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March 2020

Dear members of our parish, brothers and sisters,

It is with a heavy heart that we are introducing the measures described below in order to protect our very precious community and our wider society. By following the guidelines that we have been given, we are saving lives. The collective effort is absolutely necessary. There is unanimous agreement by all the medical professionals locally, nationally and internationally and we are obligated to listen. As of the weekend of 21st/22nd March all the public Holy Mass celebrations and all gatherings at Church, including Baptisms, Marriages and Funerals, are suspended until further notice.

The Church building will remain open for private prayer throughout the coming days, as usual, apart from the times of the Holy Mass, which I will be celebrating in private behind closed doors. All the Sunday 9.00am, 11.00am and 6.30pm) and week day Holy Mass schedule will be maintained, except the 6.00pm at Our Lady of Lourdes, Wheatley.

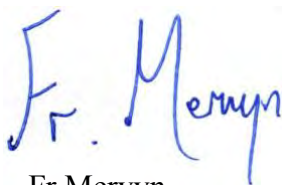
Celebration of Holy Mass is fundamental for the life of the Church and is central to the life of practising Catholic. As we introduce these measures, it is crucial that each and every one of us continues to participate in Catholic life in a new and creative way so that we foster our specific Catholic identity. We are blessed at Corpus Christi to have 24 hour live-streaming. In this sense we are joining in Mass not merely 'virtually', but we can see it as a real participation. This, I hope, will allow many of you, families and individuals, to follow a routine of participating in Sunday Mass at the time you are used to.

It is going to be of help, I think, if those of us who have to stay at home in the coming days and weeks, are able to develop (and possibly share) a daily routine or a schedule, which can be followed e.g. time for family and individual prayer, time for silence and reflection, time for reading, time for TV and entertainment, time for eating together and time for intimate family sharing, etc. I am sure that in families we can devise imaginative ways to ensure the participation of the children as well.

This is an opportunity to be proactive and show the Christian response to anyone in need and to be an example for our children. Although this guidance is separating us physically, we are called to do all we can to support one another by caring for vulnerable families, friends or neighbours. We thank the local support groups and volunteers who are leading by example.

We pray for all affected by Covid-19 and for our medical staff and researchers. May the Lord grant a swift end to the crisis that affects our whole human family.

With prayers and love, in the Lord, God bless,



Fr Mervyn