

**HINKSEY CATHOLIC PARISH**  
**-OUR PARISH LIFE-**  
**SECOND LETTER**

**24 MARCH 2020**

*Dear friends,*

I am writing to you to for a second time because things have changed very quickly in the last week. I know this letter is rather long, but I do ask you to read it carefully, and to pass on its contents to those who need to know. **There is much which has changed from the letter I wrote before.**

### **Our Present Situation**

First, here is the summary of Bishop Philip's latest Decree, issued this afternoon, which governs how we in this diocese are living our faith together in this time:

**Because of the very latest advice (Monday) from the government about staying at home, sadly, I am issuing a new Decree today, which mandates the closure of all churches and chapels across the Diocese. The Eucharist and Anointing of the Sick may only be administered to those in danger of death, and Baptisms and Weddings will need to be deferred.**

To be clear: our churches will now be closed. If anything about this is not clear, please call. The Blessed Sacrament will continue to be reserved in our tabernacles – don't think, as Mary Magdalen did, 'They have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid him.' He is there.

### **Holy Communion, Anointing, Baptism**

- **Holy Communion may only be given to those in danger of death.**
- **The anointing of the sick may only be given to those in danger of death.** Hospital visits are pretty much impossible now – you must ask (for yourself or a loved one) for the Catholic chaplains.
- **Baptisms which are not emergencies are postponed until further notice.** Where there is an emergency, anyone can baptize, with clean water, saying N., I baptize you in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Since this situation is thankfully rare these days, it will almost always be possible to avert it by calling a priest.

### **Confession, Marriage, Confirmation**

- **The Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation/Penance cannot take place except in danger of death.**

I know that this will be upsetting and concerning to many of us. I cannot tell you how much it grieves me not to be able to sit in church and wait for you, or come to your home. So let me share the words of our Holy Father Pope Francis at Mass the other day:

“I know that many of you go to confession before Easter... Many will say to me: ‘But Father...I can’t leave the house and I want to make my peace with the Lord. I want Him to embrace me... How can I do that unless I find a priest?’. Do what the catechism says. It’s very clear. If you don’t find a priest to go to confession, speak to God. He’s your Father. Tell Him the truth: ‘Lord. I did this and this and this. Pardon me.’ Ask His forgiveness with all your heart with an act of contrition, and promise Him, ‘afterward I will go to confession.’ You will return to God’s grace immediately. You yourself can draw near, as the catechism teaches us, to God’s forgiveness, without having a priest at hand.”

It works like this: 1) make your usual examination of conscience; 2) find a quiet place, kneel down if you can, and say out loud your sins in name, kind, and number (what you did, or you didn’t do, and how often); 3) make an Act of Contrition. An Act of Contrition in this context is not only the recitation of a prayer. It is an act of your will, aided by the special grace of God which you need in these extraordinary circumstances. I give two below, taken from the Vatican website. You may know another one. 4) make a resolution to go and confess these sins to a priest as soon as is practically possible.

I. O my God, I am heartily sorry for having offended Thee, and I detest all my sins because of thy just punishments, but most of all because they offend Thee, my God, who art all good and deserving of all my love. I firmly resolve with the help of Thy grace to sin no more and to avoid the near occasion of sin. Amen.

II. My God, I am sorry for my sins with all my heart. In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good, I have sinned against you whom I should love above all things. I firmly intend, with your help, to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads me to sin. Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us. In his name, my God, have mercy

## **The Mass**

At the time of writing, my going to church to celebrate the daily office and the Mass counts as work which cannot be done from home. Indeed, doing this is specifically provided for in the latest Government guidance (26 March 2020). Accordingly, live-Streamed Mass will continue Monday-Saturday at 9.00am, and at 5.00pm (Sat evening), 10.30am and 5.00pm on Sundays. Morning and Evening Prayer too. Full details of these liturgies are in the published newsletter. If anything changes with the situation about the celebration of Mass, it will take place daily in the presbytery instead, but I will let you know. Go to [hinkseyparish.org](http://hinkseyparish.org) for this. If you have family/friends who have set up the means for you to talk to them with a camera, so that you can see and hear them, whether on a computer, a tablet, or a smart-phone, it is very likely that you can also tune into Mass.

Mass intentions can be sent by email to [dlloyd@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:dlloyd@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) or by telephone or post to the parish office, for which the address is at the end of this letter. Mass stipends may be sorted out the other side of all this, God willing.

As you probably know, our sound-system was installed primarily as a hearing-aid loop, then as a general boost to the internal sound in the building, and only lately have we had the streaming project going. We are also broadcasting to a variety of types of equipment.

However, since I am about to have a little time on my hands, I will spend some of that time optimising our broadcast sound in advance of this Sunday. This will need a bit of work because we don't need to consider the hearing loop/sound boost side of things for a little while, so while it might sound a little odd in church, it ought to sound much better for you at home. Some have asked about zooming in and that kind of thing: maybe, but we have to pay a little more for it. I will talk to the suppliers this week and see what we can do.

### Talks and Study

The following will be broadcast on our website. I hope to record them for later use. On Wednesdays at 9.45am I shall talk to an empty church about St Matthew's Gospel for half an hour or so. There will be a handout available for this which I will put up on the website before Morning Prayer Please look under 'Latest News' on the parish website, here: <https://www.hinkseyparish.org/category/news/>

On Thursday evenings at 7.00pm, I will talk as part of the Building Our Faith series announced in the Parish Lent 2020 booklets. There will also be a handout for that, in the same place.

### Giving: Direct Debit/Standing Order/Gift Aid forms

A number of people have been in touch asking about this. The forms are on the website here <https://www.hinkseyparish.org/forms-for-parish-giving/> to view and download. If there are any problems, let me know, and I'll send you what you need. As ever, Cheques are made payable to **PRCDTR North Hinksey Our Lady**. You can make bank transfers by using: Account Number **00 88 33 37**, Sort Code **30 93 04**.

### Parish Office

You might know that Maria is unwell at the moment. She is resting and in good spirits. She will not be working (from home, now) for a little while. I therefore ask your patience as I navigate some of the secretarial secrets of the office.

### Website

I am working this week to re-jig our website slightly, so that it is more streamlined in these streamlined days.

### Helping One Another

We have had a great many offers of help. I have heard much about people keeping in touch with others. I am aiming to talk to everyone on the database over the next however long it takes, just to check in. I encourage anyone who needs any kind of practical assistance to get in touch with me – I also encourage you to encourage anyone you know who might need help. Telling everyone to shop online is fine, until you can't get a slot. But you could give a list of groceries, medicines, etc., which could be left outside the front door. Local groups, in streets or council wards, are also springing up.

## A Personal Note

May I thank very warmly those who have written and telephoned such kind messages of support over the last few days? I am sorry I have not had time to respond to everyone who has written. We are both quite well.

It is remarkably strange celebrating Mass not only with no one there (as one might do on holiday), but without the prospect of there being anyone there for some time. If I wanted to be a hermit: well let's just say, I wouldn't start from here. The character of these Masses is therefore different. There are specific things you do and don't do in celebrating the Mass when there are no people really present in the building. And though people are watching, we know that practically, theologically, spiritually, it is not and cannot be the same as being there. And we have got to keep up that longing for communion, as we are walking forward together into a time - at least three weeks, including Easter - which is going to be hard for many of us in different ways. But it is sustaining to me to know that when people are looking at the screen, they see pretty much what I see in church. And whether you can see that or not, what we are all doing is this: we are all turning our eyes *together* in the direction of our Saviour. We fix our eyes *together* on our Crucified Lord, Who loves us and gave Himself up for us, who knows our joys and our sufferings, and Who opens His arms wide for us, his little children, on the Cross.

I am writing this on the eve of the Annunciation, and on Sunday, across this land, we renew the dedication England under her patronage. Our Lady says her 'yes' to God, to whatever comes in doing His will. May she pray for us, sinners though we are, now and at the hour of our death. Amen.

Fr Daniel

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*with our live-stream, and other information,  
reading for prayer and study, and further updates*



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