

ST MARGARET MARY CHURCH

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Dear Beloved parishioners of St Margaret Mary Church,

I am writing to you during this Holy Week to assure you of my prayers for you during this difficult time of national crisis. I know that we are all concerned for the most vulnerable and elderly members of our parish and for any who are bereaved, isolated, lonely or anxious for their health and jobs at this time. Please let me know if there is anyone in your household, neighbourhood or wider network who is need of food, basic supplies, medicines or conversation. We have trusted people who are prepared to collect and drop off shopping or to phone you to offer some reassurance. We have also now built a foodbank at the back of church. We are also now part of a community response team across Erdington and Perry Common which is delivering food and basics to over 140 families per day. This includes organisations such as the other churches, Witton Lodge Community Association, Urban Devotion, the Active Wellbeing Society, Age UK, Trussell Trust and local politicians and leaders. **Please would you get in contact if you can help with St Margaret Mary Church's response, which includes our buddying system which is helping to keep people in touch.**

This will be a particularly challenging Holy Week but I do hope you will be able to follow in spirit, whether that is by reading the passion account in John's Gospel, or listening on radio, TV or through the internet e.g. Archdiocese of Birmingham, EWTN or Word on Fire. For those of you who have Sky, try channel 588 for the liturgies. I enclose a blessed Palm Cross for you as a focus for prayer. I know that Fr Leonard Cox also assures you of his prayers, and will continue to offer, from his home, as I am here, a mass each day for you and your intentions. Please do call him if you require pastoral support during this time: 07790 827184. Fr The-Quang is on (0121) 373 0988. I am also sending out by email a weekly newsletter and YouTube homily. I realise that those without a smart phone or computer will not be able to receive that newsletter but if you are able, please ask a relative if they would be your 'go between'. You will need to get their email address and send that to me and we will put them on our mailing list for a weekly email from the parish. I am also printing a weekly sheet and placing a pack of them on the main door of church, so you can at pick up a weekly sheet.

A realisation is growing that alongside regular washing and social distancing of 2m, masks being worn in public may prevent you contracting Covid-19 which stays infectious for up to 3 hours after being airborne. Our parish seamstress, Ebere Benson—Ezeh, is making masks. Of course, you may have other commercial sources, but please contact Ebere on 07446 182458 or Ebere.ezeh@outlook.com if you would like any masks. They cost £3.

Finally I would like to make an appeal to any who can, to please continue to give to our church. Churches are facing big financial challenges at this time, and we are no exception. We are potentially losing around £300 a week and we still have big outgoings and we want to reach out to the most vulnerable. **We are urging those who can to switch to giving by standing order.** Please set one up with our Bank, NatWest, Sort Code **60-08-02**, Account Number **14403749**. Account name: *Archdiocese of Bham St Margaret Mary*. **PLEASE RESPOND IF YOU CAN. Many thanks to those who have responded so far.** On a final note, please do phone, email or write in with any prayer requests, mass intentions or other matters.

Yours sincerely and wishing you a very Joyous Easter,

Fr Simon Ellis John 16.33 "be of good cheer I have overcome the world"