



**Pastoral Letter of the Archbishop of Liverpool  
appointed to be read at all Masses  
on the Fourth Sunday of Lent  
Sunday 22 March 2020**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

“The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want”

I send my best wishes and prayers to you and those you love at this time of uncertainty, unprecedented in modern history. We are living in challenging times and as such are called to live as the Church in a different way in these days. We are unable to gather for the Holy Eucharist and other times of prayer and praise in our communities and parishes but our hope and trust in the Lord Jesus’ presence continues.

With the threat of Covid-19, the English and Welsh bishops have unanimously agreed to suspend all public celebrations of Mass and other liturgies in the Cathedrals and Churches up and down the land from Friday March 20th. This is done to protect us all. Your priests will continue to offer the Holy Mass without a congregation physically present to ensure our prayers and concerns are offered to God as always. We are seeking new ways to express and live our faith in these trying times. But we should remember that as God’s holy, faithful people we are filled with hope and the belief that Christ always walks by our side and accompanies us in our trials and tribulations. The Lord is present to us; He hears our prayers; He understands our concerns. You and I are being called now, more than ever, to pray, to place ourselves in His presence in these days and walk humbly with our crucified and risen God.

I know that you understand that we must do everything we can in the battle against Covid-19 and to offer this necessary sacrifice of gathering as the Church for a short while in order to assist with this. This will also mean doing other things differently but social distancing and limiting gatherings with others does not mean that we close in on ourselves and forget others, rather our faith turns us outwards to those in need. There

are those in our community who are more vulnerable to Covid-19. We can telephone them to ask how they are doing and if they need shopping or medication. We can all do our part to be the hands and eyes and ears of Jesus Christ as St Teresa of Jesus suggested in her prayer. These new circumstances allow us to be closer through social media. Holy Mass will be live streamed from the Metropolitan Cathedral, St Anne's, Overbury Street, St Gregory's, Chorley and St Mary's on the Isle of Man; and the archdiocesan website will keep you abreast of new initiatives which will unite us in our prayer. In these strange and peculiar circumstances let us ask the prayers of Our Lady:

We fly to thy protection, O holy Mother of God,  
despise not our petitions in our necessities,  
but deliver us always from all dangers,  
O glorious and blessed Virgin.

Once again, assuring you of my spiritual closeness at this time.  
May God bless you and your families,

**Most Reverend Malcolm McMahon OP**  
**Archbishop of Liverpool**