

NEWSLETTER 25TH MARCH 2020

Dear Parishioners

I hope that you are coping with the developing crisis, which will, sadly, get worse over the next weeks. Bishop Philip gave a very good 'Thought for the Day' on BBC Radio 4 this morning, in which he spoke of The Solemnity of the Annunciation of The Lord. This celebration of the Angel Gabriel's announcement to Our Lady that she was being asked to become the Mother of the Saviour of men and women used to be called Lady Day in England, recognizing the importance of Mary's acceptance of this central role in the History of Salvation. Her Fiat (let it be done) enables us to share in the Life, Death and Resurrection of Jesus.

This morning I conducted a Funeral Service at West Berks Crematorium, and there are now restrictions on the number of people able to attend (15) and how close people can be. An event of this nature, at this time of crisis, is difficult for all involved, which involves clergy, undertaker, crematorium staff and, obviously, the bereaved. The obituary for the deceased from her husband of 60 years was short – simply asking people, of whatever belief, to pause for a few moments and pray for her soul. Equally moving was the journey of the coffin from their home, neighbours unable to attend standing outside their houses as we passed. In spite of everything, there was a great sense of Christian Hope present in this event today. May she rest in peace.

There follows a number of points which I ask you to note:

CLOSURE OF THE PARISH OFFICE

As from today, 25th March 2020, the Parish Office at Tadley is closed until the end of the present emergency. E-mails will still be addressed, but from home by our part-time Secretary, Barbara Davis. She will be in regular contact with me via telephone so long as we both remain well. There is now a brief message on the Presbytery telephone.

My thanks to Barbara for her commitment over the short time of being in post since January, but especially during the last couple of weeks. Please keep her in prayer. Like myself, she is extremely tired and needs a break.

TAKING A BREAK

As Parishioners may have seen from the notice on the Presbytery door, I have been resting, as far as possible, from Sunday until today. For a couple of weeks I have been struggling with a bad cold which began to affect my chest.

I am in the vulnerable group because of a tendency to severe asthma, so I need to ensure that I am over the bug I have had. Although much better, I am extremely tired by the evening, and there is still a lingering cold. Accordingly, as from today, I am taking a break for a couple of weeks and have informed the Diocesan of this. I shall be available on the telephone, and, if the cold goes quickly, will return to 'normal', whatever that is!

I am grateful to those who, as the crisis developed, contacted me to offer their help if I was unwell. At the present moment, I think a break is all that is needed, and am not displaying symptoms of the Coronavirus.

BISHOP PHILIP'S DECREE UPDATE PRECISED

As from 24th March 2020:

All Churches and chapels in the Diocese of Portsmouth are to be closed with immediate effect until further notice. Priests are able to celebrate Mass daily, but without the faithful being present. Therefore, Parishioners may NOT now use either St Michael's Church, Tadley, or St Oswald's Church, Burghfield Common, for private prayer.

Baptisms may be celebrated in danger of death, only privately, with the observance of hygiene precautions and with limited attendance. No Parish Baptisms will be booked until the Government declares the crisis suspended or over, as will be the case for Marriage Preparation.

Sacraments to the Sick and Dying will be determined by the developing situation and it may not be possible to administer them in certain cases. Visits to care homes and hospitals will have to follow the advice offered by the infection control authorities.

Keeping in contact with Jesus and our Heavenly Father in the Power of The Holy Spirit calls us to use alternatives to attending Mass (eg streamed Masses), remaining constant in prayer, and, if possible, helping our neighbours without spreading or catching the virus. There is a need to consider the material upkeep of the Church, by putting aside each week money for that purpose if we do not regularly gift through the banking system. It is appreciated by Father Patrick that some people may find this impossible because of unemployment or increased demands because of isolation. They should not be concerned, if that is the case, as their first duty is to themselves and their families.

INVITATION FROM BISHOP PHILIP

Bishop Philip would like to invite you each morning to join him for Eucharistic Adoration, Morning Prayer and Mass in his private chapel in Bishop's House, Portsmouth. He will be live-streaming the Liturgy over these next weeks. The usual weekday schedule is as follows:

0730 Eucharistic Adoration

0810 Morning Prayer of the Church, with Benediction

0830 Mass

At the Mass, you are invited to make a Spiritual Communion. There will be occasional variations in times – please see the E News from the Diocesan Website for further information

Live-streaming will begins 25th March 2020 (Lady Day)

REDEDICATION OF ENGLAND AS THE DOWRY OF MARY – SUNDAY 29TH MARCH

In preparation for this we are asked to recite the special Angelus from tomorrow (Thursday 26th to Saturday 28th March). The Angelus is below:-

V: The Angel of the Lord declared unto Mary
R: And she conceived by the Holy Spirit

As God once chose Mary to become the Mother of His Son through the message of an angel, so He chooses me this day, and invites me through the ministry of the Church or the example of another, to seek and do His Will at this moment in my life.

Hail Mary full of Grace...

V: Behold the handmaid of the Lord

R: Be it be done unto me according to thy Word

Mary's response to her invitation, "let it be done to me according to your Word", opened her heart to God's grace and all things became possible. Let my "yes" today take away fear, as I embrace God's Will, and like Mary "ponder these things in my heart".

Hail Mary full of Grace...

V: And the Word became flesh (*Bow or genuflect*)

R: And dwelt among us

At a moment in history, Mary's faith-filled "yes" conceived Him, first in her heart, which then led to the birth of our Saviour. Through accepting Him in my heart, enable me to recognise my role in bringing Christ to my sisters and brothers today.

Hail Mary full of Grace...

V: Pray for us most holy Mother of God

R: That we may be made worthy of the promises of Christ

Let us pray: O Holy Mother of God, pray for us, and assist us as we dedicate ourselves this day. Your Yes at the Annunciation brought our Saviour Jesus into the world, and you invite us to contemplate the great mystery of the Incarnation, sharing your joy in announcing that "the Word was made flesh and lived among us." May our yes, this day, open our hearts to serve our sisters and brothers in this your Dowry, that they too may share our joy in the Good News that God walks among us. We make this prayer through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**The Act of Entrustment of England to the Virgin Mary on Sunday 29th
March at 12 noon:-:**

Prayer

O Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy "Dowry" and upon us all who greatly hope and trust in thee.

Response

We your faithful people assembled here offer you this country in which we live. Once it was yours, all its children were your children and you were honoured throughout England as its Protectress and its Queen. Again do we consecrate it as your Dowry, and entrust it to your maternal care.

Prayer

By thee it was that Jesus our Saviour and our hope was given unto the world; and He has given thee to us that we might hope still more.

Response

To you we entrust the Church, which invokes you as Mother. On earth you preceded her in the pilgrimage of faith. Comfort her in her difficulties and trials. Make her always the sign and instrument of intimate union with God

and of the unity of the whole human race. To you, Mother of the human family, and of the nations, we confidently entrust the whole of humanity with its hopes and fears. Let it not lack the light of true wisdom. Guide it to seek freedom and justice for all. Direct its steps in the ways of peace. Enable all to meet Christ, the Way, the Truth and the Life.

Prayer

Plead for us thy children, whom thou didst receive and accept at the foot of the Cross, O sorrowful Mother.

Response

Pray, O Holy Mother of God, for the conversion of heart of the people of England, restoration of the sick, consolation for the troubled, repentance of sinners, peace to the departed. Queen of Peace, pray for us and give to the world the peace for which all peoples are longing, peace in the truth, justice and charity of Christ. Give peace to the nations and to the souls of all, that in peace, the Kingdom of God may prevail.

Prayer

Intercede for our separated brethren, that with us in the one true fold they may be united to the supreme Shepherd, the Vicar of thy Son.

Response

May your prayers bring back this country to the fullness of its ancient faith. May your intercession lead us to a closer union with your divine Son. We offer you all the people of this land, especially those who know you so little or not at all. May all in our country know Christ, the light of the world and its only Saviour

Prayer

Pray for us all, dear Mother, that by faith fruitful in good works we may all deserve to see and praise God, together with thee, in our heavenly home.

Response

May we who follow your Son, be fruitful in the good work of building a culture of life in our world, where all human life is treasured and the gift of God's creation is respected and cared for, so that all may share the fruits of God's generous love

V: Pray for us O Holy Mother of God

R: That we may be made worthy of the Promises of Christ.

O alone of all women, Mother and Virgin, Mother most happy, Virgin most pure, sinful as we are, we come to see you who are all pure, we salute you, we honour you as how we may with our humble offerings. May thy Son grant us, that imitating thy most holy manners, we also, by the grace of the Holy Spirit may deserve spiritually to conceive the Lord Jesus in our inmost soul, and once conceived never to lose Him. Amen.

FATHER ROB STEWART

I know Rob well, as he studied at St John's Seminary. He has been asked to move from Guernsey to become assistant Priest to Canon Michael Dennely at English Martyrs' Church, Reading. He will be giving additional support to the Hospital Chaplaincy in Reading. Keep him in prayer and all clergy involved in the care of those in hospitals at this time.

CTAT UPDATE

All CTAT events in and around Tadley are either on hold or are cancelled.

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| 1 | GOOD FRIDAY - | NO EVENTS |
| 2 | VE DAY - | CTAT INVOLVEMENT CANCELLED |
| 3 | FORUM & MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR THE DEAD - | CANCELLED |
| 4 | HOLIDAY CLUB - | ON HOLD |
| 5 | TREACLE FAIR - | ON HOLD to at least 6 th September |

THANK YOU

Finally, Father Patrick expresses his sincere thanks to all in our Parish Area who have telephoned him or made contact offering support not only for him should he get ill, but also to help those who may be in need at this time. We shall continue to monitor the situation as develop and provide whatever help is possible. In the meantime, you are all in my thoughts and prayers.

On a lighter note, for those of you who may know of Ed Murrow, the American war time broadcaster who stayed in London throughout the Blitz and made a deep impression on his listeners, and ended each broadcasts with this parting: – ‘GOOD NIGHT AND GOOD LUCK!’

Keep safe and God bless

Father Patrick Tansey