

Dear Parents and Carers,

You will have heard that the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have directed that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, from tomorrow evening we will no longer be able to gather for public acts of worship. This includes the Celebration of Mass which will be celebrated in private by clergy. Churches will remain open for private prayer where people can gather individually, following the rules for social distancing.

We are living in difficult and worrying times. Not being able to go to Mass is a cause of deep sadness for us all but we can and should join in spiritually by watching the live-streaming of the Mass and joining in with its prayers from our homes. In doing so we are making an act of spiritual communion; this is our way to share in the Sacrifice of the Mass in these days.

As long as these emergency circumstances last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed.

There are a number of churches in the Archdiocese of Southwark which broadcast a live stream of the Mass on the internet and more are expected to commence streaming in the coming days. Please click on the links below for more details:

Archdiocese of Southwark:

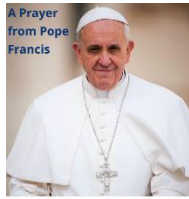
<http://www.rcsouthwark.co.uk/media/ARCHDIOCESE%20OF%20SOUTHWARK%20Live%20Stream%20Broadcast%20of%20Mass%20in%20Parishes.pdf>

The Shine of Our Lady at Walsingham offers a 12 noon Pilgrim Mass each day, a selection of previously recorded services and a prayer request facility via prayers@walsingham.org.uk
<http://www.walsingham.org.uk/live-stream>

Church Services TV provides live streaming and recordings from churches around the country:
<https://www.churchservices.tv/country/england/>



Last week Pope Francis dedicated a prayer to Our Lady for the Covid 19/Coronavirus.



O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.

We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.

*At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain,
with steadfast faith.*

You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.

We are certain that you will provide, so that,

as you did at Cana of Galilee,

joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.

Help us, Mother of Divine Love,

to conform ourselves to the Father's will

and to do what Jesus tells us:

He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us,

through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.

*Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from
every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.*

During these times when we are not able to receive Holy Communion physically, we may experience a painful longing which can help us to pray in solidarity with those around the world who, for whatever reason, are denied the Eucharist. For many centuries, reception of Holy Communion was a rare occurrence. Let us pray that these challenging times will enable us to treasure the Eucharist all the more deeply and anticipate with great joy the time when we will once again be able to receive it.

With the assurance of our prayers for you all.