

THE PARISHES OF ST ETHELBERT LEOMINSTER and ST JOSEPH'S BROMYARD

Websites: www.st-ethelberts.org.uk and www.catholicchurchbromyard.org.uk

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Alleluia, He is Risen.

Easter Sunday 2020

We have come the end of a rather extraordinary and difficult Holy Week and I hope that many of you have managed to keep in touch through the various live streamed services available on the internet.

As we now come to Easter Sunday and faced with the effect the coronavirus has had on our lives, I don't suppose many of us feel like shouting 'Alleluia'. Nevertheless, I believe the Easter story has a powerful message for us today.

I have been reflecting on what it must have been like on that First Easter Morning. The disciples, having witnessed Jesus', suffering and cruel death on the cross, must have felt that life as they knew it had come to an end-all their hopes and dreams for the future dashed. Furthermore, they fear for their own safety and isolate themselves by locking themselves away in an upper room. Then something extraordinary happens, they hear from the women that the tomb is empty, and they had been told by an angel that Jesus had risen. There is bewilderment, confusion and disbelief, what is going on? Eventually, the Risen Lord appears to the disciples in the upper room. His words: 'Peace be with you. Do not be afraid, it is I'. He helps them to grow in understanding of the true meaning of his suffering and death. Then, strengthened by the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the disciples leave their isolation and rush into the streets to tell everyone they meet about their experience.

As we arrive at Easter this year, we need to hear the Lord speaking to us in our difficulty: 'Peace be with you. Do not be afraid, it is I'. Let us pray for each other during this Easter Season that the Risen Lord will help us to recognise his presence with us and that by reflecting on his words, our faith and trust in him may be strengthened. Let us also pray that we, like the disciples, may soon be able to leave our isolation and come together with renewed faith to give witness, glory and praise to the Risen Lord.

May the blessing and peace of the risen Lord be with you all.

Fr Paul

Please pray for the repose of the soul of Dom Raphael Aspinwall, a monk of Belmont Abbey, who has died recently.

Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, even if it is only the simple prayer of intercession added to this year's Good Friday service:

Almighty ever-living God, only support of our human weakness, look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children who suffer because of this pandemic; relieve the pain of the sick, give strength to those who care for them, welcome into your peace those who have died and, throughout this time of tribulation, grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

I shall continue to celebrate Mass in private at 12 noon each day and pray for the wellbeing of all parishioners. Also a reminder that although you are unable to receive communion at the present time, it is possible to make a spiritual communion and you may find the following prayer helpful:

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Prayer of St Alphonsus

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in this Holy Sacrament of the altar. I love you above all things and I passionately desire to receive you into my soul. Since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, come spiritually into my soul so that I may unite myself wholly to you now and forever. Amen.