

OUR MOST HOLY REDEEMER AND ST THOMAS MORE

LETTER TO PARISHIONERS

Sunday, 17th May 2020

Where are we? In the Church's calendar, this weekend brings us to the 6th Sunday of Easter, and we begin to move our attention from Easter, onwards to Pentecost. On Thursday we celebrate the Ascension of the Lord. In the Coronavirus drama, we have made some sort of progress, or that was what the Prime Minister's statement last Sunday seemed to say. As yet our churches remain closed, though, as you may have heard Cardinal Nichols say, the Catholic bishops have asked the government to allow for private prayer in church. If any changes are announced, there will be conditions attached to opening the church and details will be posted under "Newsletters" on our parish website.

Another Lockdown prayer. This week I am offering you a translation of the great St Theresa of Avila's prayer "Nada te turbe". This woman of faith lived through some very trying experiences, when it seemed as though everything was against her. You may have heard me tell the famous story of the occasion when her horse bucked and threw her into a river and she exclaimed: "Dear Lord, if this is how you treat your friends, is it surprising you have so few!" However, in contrast, "Nada te turbe" is more tranquil, a meditation on how learning to trust God changes everything. Take it slowly, savour it, as you might really good chocolate. Linger over it, let it soothe you, like a glass of good port.

Screen time. Well, my first suggestion is to find out about St Theresa of Avila, if you aren't already familiar with her story. Perhaps, if you have children, you might get them to do a little project finding out about her life and times, or those of their patron saint. If you don't know where to begin, start with the 5 Ws: Who?, Where?, When?, What?, Why? With younger children, join them and ask them to draw/paint the clothes, the houses, the churches, or make maps. For those following Mass on computer, please take the opportunity to reflect on the various parts of the Mass. In church it can all pass so quickly, we move on from one thing to another. Now you have an opportunity to pray the Mass differently, and perhaps grow to understand and appreciate its mystery more deeply. I know some of the First Holy Communion group are doing this, so let us join them in this, and also support them in prayer. Finally, look out for the film "Risen". It's a 2016 film starring Joseph Fiennes as the Roman officer sent to supervise the Crucifixion. One can always find fault, but this struck me as a particularly sensitive attempt to put across the New Testament account of the Death, Resurrection and Ascension of Jesus.

Please keep praying for all those affected by the coronavirus, directly or indirectly.

We are united in Christ; the meaning/reality of "communion" is all the more important in this time of crisis.

Canon Paschal Ryan

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