

From Fr Paul

23rd March 2020

I hope you are all keeping well. Yesterday was very strange, it seemed like something out of a science fiction film with virtually nobody coming to church on Sunday. However, there was a steady trickle of people visiting throughout the day. Some remained quite a long time, some lit a candle, while one or two came for the Sacrament of Penance. But there was no public Mass. It seemed a bit like Good Friday. I know there was much pain felt by many who missed being able to physically attend Mass and receive Our Lord, and so those who were able, watched Mass online. But in spite of this God is still close to us.

We priests are very privileged in that we can still offer Mass and receive Holy Communion. But I certainly felt separated from all of you. After all, the priest is supposed to be with his people. St Peter pointed that out when he said, “*Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care*” (1Pt 5:2), but it’s very different when the flock are not there! However, I remembered you all at the altar and I knew that we were spiritually united in the offering of Mass even if we weren’t physically present to each other. But it helped remind me that the priest stands at the altar *on behalf* of the people.

Hopefully we can all use this time to grow spiritually. We have more time on our hands now. We have to make our homes into small churches. As St John Paul II used to say, “The home, the family is the ‘Domestic Church.’” Learn more about the Faith. Read the Bible. Let’s make friends with the saints by reading their lives. Parents, teach your children about the saints and **pray together**. Pray the Rosary. But don’t stop praying because you can’t go to Mass. And let’s keep in touch with each other whether by email, by phone or online.

May God bless and protect you all.

Fr Paul