

St. Dominic's Community, S. West Leicestershire – The management of Coronavirus

We are now all only too well aware of the implications of the outbreak of the Coronavirus and the impact it has had on all of our lives. This week, in line with government thinking, the Bishops' Conference have decided to take the drastic step of cancelling all public gatherings in church from Friday March 20. This includes Masses, baptisms, marriages, funerals and all services and parish activities, and will be a devastating blow to us but nevertheless a necessary step to take. I am personally heartbroken at the prospect of not seeing and being with you, my family on a regular basis for the foreseeable future. It is a very painful thing to contemplate but sadly what is now required. Every priest has been asked by our bishop to say a private Mass for the intentions of his people each day in church. While this may seem selfish, it is nevertheless the offering of the prayer within our church for all of us and is thus very important. Churches are also to be kept open for significant parts of the day to enable people to come in and pray quietly, as prayer is about the only thing we can meaningfully do at this moment. We have seen the behaviour of some people in the supermarkets and this is not a nice thing, especially when they are seeing to their own needs at the expense of those of others, many of whom are among the most vulnerable members of our society. We hope this selfish and thoughtless activity will soon come to an end and indeed we, as members of Our Lord's Church, will no doubt take the lead in ensuring that it does so. The generous offers of many people, young and old, to help those unable to get about is most heart-warming and encouraging. All is not lost! So what do we need to do in the coming weeks to ensure we are in keeping with what is asked of us while simultaneously being good to each other? Much will depend on our ability to communicate with each other, and while many people are not on the internet, this will become an essential tool, as long as it is accompanied by word of mouth or use of the telephone.

Website – we have a website: www.stdominicsteamministryleics.com which will be the main source of information. Go on the website and click on the Coronavirus folder for the latest news. It will be updated as often as possible. At present it contains the letters from the bishops, the newsletters from our parishes and of course this document. Please do not go onto the individual parish websites. You may contact me via our email address – hinckleypriory@gmail.com or by phone – 01455 634443 and mobile 07826 821214 – if you have any questions, information and of course in an emergency. I do not propose to lock myself in the Priory but to continue to look after people where necessary and safe, especially of course our dear Fr.Terry. You may also contact Fr.Isaac on the house phone, Fr.Brian on 07516 342356 or Fr.Geoffrey on 632509 if you wish to speak to a priest. It would also be useful if you have not done so already, to let us know your email address, so that we can contact you personally.

Sunday Liturgy – sadly we will not be able to have Sunday Mass but would it be a good idea if we all stopped what we were doing in our homes at 10.00am to unite ourselves with each other in prayer? Prayers will be provided and also access to the Sunday readings for each particular week with a reflection from one of the priests to help us. It might be a good idea to have a 'liturgy at home', when we sit together round the table with a lighted candle and a bible to celebrate and pray for each other. If you have any prayer intentions for

yourselves or for people who have died, please email them to me or put them through the letterbox and we will be sure that they are remembered during our masses. It may be possible to 'stream' a Sunday Mass to you and we are looking into that possibility.

Self-isolation – many people feel the need to isolate themselves from others for a period in order not to run the risk of spreading any infection, and rightly so. This may become very lonely and even boring for them, so telephone calls from family and friends will no doubt be a great help. Also, if you need any specific help with shopping or prescriptions, please ring the Priory and we will ask some of those who have kindly volunteered to get in contact with and help you.

Finance – the lack of Sunday gatherings has of course great financial implications for the upkeep of our communities. If you would care to fill your envelope each week or set aside what you might have put into the collection for future contribution that would be very helpful and most appreciated. Thank you to those who make a contribution by standing order or some other means.

Care of Fr. Terry – the care company that visits Father twice a day have asked that we limit his exposure to too many people for fear he might be at risk. Accordingly he will not be saying mass in the presbytery or going out for meals. We have identified some people to act as 'responsibles' each day and to whom others can bring cooked meals and hand them in to the presbytery for them to give to Father. For the moment would all those who have signed up to bring Father meals in the coming week please do so. The new arrangement will be published next week.

Church opening – we propose to open the church in Hinckley each day from 10.00am to 4.00pm for people to come and say a prayer. Earl Shilton will be open on Sundays 11.30-12.30pm, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays 10.00am-11.00am, and Market Bosworth Wednesdays 10.30-11.30am; Saturdays 5.00-6.00pm. Responsible behaviour in keeping a short distance between yourself and other people will of course be necessary. Fr. Isaac will be in church in Hinckley each day from 10.00-11.00am and Fr. Frank will replicate this once a week in Earl Shilton (Monday 10.00am) and Market Bosworth, (Wednesday 10.00am) if anyone wishes to talk to us or needs our prayer and help.

Formation – programmes for First Communion and Confirmation preparation have been postponed but hopefully the work will be made available by email to candidates and their families. For those who had expressed an interest in joining the programme on the Catholic Faith, please look at 'The Servant Church TC' on the website which will give you plenty of reading to be going on with!

These are difficult and uncharted times for all of us and will undoubtedly prove to be a great challenge. I pray that we will all keep strong, be responsible especially when shopping, look after each other and keep praying. We will certainly pray for you all every day.

Kindest regards, Father Frank, with Fr. Isaac, Fr. Brian, Fr. Terry, Fr. Geoffrey, Rev. Robin, Marina, Margaret and all the Pastoral Teams