



Diocese of Plymouth
From the Office of the Bishop

**Bishop Mark sends Message to the Diocese urging “Spiritual Communion”
during the time of the Coronavirus Pandemic**

My dear friends, I greet you today, on this Feast of St Joseph, at a time when our Church and our diocesan family, faces, together with the whole world, a huge challenge. We have become more conscious that we are not masters of the universe. We are more vulnerable than perhaps we have dared to believe. We are more aware than ever of our own mortality.

In the face of the darkness and uncertainty of these days, we must turn more urgently to God, who is our only and sure hope, and who gives us light and strength beyond our human capacities.

For us, as Catholics, we know that there is no substitute for personally participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, which is the source and summit of our life in Christ. We pray for the time when this may be universally available once more.

Mass will continue to be celebrated every day in our churches by our priests, but of course, without a congregation. Yet we can all seek the fruits of the Sacrifice of the Mass through a spiritual communion. This is an act of faith which we each make personally, hopefully each day. It is a practise which will remind us that Jesus does not abandon His people, but draws near, indeed comes into the heart of each one, if we but turn to Him in sincerity and truth.

So many of our brothers and sisters around the world are deprived of the opportunity to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, for many reasons. Due to this pandemic we also will now experience their suffering. This sacrifice we must make, will, I am sure, help us to cherish more profoundly the great gift of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. It will certainly intensify our hunger for Jesus, our Eucharistic Lord.

Mass in the Cathedral, celebrated every day at 11am, will be available on our Diocesan and Cathedral websites. This is one place where we can join together each day, as a Diocesan family, and individually make our own act of spiritual communion. In addition, every afternoon at 4.30 there will be a time of prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, again available online. Prayer is the most important thing we can do at this time - prayer for the sick, for the dying, for the bereaved, for

our health care professionals and for those seeking a vaccine. Let us remember that the mercies of the Lord are everlasting. He renews them in us each day.

I finish these words by sharing with you an act of spiritual communion which you may want to make your own in these days;

“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.”

Our Lady, Mother of us All, Pray for us
St Joseph, Guardian of the Church, Pray for us
St Boniface, Patron of our Diocese, Pray for us

May God bless you all at this time.

Pray for me.

+Mark O'Toole
Bishop of Plymouth

A YouTube video of this message is available on our Diocesan website: <https://www.plymouth-diocese.org.uk/> and on the Plymouth Cathedral website: <https://www.plymouthcathedral.co.uk/>

Any media enquiries please call: 01752 224414.