



Parish Church of St Nicholas of Myra
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From the Parish Priest

Dear brothers and sisters

I hope this email comes to you in good health, and in as calm and collected a frame of mind as is possible at this very unsettling time.

I am writing to let you know how the coronavirus changes our life together as a Christian community. On Tuesday 17 March, we received news from the Archbishops of Canterbury and York that public worship is suspended in all churches for the time being. There will therefore be no public celebration of the Eucharist or morning and evening prayer at St Nicholas for a while. I believe this also means that there will be no public administration of the Eucharist to those who are healthy. I expect to receive further clarification about how we should celebrate baptisms, marriages and funerals, and other sacraments, very soon. Guidance from the Church of England and our diocese is developing day by day and we are responding to it carefully.

The archbishops have encouraged the clergy to keep on praying as before, but in a private way. Mthr Jess and I have most definitely been praying for you all, and we are presently setting up a video stream so that you can join us in prayer from home if you would like. We will also be sending out a mailing each week to help you pray at home, and keep you updated. If you have particular prayer intentions for us to offer in church, please send them to either of us by email.

Aside from worship, all other non-essential activities at St Nicholas are being suspended for the immediate future. It is likely that this will include the Annual Parochial Church Meeting; I await further clarity on this. However, it is likely that the church will be open for private prayer; we will keep you updated as the situation develops. We will continue to collect provisions in church for the food bank, and I encourage you to keep supporting this vital resource if you are able. We will be providing food from church for those in need on the third Saturday of the month, in place of our usual Welcome Café. The parish office will continue to respond to emails and calls. There may be other ways we can usefully help people in need over the coming weeks.

We all find ourselves in exceptional circumstances. It is therefore all the more important that our pastoral ministry continues, albeit in a slightly different form. As a pastoral team, Mthr Jess, Lesley Anne Di Marco and I will be staying in touch with the sick and housebound - please let any of us know if you have particular needs, would like a regular call, or ministry at home or in hospital in time of serious illness. I encourage you to stay in touch with us, and

with each other too. The old fashioned telephone can be a powerful tool.

I also encourage you to keep praying at home, confident in the knowledge that the Holy Spirit binds us together as one body, and is working through us for good - indeed all the more so at a time of significant challenge. Please:

Pray for the needs of the world, especially those who are sick and all who are treating them.

Pray for the country, as we face this challenge; for calmness, cooperation, and compassion.

Pray for those who are isolated, anxious or grieving - for the spirit of peace to rest upon them.

I commend to you the second collect at Matins, as a good prayer with which to start each day.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, Almighty and everlasting God, who hast safely brought us to the beginning of this day: Defend us in the same with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no sin, neither run into any kind of danger; but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

If you are not on our regular mailing list, and would like to be, please email the parish office and we will arrange for you to be added.

With love and prayers

Fr Dominic