

Fourteen Sunday of Ordinary Time – 5th July 2020

Dear Parishioners and friends of the Good Shepherd Parish,
Thank you for staying with us during this time of Lockdown.
Things are easing up a little, but it is still a time to take care, follow the rules and guidelines and above all, stick to what you feel safe doing.

This last week, Sacred Heart church has been open several times for private prayer. It has gone well. It hasn't been too busy, but a few people have taken advantage of the church being open offering a beautiful setting for prayer and reflection in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament. It will continue to be open at the same times this coming week. Thank you to the stewards who have volunteered their time to make this possible.

We now need to move forward and obtain permission from the diocese to open Holy Saviour's church. Once permission is given for private prayer, and the parish priest judges that the time is right and all the necessary conditions are satisfied, then the church can be used for Mass with a limited congregation. Working out how to limit a congregation is going to be a problem. Some ideas are being passed around, but no decision has been taken as yet. In some ways, coming out of lockdown will be harder than being in it.

This time of the church being closed and the Mass being live-streamed has been an opportunity to think and pray more deeply about what the Mass is and what Holy Communion and the Real Presence really is and what it means to us. I attach a couple of links here to two YouTube videos which might give food for thought. Bishop Barron (Fr Barron, as he was at the time of making the video) gives us the theology and teaching of the Catholic Church on the Real Presence of Christ in the Eucharist and does so quite simply in only a few minutes. The Veil Removed is a much more adventurous journey into the world of creative film making, which attempts to remind us what the reality is at every Mass. The key to unlock the essence of the Mass is the "Sanctus", the "Holy Holy". It is preceded by the Preface, at the close of which the priest says something like, "and so with the angels and archangels, and all the hosts of heaven, we worship you and say..." And then we say, or preferably sing, the "Holy Holy". This takes us back to the vision of Isaiah, where he is given a vision of heaven, and as he passes onwards towards the awesome majesty of God, he passes through ranks and ranks of the hosts of angels, who are all bowing down in adoration and proclaiming, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of angel hosts. Heaven and earth is full of your glory. Hosanna in the Highest." We start our entry into the Eucharistic Prayer, the great prayer which transports us both to the Last Supper, to the Sacrifice of Calvary and to the Resurrection as well as transporting us into the very heart of the eternal Liturgy of Heaven. We are, where Isaiah was, but whereas he saw, but in a vision, we do not see, but are in the reality! That is the awesome reality of the Mass. We don't go to Mass because we like the church, or the priest, or the choice of singing, all of which might encourage or discourage us. We don't even go exclusively to receive Holy Communion. We go to be transported into the Paschal Mystery and into the very heights of Heaven to where the ultimate, eternal liturgy is beckoning us to take part. Well, that's what The Veil Removed is trying to get across. It won't be everyone's cup of tea, but it certainly gives food for thought, and, I hope, prayer and prayerful reflection.

Click on the links to go to the YouTube videos.

[The Veil Removed](#)

[Bishop Barron on the Real Presence](#)

On a much more earthly and practical note, can I remind you, please, that the parish income has been losing over £1,000 every week of the lockdown, our bills have remained fairly constant, and in a normal year we just about break even. In addition to this fact, we have now paid for the new boiler at Holy Saviour's church, which has cost in the region of £18,000. That's about the same as the loss in collection, which means we are the best part of £40,000 down since March. This is simply one reality amongst many others, including the fact that some of you will be struggling in different ways. Some of you may have lost your job. Most of you will have experienced significant upset. We will calmly move forward and see how things are when the light appears at the end of the tunnel. But in the meantime, any contribution is welcome.

Standing Orders. It is still possible to start a Standing Order Mandate for any amount and that can be cancelled at any time, such as when you start to return to church. It is possible to make a transfer using the parish's bank details. Both of these are available on the [donate to parish](#) page on the newsletter page of the website. There are collection boxes at the back of Sacred Heart Church and you can drop contributions through the presbytery letter boxes. The [Gift Aid Envelope Boxes](#) for the coming twelve months will be at the back of Sacred Heart church for the whole of the Parish in the next few days. Thanks to the co-ordinator for arranging that.

If you have signed a Standing Order which hasn't been activated yet, or if you have dropped off cheques which haven't appeared on your bank statement yet, apologies for that, but some of the Standing Orders have been returned to us by the Post Office because the banks or building societies were closed and not accepting post, and also Barclays has not been open for us to pay in, until recently. Hopefully all of that is now happening.

Once again, thank you for sticking with us, and you have been very much a part of my prayers and Masses each day.

God bless,
Fr. Peter

The times that Sacred Heart will be open for private prayer are currently as follows:

Sunday:	---	6.30pm – 8.00pm
Monday:	2.00pm – 3.30pm	6.30pm – 8.00pm
Tuesday:	2.00pm – 3.30pm	6.30pm – 8.00pm
Wednesday:	2.00pm – 3.30pm	6.30pm – 8.00pm
Thursday:	---	6.30pm – 8.00pm
Friday:	2.00pm – 3.30pm	---
Saturday:	2.00pm – 3.30pm	---