

St John Southworth Parish

Christ Church, Carr Rd,
and St John Southworth Church, Vaughan St, Nelson
Parish Priest: Fr. Gerard Kelly

Tel: 01282 614859 email: Gerard.Kelly@dioceseofsalford.org.uk

Psalm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord 5th April 2020

Dear Parishioners and Friends,

We can hardly believe that a microscopic bug – such a low form of life without any intelligence – could take over the world in such an alarming way, disabling so much that we take for granted in our sophisticated human culture.

‘You couldn’t write the script’ is what many say when events turn out very differently from as predicted. Well, on this occasion, we aren’t writing the script, and the corona virus is both author and lead player in this most dark of all dramas. We have been helplessly side-lined as the virus continues to wreak havoc centre-stage while we do our best to hide away!

We know, however, that the Lord himself always has the final word in all human affairs, and through the resolve of those who courageously try to overcome present problems with love and commitment, we will be brought to a new beginning. If we allow this crisis to challenge us to grow in wisdom, we will live in the world more simply and humbly, recognising that we need to care for the world in which we live, care for each other in our one family of the human race, and acknowledge that without God’s grace, we are unable to live according to the standards demanded by our own dignity.

As this worldly drama continues to unfold, and in many ways deepens its threat as the days – and probably weeks – go by, in the Church we are involved in another dramatic story as the Christ makes his way to Jerusalem for his final

showdown with the forces of evil. The fight of good against evil is the constant theme underlying the narrative of the human race. And goodness, always the underdog, fights a losing battle, until its resilience is revealed in a final moment of glory.

It is from our faith that we find the power not to be fearful, not to panic, and not to be discouraged but to remain resolutely convinced that God can turn all things to the good; that in the greatest defeat we find the seeds of the greatest victories. Let us, as Christians, take our eyes off the constantly streaming news and fix our eyes on Jesus - the man who is the Good News who invites us to be – with him – good news to the world!

As we enter Holy Week, we can make our choice to follow Christ in the liturgies of the Church as Jesus invites us to share in his journey to Jerusalem: to be with him in his final meal with his disciples, to be with Mary and John at the foot of the Cross, and to celebrate in his new indestructible resurrection life. Of course, we are more challenged than ever to participate in the Sacred Triduum during these times but participation online when at all possible is to defy the odds and express our faith at a deeper cost.

Fr Peter and I will be celebrating the liturgies at Sacred Heart Church, Colne and you are invited and encouraged to tune in to the webcam and put that time aside for the Lord.

With every blessing of Holy Week,

Fr Gerard