

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith. It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, at this time we must not gather for public acts of worship in our churches. This will begin from Friday evening, 20th March 2020, until further notice.

Our churches will remain open. They are not closing. They will be a focal point of prayer, where you will find solace and strength. In visiting our churches at this time, we will observe with great care the practices of hygiene and the guidance on social distancing.

However, the celebration of Mass, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, will take place without a public congregation. Knowing that the Mass is being celebrated; joining in spiritually in that celebration; watching the live-streaming of the Mass; following its prayers at home; making an act of spiritual communion: this is how we share in the Sacrifice of Christ in these days. These are the ways in which we will sanctify Sunday, and indeed every day.

We want everyone to understand that in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed. This is, without doubt, the teaching of the Church (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2181). This pandemic is the ‘serious reason’ why this obligation does not apply at this time.

You will find more details about the pathway of prayer and sacramental life we are now to take in the accompanying document and on the Bishops’ Conference website ([www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)). Your own bishop and parish priest will provide further support, encouragement and information about our way of prayer together in the coming weeks.

The second vital aspect of these challenging times is our care for each other. There are so many ways in which we are to do this: being attentive to the needs of our neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us.

During these disturbing and threatening times, the rhythm of the prayer of the Church will continue. Please play your part in it. The effort of daily kindness and mutual support for all will continue and increase. Please play your part in this too. For your commitment to this, we thank you.

*“The Lord is my shepherd,  
There is nothing I shall want.”*  
May God bless us all.

Vincent Cardinal Nichols, President  
Archbishop Malcolm McMahon OP, Vice-President

## The Mass

**The holy sacrifice of the Mass will continue to be celebrated, albeit in private.**

In these circumstances, the faithful are encouraged to make a Spiritual Communion.

Masses will continue to be offered for the intentions of the faithful: planned celebrations are shown in the [calendar](#), and this page lists [intentions for future masses](#) below.

We are making plans for our clergy’s private celebrations of Mass to be streamed online, but this will take a little time to set up.

## Spiritual Communion

The key to Spiritual Communion is to grown in your heart a constant desire for the Blessed Sacrament.

1. If you are aware of serious or mortal sin, make an Act of Perfect Contrition.
2. Imagine the sacred words and actions of the Mass, or watch online or on TV.
3. Make all those acts of faith, humility, sorrow, adoration, love and desire that you usually express before Holy Communion.
4. Desire, with earnest longing, to receive Our Lord, present — Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity — in the Blessed Sacrament.
5. Say this prayer of St Alphonsus de Ligouri:
6. My Jesus, I believe that Thou art present in the Blessed Sacrament.
7. I love Thee above all things and I desire Thee in my soul.
8. Since I cannot now receive Thee sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart.
9. As though Thou wert already there, I embrace Thee and unite myself wholly to Thee;
10. permit not that I should ever be separated from Thee. Amen.
11. After moments of silent adoration make all those acts of faith, humility, love, thanksgiving and offering that you usually express through prayers after Holy Communion.

## Act of Perfect Contrition

Through an Act of Perfect Contrition, you receive pardon for your sins outside of confession, even mortal sins, *on condition* that you determine to amend your life and make a firm resolution to go to sacramental confession as soon as this becomes possible for you. Perfect contrition is a grace for God, so sincerely ask for this gift throughout the day prior to making your act of contrition: “My God, grant me perfect contrition for all my sins.”

1. In your imagination, or in reality if possible, kneel at the foot of a crucifix and pray,
2. Jesus, my God and my Saviour, in the midst of Thine Agony thou didst remember me, suffered for me and wished to wipe away my sins.

3. Contrition is “perfect” if you repent of your sins because you love God and are sorry for offending him and causing the sufferings of Christ on the cross. Before the Crucified Christ, remember your sins and repent of them because they have brought our Lord to his Passion on the Cross. Promise him that, with his help, you will not sin again.
4. Recite, slowly and sincerely, an act of contrition focused on the goodness of God and your love of Jesus:
5. O my God, who art infinitely good, and always hatest sin, I beg pardon from my heart for all my offences against thee; I detest them and am heartily sorry for them, because they offend thy infinite goodness, and I firmly resolve, by the help of thy grace, never more to offend thee, and carefully to avoid the occasions of sin.
6. O my God, I am very sorry that I have sinned against thee, because thou art so good, and I will not sin again.
7. O my God, because you are so good, I am very sorry that I have sinned against you and by the help of your grace I will not sin again.

## The Sacrament of Penance

It should be possible to celebrate this sacrament, and arrangements will be published here: see the [calendar](#).

## Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Adoration will be possible, provided that you distance yourself from others in the church, and arrangements will be published here: see the [calendar](#).

## The Daily Office

The Offices will not be said publicly, but you can join in the Prayer of Church using the Offices published by Universalis or by the Church of England — these are licit forms of prayer and are very close to what is published in the Customary of Our Lady of Walsingham. However, the Anglican Calendar is different.

## Other resources

- [Lent in isolation](#)
- Each day of Lent, starting on Thursday 19 March, the Archdiocese of Westminster will deliver a video which shares the Word of God from the daily Mass readings, spiritual guidance from their priests, and lead an act of spiritual communion. Videos will be released at 10:00 (GMT) each day.
- [Catholic Masses live online](#)
- A directory of celebrations of the Holy Mass in English, from around the world (so the calendar can take a little time to load).

