

Let us continue to pray for all hospital and medical staff and key workers. We pray particularly for carers working in residential homes and in the community.

Let us pray today for all those who at these times walk in the valley of darkness and illness and may they know God walks with them.

Let us pray today for those who have died, those who have died recently and those whose anniversaries are at this time, may they rejoice in the kingdom of heaven and see God face to face. We remember this 75th anniversary weekend of VE Day all who have died in war and conflict.

Let us pray and thank God today for all our friends and loved ones from whom we continue to feel so distant, separated and isolated from at the moment. Let us picture our loved ones and pray for them and give thanks for them.

Though not physically together, we remain close in the Lord and in his love today and every day.

With an assurance of prayer and may God bless you and all your loved ones.
Steven Parkinson

Let us pray: Do not look forward with undue anxiety to the days to come. The same everlasting God who cares for you today, will take care of you tomorrow and every day. Either he will shield you from harm or give you the strength to face what comes; so be at peace and try to put aside all unnecessary thoughts and imaginings. St Francis de Sales

DAYS THIS WEEK

Monday – St Bede. Tuesday – St Philip Neri.

Wednesday – St Augustine of Canterbury. Friday – St Paul VI.

NEXT WEEK: PENTECOST SUNDAY (A)

Acts 2:1-11. 1Corinthians 12:3-7, 12-13. John 20:19-23.

Mass intentions received:

Recently deceased: Fr Peter Gooden, Margaret Carroll, Pat Window, Kathryn Ranson, Margaret Holmes.

Anniversary: Joseph Neary, John Fitzgerald.

Other: Special Intention, Thanksgiving: John & Joan Moran- 60th wedding anniversary.

Please remember in your prayers Pat Window RIP, Bridget Dempsey RIP, David Hendrie RIP, Doreen Lesik RIP and Toni Openshaw RIP whose funeral services have taken place this week.

May they know the eternal love and peace of God and may their loved ones find consolation and strength.

Together at St. Michael's & St. Bernadette's Whitefield



Seventh Sunday of Easter (A) 24th May 2020

In these days between the Ascension, (when we let the Risen Lord return to the glory of heaven and we hear him commission all those who believe to witness to the Good News of the Gospel), and next Sunday's great Feast of Pentecost (when we celebrate the reception of the Holy Spirit who enables us to live here and now, in and through faith) next week, today, we hear Jesus in the Gospel pray in the Spirit. The Spirit is the source of the prayer and praise of the whole church and all believers, so that we do not simply re-enact the past but live in the power of the Spirit, alive in God here and now, as brothers and sisters of Jesus.

The one who revealed to us the fullness of God has returned to the Father in heaven, bringing with him all that is human. The Risen Lord has ascended but his Spirit dwells in us. We are Christ's, we form his body now, with all our strengths and weaknesses, our sorrows and joys. We prepare for the way he is with us now, next Sunday at Pentecost, in the Spirit. Where the gifts and fruits of the Spirit are alive, he is alive and present in us and through us.

The name given to Jesus, by the angel to Joseph in his dream, at the beginning of Matthew's Gospel is "Emmanuel" a name which means *God is with us*. The whole Gospel attests to that truth and it is a central point of Matthew's teaching of Jesus that, "where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there in the midst of them". Jesus is risen, glorified and ascended, we live now in and through the Spirit, God is with us, alleluia!

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THANK YOU to all who are in so many ways, helping to continue to create community in these days: those who are donating to the food bank, those who are delivering newsletters, shopping for and checking in on others, keeping in touch by 'phone, online and via technology, and all those holding each other in prayer.

FOODBANK the demand is pressing upon the foodbanks, Red Door in Bury, Cornerstone and the Lalley Centre in Manchester, with the SVP foodbank in Heywood who we support weekly are all seeing increased demand. Contributions can be left in the porch of the house at St Bernadette's and we have one or two volunteers who may be able to collect items, let us know either by email or phone. Many thanks to all who have donated to the food bank, there is great generosity each week. Thanks for a donation of £60.00.

RED DOOR (Caritas, Diocese of Salford) remains open and continues to work with Bury Christian Fellowship at The Manna House, Irwell St, Bury, on Mondays from 11.00am–1.00pm offering homemade soup and a roll as a takeaway service. On Tuesdays and Fridays from 10.00am–1.00pm, Red Door is open at St Joseph's (former Presbytery), Peter St, Bury, for food parcels, toiletries, showers and a laundry service. There is also help and advice with housing and benefit issues. If you are aware of anyone who might benefit from this local support, please encourage them to visit Red Door.

BURY COUNCIL HAVE A SUPPORT PACKAGE for those who need assistance during lockdown. If you, or someone you know needs anything from advice to some shopping call 0161 253 5353.

GREATER MANCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT offers free confidential help 24/7. Just Text GMBury to 85258.

ST MICHAEL'S & ST BERNADETTE'S CREDIT UNION Due to the current situation with the Coronavirus the Credit Union is offering a telephone service only. If you have any concerns or require more information please phone 07803854963.

RESOURCES FOR KEEPING SUNDAY AT HOME see <https://www.dioceseofsalford.org.uk/covid-19-online-resources/> Resources are available here for reflection based upon the Sunday's liturgy. There is an extensive list of where Mass is available livestreamed online. Salford Cathedral has an online timetable with liturgy led either by Bishop John or one of the Cathedral team. This can be found by accessing the Diocese of Salford website, COVID 19 online resources, Livestreaming. The *Lord's Day at Home* prayer sheet is being made available by email with this newsletter and can be found on our parish website, along with a Sunday activity sheet for children.

CAFOD VIRTUAL CHILDREN'S LITURGY Each Sunday at 10.00am CAFOD is hosting a virtual children's liturgy via its website. Many families have found this very useful and enjoyable as a time of prayer and reflection. You can register via its

website or search *CAFOD children's liturgy* and sign up for the next twelve sessions. If you can't join live then recordings will be available to watch afterwards.

SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMME the celebration of First Holy Communion for the children who have been preparing in 2019/20, will be moved to the autumn this year. We keep them and their families in our prayers.

SUNDAY OFFERTORY Thank you to those who have dropped offertory envelopes and donations through the letterbox. **Please do not** make unnecessary journeys to do so. One or two people have asked about direct debit donations: details are available by emailing the info email address. People's welfare is more important than money at this time, we can witness to that need by trying as best we can to donate to the foodbank.

PENTECOST SUNDAY 31ST MAY Rosary Rally. Pope Francis is encouraging us to pray the Rosary during the month of May, especially when the Pandemic is making us aware of the value of our families and making it possible for us to pray together in lockdown at home. He encourages simple Rosaries to pray to Our Lady for her intercession in Covid-19 and he has composed two prayers for this intention. The Pentecost Sunday National Rosary Rally is from 9.00am to 9.00pm across Scotland England and Wales. Our Diocese has been asked to pray a Rosary Hour at 1.00pm and you are invited to take part. Information via the Diocesan website.

FULL CLOSURE OF CATHOLIC CHURCHES AT THIS TIME We can only await further Government guidance on this. Whilst all church services, including Weddings and Baptisms are not being celebrated at this time and will be rearranged for when we are able to gather again, Funeral services are taking place with very limited numbers of people, going directly to the graveside or crematorium. We continue to keep all those bereaved families, in such difficult circumstances, in our prayers. After recent statements our Bishops' Conference made the following statement:

The timing and the manner of the opening of churches touches profound sensitivities and spiritual needs. The Government's document and statements fail to recognise this.

The Government's position, established today, includes these steps aimed at opening churches as soon as possible: the establishment of a task force for places of worship, to work closely with 'stakeholders' in ensuring that premises are COVID-19 secure; and heeding the experience of other countries in which churches are already open for worship. In dialogue with the Government, the Catholic Church will continue its engagement in this process and has already submitted a detailed plan, in full accordance with public health guidelines, for churches to be opened for private prayer. The Church is ready to play its full part in the task force, understanding that this includes the possible earlier use of churches for private prayer, as a first safe step towards their use for public worship." Let us pray that we will soon be able to open our building for private prayer.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION Pope Francis has said: I know that many of you go to confession at Easter. Many will say to me: 'But Father, I cannot leave the house and I want to make my peace with the Lord. I want Him to embrace me. Do what the catechism says. It is very clear. Speak in your heart to God. He is 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, 'afterwards I will go the Sacrament.' 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 to offer the words of absolution.