

Dear Parishioners

In these very difficult times for us all, I want to assure you that you are much in my prayers. I say Mass each day and offer it that all of us and our loved ones may be protected against the disease. I also spend a few hours in personal prayer daily for this intention. I pray also for those who are suffering from the disease and those who have died from it - and also for all who are finding it especially difficult to live the kind of restricted life-style that we have to bear with at this time. I know it is absolutely necessary for our safety, and I pray that we will feel that Christ is close to us in our time of privation.

I would also ask you to pray for me - not since the Biafran war of 53 years ago have I had an experience like this! But I know that God is with us through it all, and perhaps, when it is all over, we will be better people. I offer you a few thoughts on how we might maintain a strong and meaningful prayer life at this time.

Let us pray for one another

Fr. Frank

CORONA VIRUS - WHAT WE CAN DO

In this very critical time in our country we need to call on God to protect us all and to halt the further spread of the coronavirus disease. This we obviously do by strictly following the Government directives given during the week, and also by thanking God for the heroic work being done by those in the forefront of the fight against the disease. We also thank him for the ray of light in these dark times in the huge number who have offered themselves for volunteer work with the NHS, and the doctors who have offered to come out of retirement to help. May God bless and protect them all.

But is there anything we, as Christians, can do to help this situation. The answer is an emphatic 'yes' – we can do a great deal more. We might take heart from the inspiring words of the great Anglican spiritual writer, Evelyn Underhill, which she wrote in 1940 at the height of the London bombings ...

'Easter and Pentecost show us ... our Lord himself and his chosen apostles possessed of a *new power* – the power of the Spirit. This supernatural power is *still the inheritance of every Christian*. It is this power *and only this* that can bring an end' to the evil which is threatening us.

Yes, we are possessed of a 'new power'. As human agents we must certainly do all we can, but our power is limited. But this new Power is not a human Power; it is the Power of a loving God; *it is the Risen Christ living in us*. Christ is not just 'up there' in heaven; he is 'in there' at the heart of the world. And he is *in us*, empowering us to act as his agents in delivering the world from evil. It is this Christ working in the early disciples that enabled them to perform the miracles that helped the Church overcome the powers of evil and opposition, and become

the force it is in the world today. And this same Power is alive in us today in our fight against the evil of Covid-19. Because it is the Power of God, it is infinitely greater than any human Power and can do things which, from a human point of view, seem unlikely - even impossible. As Jesus himself assures us: it is a Power that can 'move mountains'

But the awareness of this Power of Christ in us is fragile and that is why it needs to be continually nourished by prayer. The stronger it is the more effective will it be. And that is why Evelyn Underhill tell us that 'we must pray for it; expect it; trust it, and as we do this, we shall gradually become more and more sure of it'. This Power of Christ living in us is the source of our Hope that because it is a loving God who is in control of our world, in the end 'all things will be well'