



**THE PARISHES OF
OUR LADY AND ST PATRICK MAESTEG
ST. ROBERT ABERKENFIG**

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4th Week of Lent 2020 Year A 22nd March 2020

CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

A letter from the President and Vice-President on behalf of all the Bishops of the Conference

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

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). 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
18th March 2020

Dearly Beloved,

Following from the Letter of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in response to the Coronavirus Pandemic, Public act of worship in our Churches will be suspended beginning from Friday 20th March 2020 until further notice. Daily Mass will be celebrated privately by Fr. Edmund at Our Lady & St. Patrick, Maesteg.

However, the Church will be opened daily till 6pm to serve as a focal point for private prayer, where you will find solace and strength. In visiting the church at this time, we are advised to observe with great care the practices of hygiene and the guidance on social distancing.

Jesus tells us in John 4:23-24 "the hour is coming, and now is, where the true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and in Truth, for such the Father seeks to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in Spirit and in Truth"

To maintain and develop our faith and spiritual life, we will like to encourage all Parishioners to join in prayers and devotions in the comfort of their homes:

1. Please create a sacred space in your home.
2. Pray the Holy Rosary daily individually or as a family
3. Read and reflect on the daily readings of the Mass
4. Join the live Streaming Mass online or EWTN if you have SKY TV at Channel 588
5. Pray the Acts of Spiritual Communion

ACTS OF SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least Spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from you. Amen.

Pastoral Care of the Sick and the Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confessions) may be offered upon request as long as the necessary hygiene and social distancing requirements are observed.

God love you all.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Edmund Neizer
Parish Priest

20th March 2020