

St Joseph & St Laurence's Parish, Bewley Drive, Kirkby, L32 7PZ.

Feast of St Joseph, Husband of Mary, Foster-Father of Jesus

Patron Saint of the Archdiocese of Liverpool

19<sup>th</sup> March 2020

Dear Families,

In these strange times, we have all been asked to follow the UK government advice to respond to and reduce the harm to other people caused by the spread of the new Coronavirus, Covid-19.

The government advice now leads to the next steps for schools and Churches. The Head-teacher will inform families in relation to how schools are affected, I am writing to explain what is happening with Churches, Masses and the sacraments of the Church.

From Friday evening St Joseph & St Laurence's Parish Church will continue to remain open, every weekday from 8.30am until 3.30pm and weekends from 10am until 1pm. Everyone is **WELCOME** to visit Church during these times for personal prayers, lighting of candles and prayer before Jesus, the Blessed Sacrament (communion) in the Tabernacle at the altar.

However, from **THIS** weekend there will be no public gatherings in groups or congregations and all Church services are cancelled, until we are next allowed to gather together in groups. This is to minimise passing on the virus by human contact; these steps increase 'social distancing', by reducing the number of people any of us has closer contact with and by breaking the chain of infection so as not to pass it to those who may be more vulnerable to the effects of the virus- like those over 70 years old, those who are pregnant and those with underlying serious health conditions.

Because of these new restrictions to public gatherings there will therefore NOT be any Masses to attend and all parish meetings for groups or sets of children will also be postponed until we are able to gather together again in public events.

I will be celebrating Mass every day for all the people of the parish during this health emergency and the bishops of England and Wales invite parishioners at home every day to join their prayers with the priest's prayers and the offering of the Mass and the sacrifice of Jesus on the Cross at the altar and so receive Communion in their hearts, even if now they can't on their tongues or hands.

Mass sheets with the Sunday Mass readings and prayers will be available at the back of Church each weekend to take home and pray together as a family and individually at home.

Weekly parish newsletters, with updates and information will also be printed each weekend for people to collect from the back of Church.

Year 4 First reconciliations and their receiving of Holy Communion at a Sunday Mass for the first time will be postponed, until after meetings are rearranged, and public gatherings are restarted.

There are also a lot of on-line facilities for Church information, updates and daily Mass and prayers and streamed Masses are also available around the Country and including with the Pope in the Vatican

Archdiocese of Liverpool: [www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk](http://www.liverpoolcatholic.org.uk)

Bishops Conference of England and Wales: [www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)

Walsingham Shrine of Our Lady: [Walsingham.org](http://Walsingham.org)

Pope Francis: ['Holy See-Vatican'](#)

We are all now being invited to radically change our daily lives, to protect other people who may suffer more than us. This is a very good thing to do and fits with this Christian season of Lent, which prepares us for the future and Easter feasts.

On Ash Wednesday we were all invited to pray, fast and give charity/support to others. Although school life, Church life and daily life is going to be very different, for an extended period of time, we can also re-focus our lives on what and who are the most important people in our lives and do what we need to do to support those most in need in the wider society too: Remembering God, our neighbour and ourselves. Please pray for each other and if you can, call into Church from time to time in the coming days and weeks and months, until we can have our whole parish family gathered altogether again.

St Joseph & St Laurence, Pray for us!

Yours faithfully,

Fr Sean Kirwin

Parish Priest