourage all those who are able to read the Scripture readings of the Sunday Mass and to pray the Rosary. We can also make a Spiritual Communion which prayerfully expresses our faith in Christ's presence in the Blessed Sacrament...

Our Catholic faith offers the vital spiritual support we will need to cope with all that will unfold. We can sustain our life of prayer, turning to the Scriptures, the Rosary, to novenas and litanies, using Catholic social media and internet resources to keep connected in the communion of faith. Live-stream celebrations of the Mass and other devotions are available from churches and shrines across the country and around the world. I encourage every Catholic — individuals, couples and families – to create, if there is not one already present, a simple shrine in their home, with a crucifix and religious images, to provide a focus until that blessed day when we are able to gather in our churches once more.

Thank you for everything you are doing to support your parish, school and wider community at this challenging time. Please have a special care and concern for anyone who might struggle. Be Good Samaritans to each other. Support those most in need in the best ways possible. Please shop responsibly and give to charities working with people who are vulnerable and marginalised. Speak to your families and loved ones as often as you can. Keep everyone in your prayers, especially those suffering illness, and all our NHS, emergency and social care staff.

We may be more physically separated at this time, but we remain united spiritually in Christ through the Holy Spirit in a bond of faith that cannot be broken. Our prayers strengthen our relationship with Christ, our unity with Our Blessed Lady and the Communion of Saints, and our connection with each other. No one is forgotten in the prayers of the Church.

I want to assure you of my prayers for you, for your loved ones and for your parish community. We will do our very best to provide support and information through the Archdiocesan website and social media presence. In all that we will face, individually and together, we find our hope in Christ. He is our sure foundation, today, tomorrow, and always.

With every blessing,

Yours devotedly in Christ,

✠ John Wilson

The Most Reverend John Wilson

Archbishop of Southwark

Given at Archbishop's House, Southwark, 18 March 2020