



**National Catholic Church of the  
United Kingdom and Ireland  
ECCLESIAE CATHOLICÆ NATIONALE  
REGNUM UNITUM ET HIBERNIAE  
PETRUS ARCHIEPISCOPUS**

**The Paschal Message of the Presiding Archbishop  
*Ad Clerum et Ad Orbi, Easter 2020***

My dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

**Surrexit Christus Vere, Alleluia, Alleluia!**

The traditional proclamation on Easter Sunday. However, one feels at the present time that “Alleluias”, though liturgically permitted, may not be quite appropriate for a while yet.

It goes without saying that we all are living today in troubled times. A virus, a disease, a plague, the like of which none of us have experienced in our lifetimes, or in the lifetimes of our parents, grips the entire world. Indiscriminate about whom it infects – young or old, rich or poor, entirely healthy or with underlying illness; nobody knows who might have been infected or who might be infected.

I myself have so far lost several friends to this evil virus and I am extremely concerned about other friends. The friends that I have lost had no business dying so young, all of them good people who without doubt made the lives of everybody they knew or met all the better for having encountered them. May they all rest in eternal peace.

For that very reason, we are all having to practice self-isolation and social distancing. We NEED to halt the progress of this pandemic. The longer certain people ignore the guidance from the Government, thinking it doesn't apply to them, the more people are going to die and the longer the lockdown is going to have to continue.

Indeed, the state of lockdown not just within the United Kingdom but in many nations of the world is such that our Churches, Cathedrals, Mosques, Synagogues, Temples, Gurdwaras and other places of public worship are closed; religious gatherings are forbidden in a way not seen since the days of totalitarian rule in the former Soviet states – but now for a totally different reason: the protection of life, the prevention of disease and the protection of our health services.

Unlike in those dark days under atheistic totalitarian rule where any religious activity was banned, we are still able and encouraged – thank God – to participate in our worship through the medium of live streaming on the internet.

So it is thankfully possible for the faithful to be able to fulfil the Sunday obligation to hear Mass, and it is literally the case that that is what is happening, hearing Mass – in a way which is taking the Roman church back to the days before the liturgical reforms of 50 or more years ago.

Those reforms demanded “the active participation of the faithful”. My views about that are widely known and this is neither the time nor place to embark upon a lengthy expatiation thereon.

If one is not be able to physically attend one's usual Church for the offering of The Holy Sacrifice of The Mass and to receive Holy Communion but one is able to make a Spiritual Communion whilst hearing Mass on a live

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stream, that is equally as valid and offering the same divine graces as the physical act of receiving the Body of Christ in Holy Communion.

It gives us a chance to reflect on the true meaning of the Sacrament of The Holy Eucharist, the institution of which we commemorated on Thursday evening with the Evening Mass of The Lord's Supper. Bishop Michael sent me the text of a quotation from the Right Reverend Francis Weston DD (1871-1924), Anglican Bishop of Zanzibar from 1908 to 1924, a convinced Anglo-Catholic. It has certainly given me the strongest of themes on which to meditate when thinking about the theological aspects whilst I have been preparing this message.

*But I say to you, and I say it with all the earnestness that I have, if you are prepared to fight for the right of adoring Jesus in His Blessed Sacrament, then, when you come out from before your tabernacles, you must walk with Christ, mystically present in you, through the streets of this country, and find the same Christ in the peoples of your cities and villages. You cannot claim to worship Jesus in the tabernacle if you do not pity Jesus in the slum. ... It is folly, it is madness to suppose that you can worship Jesus in the Sacrament and Jesus on the throne of glory, when you are sweating Him in the bodies and souls of His children. ... You have your Mass, you have your altars, you have begun to get your tabernacles. Now go out into the highways and hedges, and look to Jesus in the ragged and the naked, in the oppressed and the sweated, in those who have lost hope, and in those who are struggling to make good. Look for Jesus in them; and when you have found Him, gird yourself with His towel of fellowship and wash His feet in the person of His brethren.*

Over the last few weeks, we have seen Bishop Weston's exhortation coming to life. Over three quarters of a million volunteers signing up to help our National Health Service within the United Kingdom and over forty thousand have signed up to be 'on call for Ireland' as well. Major manufacturing businesses turning over their production lines to produce much needed equipment for our hospitals. Individuals at home using their skills to make masks, scrubs, laundry bags and much more besides for those key workers in the front line of defence against the virus.

Indeed, here in my home town of Bedford, the local Sikh community are preparing and delivering hot meals every day for the front line NHS staff at Bedford Hospital and it is my understanding that they are doing all of it entirely at their own personal expense. And there is so much more.

As the days go on, and I hear more and more about what is being done within our communities, I am seeing that the message that our Church tries to convey: that of a God of love, sitting on His throne of grace, which love and grace is open to all who will embrace it, is resonating through the whole of society. And that is regardless of anybody's individual belief or otherwise, regardless of anybody's description of or name for Almighty God, or how anybody chooses to participate in a particular system of worship or not.

During this great celebration of Easter, which is so special to all of us Christians, I offer my own prayers and thanks to Almighty God for the part that everybody is playing in the fight against this evil virus. Regardless of your own faith, God – Allah – your Dharma – the Wahe Guru – whatever name you use, is seeing and observing your actions in walking with God, mystically present in us, finding Him in all we meet; and remembering the words that His Son taught us: "whatsoever you do unto the least of my people, you do that me Me. When I was hungry, you fed me; when I was naked, you clothed me, when I was sick you looked after me." You all are truly open to God's love and grace and I pray that, come the time, your reward will be great in Heaven.

To all of you working on the front line, - you are all walking with Christ, that is apparent through your actions. I pray that he remains with all of you, that when it all seems to be driving you to despair, that His hand will be on your shoulder, giving you and your colleagues to the strength to keep going through the current crisis. To use the meme that has been going around for quite a while – "Keep Calm and Carry On – God is with you."

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So my message this Easter is quite simply this:

- Give thanks to Almighty God for the dedication of all our front-line workers – doctors, nurses, health care assistants, hospital staff, paramedics, ambulance technicians – and pray that they may be kept safe whilst they are caring for those who have been taken ill;
- Give thanks as well for all our community volunteers who are unsparingly helping to look after the vulnerable within our communities, again praying that they may be kept safe;
- Pray for the safety of our police - be they known as gardaí, gendarmes, politeia, gendarmeria, policia, polizei or however these vital public servants are named in whatever language - who are having to deal with the idiotic minority who think that the self-isolation and social distancing rule don't apply to them;
- Give thanks for the dedication and selflessness of other front-line key workers – working in pharmacies or grocery shops and pray that they may be kept safe;
- Pray for the medical staff who are caring for those who have on-going conditions not related to the coronavirus but who are using their best endeavours to ensure that those patients continue to receive the best possible care;
- Pray for those who are ill as a result of infection with coronavirus, or have been infected and are in recovery;
- Pray for all those who have died as a result of coronavirus/Covid-19, that their souls will rest in eternal peace;
- And pray for their friends and families, who are having to mourn without being able to give their much loved ones the dignity of a proper funeral, that they may find peace and closure.

That is quite a long list, and I make no apologies for it. We will get through this, it is going to take a while, but we all need to do two things:

Firstly, abide by the Government's advice/rules about self-isolation and social distancing.

Secondly, Pray. I have no hesitation whatsoever in recommending the Rosary; Our Blessed Lady is the mediatrix of all graces, she alone has the unique situation of a direct line into God. If I can use a modern allegorism, whilst the Saints and Martyrs, Blesseds and Venerable Servants of God must go through the switchboard; Our Blessed Lady has the direct line. So start (or continue and increase) praying the Rosary. She herself told us that it is a direct line to Almighty God.

I therefore invite all – it doesn't matter if you are Roman, Anglican or Independent Catholic – to join in praying the Rosary at 6pm every evening. Let us get the whole world united under the Catholic banner (“Catholicos”, the original Greek, means Universal) praying the Rosary every evening.

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I leave you with my Apostolic Blessing and these prayers:

*Requiem æternam dona eis, Domine, et lux perpetua luceat eis. Fideliam animas eis, et fideliam animam  
onimam defunctorum, per misericordiam Deum, requiescant in pace. Amen*

*Salve, Regina, Mater misericordiæ,  
vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, salve.  
Ad te clamamus exsules filii Hevæ,  
Ad te suspiramus, gementes et flentes  
in hac lacrimarum valle.*

*Eia, ergo, advocata nostra, illos tuos  
misericordes oculos ad nos converte;  
Et Jesum, benedictum fructum ventris tui,  
nobis post hoc exsilium ostende.  
O clemens, O pia, O dulcis Virgo Maria.*

*(V̇ Ora pro nobis, sancta Dei Genitrix.  
Ṙ Ut digni efficiamur promissionibus Christi.*

*Oremus.*

*Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, qui gloriosæ Virginis Matris Mariæ corpus et animam, ut dignum Filii  
tui habitaculum effici mereretur, Spiritu Sancto cooperante præparasti: da, ut cuius commemoratione  
lætamur; eius pia intercessione, ab instantibus malis, et a morte perpetua liberemur. Per eundem  
Christum Dominum nostrum.)*

*Amen*

May you be open to and filled with the message of the risen Christ, may you stay safe and well, and may God's  
love and grace be with you now and always.

++Petrus Anglianensis  
Archiepiscopus Presiderat et Metropolitanis  
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