

The Church of St Mary and St John the Divine, Balham



Readings, Prayers, and Notices

Mothering Sunday
22 March 2020

Dear Friends,

As you are probably aware, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have suspended all public worship across the Church of England in response to the spread of the Coronavirus/COVID-19. In their letter to the clergy on 17 March, the archbishops acknowledged that big adjustments will be required of everyone in the days ahead, but they also insisted that ‘this does not mean that the Church of England has shut up shop.’ In keeping with this sentiment, I want to assure you that although we will not be able to meet at St Mary’s for services and activities for a period of time, we remain committed to sustaining our common life. Mtr Berni and I continue to pray for all of you, saying the Daily Office and celebrating the eucharist. We hope to invite you to join in this worship soon through online streaming. In the meantime, please note that the church remains open daily for individual prayer, and Mtr Berni and I are spending as much time there as possible. Please consult the website for opening times: <https://stmarybalham.org.uk/>.

We have also set up the St Mary’s Support Network, so that we can offer practical assistance and pastoral care to members of our community who may require it. If you need to self-isolate or require supplies, please ring or email us (details below). Likewise, if you would like to help support others, we would love to hear from you. It is heartening to see how many other support networks have sprung up locally in recent days. For those of you who are able to, please connect with your neighbours and join whatever cooperative efforts may be underway in your immediate vicinity.

We will continue to issue weekly notices over email and via the website. If you need a paper version posted to you, please just ask. The notices will include the Sunday lectionary readings and other prayers for the day, as well as community news. Please contact me or Mtr Berni directly with any prayer requests or other notices you may have. And lastly, never forget that God is with us always!

Yours faithfully,
Fr Robert

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READINGS & PRAYERS FOR TODAY

The Collect

God of compassion, whose Son Jesus Christ, the child of Mary, shared the life of a home in Nazareth, and on the cross drew the whole human family to himself: strengthen us in our daily living, that in joy and in sorrow, we may know the power of your presence to bind together and to heal; through Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

Readings

Exodus 2. 1–10

Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a Levite woman. The woman conceived and bore a son; and when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him for three months. When she could hide him no longer she got a papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on the bank of the river. His sister stood at a distance, to see what would happen to him. The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river, while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and she took pity on him. ‘This must be one of the Hebrews’ children,’ she said. Then his sister said to Pharaoh’s daughter, ‘Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew women to nurse the child for you?’ Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Yes.’ So the girl went and called the child’s mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, ‘Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages.’ So the woman took the child and nursed it. When the child grew up, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and she took him as her son. She named him Moses, ‘because’, she said, ‘I drew him out of the water.’

Colossians 3. 12–17

As God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing

psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

John 19. 25b–27

Meanwhile, standing near the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing beside her, he said to his mother, 'Woman, here is your son.' Then he said to the disciple, 'Here is your mother.' And from that hour the disciple took her into his own home.



Prayers for Mothering Sunday

As we observe Mothering Sunday today, we recognise it as an occasion eliciting a wide range of emotions. For some, it is a day to give thanks and celebrate family life, while for others it serves as a reminder of broken or painful relationships. Mindful of these complexities, the following prayers seek to offer a variety of approaches to the idea of motherhood as part of our salvation story.

O God with a mother's heart, you gather us as your children. You comfort and hold us in your warm embrace. When we hurt your arms enfold us. When we are afraid your wings protect us. When we are hungry you feed us with the bread of life. God with a mother's heart, your love surrounds and supports us, in good times and bad, in the midst of joy and pain, always and everywhere. You will never leave nor abandon us. God eternal and loving one, God with a mother's heart, we thank you this day and always. Amen.

Lord God, we pray for mothers everywhere. Like Samuel's mother, may they have wisdom to know how to protect their children and keep them from harm. Like Naomi, may they be able to turn hard situations into good. Like Lois and Eunice, may they always be ready to share the love of Christ with their children. And in all that they give to others, may they have the joy of knowing that they too are children, held in the love and care of God. Amen.

Motherhood was never easy, not for Mary, not for us. There's longing in it, waiting, pain, hard work and tight budgets. But you, creating God, come that way, lighting with glory the bond of trust and humble devotion. Speak to us, we pray, through all mothers and carers, that we may know your steadfast love in our lives. Amen.



Prayers in a Time of Crisis

Along with other church leaders, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York have called upon Christians to observe 22 March as a day of prayer and action in the face of the public health crisis. One specific action they have suggested is that everyone place a lighted candle in their window at 7.00pm on Sunday night as a sign of solidarity and a reminder that the light of Christ can never be extinguished. Please pray especially at this time for all those who are sick or anxious, as well as for our national leaders and those working in the Health Service.

Keep us, good Lord, under the shadow of your mercy. Sustain and support the anxious, be with those who care for the sick, and lift up all who are brought low; that we may find comfort knowing that nothing can separate us from your love in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen.

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; courage to change the things I can; and wisdom to know the difference. Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace; taking, as he did, this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it; trusting that he will make all things right if I surrender to his will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life, and supremely happy with him forever in the next. Amen.

Christ be with me, Christ within me,
Christ behind me, Christ before me,
Christ beside me, Christ to win me,
Christ to comfort and restore me.
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ in quiet, Christ in danger,
Christ in hearts of all that love me,
Christ in mouth of friend and stranger.



Parish Prayer List

We continue to pray for individuals about whom we have a particular concern. Please contact Fr Robert or Mtr Berni if you would like to add a name to the Prayer List. Names will typically remain on the list for one month but can be renewed.

Sabaina Oni	Naomi Shaw	Chris Serbutt
Charlotte Ennis	Abigail Francis	John Mathieson
Janet McLendon-Lee	Rebecca Memmott	Emese Bito

And of your charity, please pray for the repose of the souls of

Daphne Willers
Peter Watt

Sidra Jafri
Ivana Morrice

Solomon Oleghe



An Act of Spiritual Communion

There are times when all of us find it impossible to attend the Eucharist on a Sunday. Under these circumstances, we can nonetheless draw on the ancient tradition of making an act of Spiritual Communion, an act which expresses what St Thomas Aquinas described as ‘an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and in lovingly embracing Him.’ In Spiritual Communion, we ask Jesus with a contrite heart to come to us in the same way he would if we were able to receive the Sacrament. This can be done as often as one likes, informally in one’s own words or through the traditional prayer below. Cultivating this practice may serve to deepen our experience of the Eucharist, even when it becomes possible to take part in it once more at church.

Lord, I am not worthy to receive you,
but only say the word and I shall be healed.

My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.



Readings for Evening Prayer, 22 March

Micah 7. 1-20; Psalm 31. 1-16; James 5. 1-20



Further Resources for Prayer and Worship at Home

Last week, Mtr Berni prepared a booklet of Worship Resources, copies of which are still available at the church. Meanwhile, there are lots of other resources available for prayer and worship at home. Here are a few suggestions:

A collection of prayers and reflections for Lent, Holy Week, and Easter:
<https://llychurch.files.wordpress.com/2020/03/praying-at-home-4.pdf>

'Live Lent: Care for God's Creation':
<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/church-resources/lent-2020-church-resources>

Resources specifically for children and families:
<http://www.going4growth.com/home>

Radio Services:

- Prayer for the Day: daily at 5.43am on Radio 4
- Thought for the Day: around 7.45am Radio 4
- Sunday Worship: Sundays at 8.10am on Radio 4
- Daily Service: Monday-Friday at 9.45am on Radio 4 Longwave and DAB
- Lent Talks: Wednesdays at 8.45pm on Radio 4
- Choral Evensong: Wednesdays at 3.30pm and Sunday at 3pm on Radio 3

We will continue to add to this list of resources in the weeks to follow.



COMMUNITY NOTICES

Local information on Coronavirus (COVID-19)

There is a lot of useful information about Coronavirus (COVID 19) on the Wandsworth website: <https://www.wandsworth.gov.uk/coronavirus>

In addition, our constituency MP, Dr Rosena Allin-Khan, has organised a Facebook page providing official updates on the outbreak:

<https://facebook.com/groups/SW17Coronavirus/permalink/489269375287294>

Food and Vouchers Needed

Both the South London Refugee Association and Trinity St Mary's School serve individuals and families in need. One immediate way we can help them during this difficult time is to collect non-perishable food and toiletries for distribution. Alternatively, please consider purchasing food vouchers from Sainsbury's, which SLRA and TSM can likewise distribute. All donations should be brought to the church. Please contact Fr Robert for more details.



CONTACT DETAILS

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