

Dear Brothers and Sisters

Greetings and peace to you all.

I am writing to give you an update from Bishop David, ordained and installed yesterday as the new bishop of Northampton diocese, who we warmly welcome to our diocese. This update is also in tandem with the directive issued by The Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales following government advice on how to contain the spread of COVID -19. The Conference having consulted the Ordinaries of the Dioceses, **has agreed that the cessation of public liturgies should begin from Friday evening 20th March 2020.** I am conscious of the impact this will have on us all and would like to assure you that I feel ever closer to you now than ever and will keep praying and supporting you.

Because of the situation the Church finds herself in, the obligation for the faithful to attend Holy Mass on a Sunday or Holy day of Obligation is removed, until further notice. However, I will be celebrating daily Masses without congregation and would fulfil the intentions already booked. Perhaps you could join in spirit as the Masses are offered for you and make a Spiritual Communion. Find a recommendation for Spiritual Communion at the end of this letter.

There is live streaming service from the Cathedral in Northampton <https://northamptondiocese.org/live/> which you may wish to follow or follow Masses on EWTN and other TV Channels.

During this period, Our Lady of Peace church will remain open, from 9.00am to 7.30pm for individual private prayer, without any organised services, and offering prayer before the Blessed Sacrament.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Confession will be offered on request. Please phone the parish office or send me email to arrange a suitable time.

Celebrations of Baptism, First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, Confirmation and Matrimony are postponed until a time that allows for families and friends to gather safely within our churches.

Pastoral care of the sick and housebound will continue with visits and telephone support. Visit to those in hospitals and care homes would depend on the advice of the staff.

It will still be possible to do funerals, so should need arise, please phone or email the parish office to make necessary arrangements. Please note certain restrictions do apply also with funerals.

More than ever, this is a time for all of us to look after each other. As a matter of duty, please phone up and check on one another. Let us continue to support and pray for one another. SVP and other charitable arms of the Church would need to continue their ministries of reaching out to the vulnerable. Leaders of groups in the parish should also endeavour to reach out to their members. Strict hygiene protocols should be maintained, especially when distribution of goods and visits are involved.

There is need to set up a parish response team and I will welcome volunteers. Should you or anyone need support, please telephone or email the parish office.

Particular directives will be given about Holy Week and Sacred Triduum in due course.

For further clarification please click on this link to view the Liturgical Advice in the light of the COVID-19 Pandemic [Click here to read the advice](#). You may also like to read the article published in [The Tablet](#)

We will continue to keep you updated, and thank you for your continued support at this time.

Finally I exhort you with these holy words: "Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go" (Joshua 1:9). May our blessed mother, Our Lady Queen of Peace and help of Christians, St Joseph and St Andrew intercede for us all. AMEN.

Act of Spiritual Communion:

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.