

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT Year A**

**Sunday 29<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

**Our church, like others, is closed to the public. Mass is offered daily in our parish, in private, for the needs of our people and for our country at this most testing time.**

**DUE TO THE DANGERS FROM THE CORONAVIRUS WE REGRET THAT OUR CHURCH CAN NO LONGER BE OPEN DAILY UNTIL IT IS SAFE.**

At this time we pray for doctors, nurses and all working in the NHS and the Emergency Services, for carers who look after the elderly and vulnerable in their home or care homes, for those who are alone and dependent on the goodness of others, for our families, for ourselves and those in need. We can reflect and pray on the Stations of the Cross and how many share in Christ's sufferings. We can light a candle at home (being careful and safe in doing so) and ask Jesus, the Light of the World to be a light and Saviour for all God's people at this time of great need, and ask Mary his Mother to intercede for us

**PUBLIC MASSES with a congregation will not be celebrated in our or other Parishes this week or the near future due to the dangers from the Coronavirus.** This position will continue until our bishops, following advice from the Government & NHS, declare it safe for people to congregate and meet in numbers. Priests in our parishes will offer Mass in private daily, to invoke God's protection on his people. We pray for deliverance from this virus that threatens the wellbeing of communities and nations, at home and abroad. Further information is on the website of the Catholic Bishops Conference of England and Wales and the statement by Cardinal Vincent Nicholls is to be found at [www.cbcew.org.uk/](http://www.cbcew.org.uk/)

**SACRAMENT of PENANCE** by request.

**UNIVERSALIS:** [www.universalis.com](http://www.universalis.com) Daily Mass readings, Lectio Divina, Prayer of the Church in The Divine Office and Spiritual Readings for each day of Lent.

**EWTN DAILY MASS** and more at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/EWTN>

**DAILY MASS Leigh-on-Sea:** Our Lady of Lourdes Church at <https://lourdesleigh.org/>

**Bishops Stortford:** St Joseph & English Martyrs: [www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford](http://www.churchservices.tv/bishopsstortford)

**In Brentwood Diocese:** [www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/covid-19-can-parish/](http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/covid-19-can-parish/)

**DAILY SERVICES WITH MASS:** [www.churchservicestv.com](http://www.churchservicestv.com)

**STATIONS OF THE CROSS FOR KIDS:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0qv7c4PsrA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j0qv7c4PsrA)

**CAFOD KIDS ZONE:** <https://cafod.org.uk/Education/Kidz-Zone> (worth visiting)

**DAILY SERVICE on BBC RADIO 4** (198 meters Long Wave) at 9.45am

**SUNDAY SERVICE on BBC RADIO 4** on 92.3FM at 8.10am

**BBC ESSEX** at 95.3 and 103.5FM Sunday programme from 6.00am to 9.00am

**SPIRITUALITY & LENT:** <https://aleteia.org/category/spirituality/>

**A LENT RETREAT 2020** – Journeying with Jesus daily: [www.sacredspace.ie](http://www.sacredspace.ie)

**SCRIPTURE READINGS for FIFTH SUNDAY of LENT Year A 29 March 2020**

**FIRST READING:** Ezekiel 37:12-14 The Lord says, "I will put my spirit in you"

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** Psalm 129 Out of the depths. I cry to you, O Lord,

**SECOND READING:** Romans 8: 8-11 The spirit of God is living in you.

**GOSPEL:** John 11:1-45 Jesus says, "I am the resurrection and the life".

**GREAT THANKS:** In this challenging and very difficult time, when people have to cope with many difficulties and the unexpected, there have been extraordinary acts of kindness and caring by people of all ages in the area to others that they do not know. We are all most grateful for this caring and sharing of concern and love in the area.

## The Immaculate Conception Catholic Church



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Registered Charity Number: 234092

Our parish is twinned with Thistle Grove/Lebohang Parish in the Diocese of Dundee, South Africa

**FIFTH SUNDAY IN LENT A**

**29<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

*Dear friends,*

Jesus said, "I am the resurrection. If anyone believes in me, even though he dies he will live, and whoever lives and believes in me will never die" (Jn.11:1-45). Jesus gave this teaching on the resurrection of the dead and eternal life for all who believe in him, as he mourned the death of Lazarus, his friend. He brought the compassion of God to Martha and Mary and shared their grief at the tomb of Lazarus, their brother. St John tells us in the shortest sentence in the Bible, "Jesus wept", and the people commented, "See how much he loved him" – and yet the suffering and loss!

Jesus came as a comforter and to mourn with the sisters of Lazarus and the widow at Nain, whose only son had died (Luke 7:11-17). Of Lazarus he said, "This illness will not end in death but in God's glory, and through it the Son of God will be glorified". When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead God's glory was seen at work in and through him. This was his final miracle and would lead to his own sufferings and death on the cross, through which he would give even greater glory to God.

Here is the mystery of suffering, and the difficulty of understanding God's presence and action, or seeming absence or inaction in dreadful situations. We may ask, yet find it impossible to get answers as to why God allows some things to happen, like the Coronavirus pandemic, at the present time. Why did Jesus allow his friend, Lazarus, to die when he had healed others? Why did he allow Martha and Mary whom he loved, to go through mourning their brother? Why was he so distressed and wept at the tomb of Lazarus, when he knew he would raise him from the dead? In the end, we can only go forward as people of faith placing our faith and hope in Christ!

In Jesus, we see the compassion of God reach out to people in the past and present. In the Stations of the Cross, Jesus is walking with people in suffering and grief. In him, we have the hope and promise of eternal life with God, for he is the Saviour of the world and especially to those who believe in him. Ultimately, Christ our Saviour transforms sufferings and death into new and eternal life with God.

In these difficult times that we are living through, with insecurity and uncertainty, we turn to the Lord in our prayer asking him to save and protect his people. While the church is now closed, I celebrate and offer Mass in private every day for our people and constantly pray the words in the Church's Night Prayer, "Save us, Lord, while we are awake and protect us while we sleep, that we may keep with Christ and rest with him in peace". *May God bless and protect you and yours. Fr John*

**RECENTLY DECEASED: CHARLES DERENGE RIP**, father of our parishioner Margaret Steggle, died on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> March. His Funeral will be held in private this week and a Memorial Mass will be celebrated later. **May he rest in peace.** We offer our sympathy to Margaret and her family and pray: *That the Lord sends his Holy Spirit, the Comforter, to console and strengthen them and all who mourn at this time.*

**CHURCH UPDATES Re CORONAVIRUS:** For the latest updates please visit: [www.cbcew.org.uk/](http://www.cbcew.org.uk/) and also go to [www.vaticannews.va/en/church.html](http://www.vaticannews.va/en/church.html)

**PRAY WITH POPE FRANCIS**, in St Peter's Square, Rome this Friday evening at 5pm GMT. This service will be broadcast live to the world on the Vatican Media and can be followed on several languages, the Vatican website, Facebook Live or You Tube. It will have Scripture readings, prayers of supplication and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. This extraordinary moment of prayer in the time of the Corona pandemic will last about an hour and will conclude with the Holy Father giving his Apostolic Blessing.

**IN NEED OF HELP:** If you, or someone you know is urgently in need of help at this time, please contact the Priest's House and we will do what we can to assist through the church, parishioners, the Foodbank or other local agencies. We have made a donation of £1000 from our parish funds to Epping Forest Foodbank in this time of great need.

**OTHER CHARITIES** our parish has made donations to in the past week are: International Refugee Trust £200, Cardinal Hume Homeless Centre £200, Providence Row Shelter £200, Prisoners' Aid £250, Mercy Ships £150, The Passage Homeless Centre £150, Pax Christi £200, Aid to the Church in Need £1,000, Smile Train £100, Church's World Mission £250. **Thank you to all of you who donate to our parish.**

**MASS INTENTIONS:** If you or anyone you know wishes to have Mass offered for a particular intention or for anyone, living or dead, please contact Fr John at The Priest's House, by letter, e-mail or phone stating the intention, and the Mass will be offered as soon as possible in private in our parish, for that particular intention.

**OUR BIBLE COURSE in Lent, based on "The Big Picture"** will NOT continue at the present time but may resume later on when we are free to gather together again.

**FIRST HOLY COMMUNION CHANGES:** Our first Holy Communion preparation and the First Holy Communion Masses have now had to be postponed and new dates will be set when it will be declared safe for people to congregate again in church.

**WE PRAY FOR OUR SICK IN HOSPITAL & AT HOME:** Frances Wells, Paula Hall, Ann & Bill Dowd, Marcheta Swift-Daley, Mark Toohey, James Bullen, Fr Paul Dynan, Fr Tom Jordan Fr Michael Butler and Fr Niall Harrington. **Please contact a Priest or Hospital Chaplain if you, your relative, or a parishioner, is ill at home or in hospital so that they may have ministry and the Sacraments.**

**OFFERTORIES:** Many thanks for £800 Standing Orders and to parishioners who put their Offertory Envelopes through the letter box of the Priest's House.

**CATHOLIC NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES:** Catholic newspapers & magazines have been delivered to us as usual this week. Anyone who wants to get a particular one please contact the Priest's House and we will see what can safely be arranged.

**DOWRY OF MARY: REDEDICATION OF ENGLAND TO OUR LADY**  
**On this Sunday in parishes throughout England there will be a rededication of the country to our Lady, who points the way to Jesus, her son as our Saviour.**

**PRAYER TO THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY FOR ENGLAND**

O blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God and our most gentle Queen and Mother, look down in mercy upon England thy "Dowry" and upon us all who greatly hope and trust in thee. By thee it was that Jesus our Saviour and our hope was given unto the world; and He has given thee to us that we might hope still more. Plead for us thy children, whom thou didst receive and accept at the foot of the Cross, O sorrowful Mother. Intercede for our separated brethren that with us in the one true fold they may be united to the supreme Shepherd, the Vicar of thy Son. Pray for us all, dear Mother that by faith fruitful in good works we may all deserve to see and praise God, together with thee, in our heavenly home. Amen

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5dd26c39e4888e54689c5a3f/t/5e1681de41d1895d960a582e/1578533343593/Act+of+Entrustment.pdf>

**For a presentation vist:** [www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8dzDrvziXECOV19](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w8dzDrvziXECOV19)

**DOMESTIC CHURCH PARENT RESOURCES:** Find a link on the Diocesan news page, where they publish an article recommended to parents of school-aged children to enable them to continue worship in the home and continue the season of Lent / Easter with their families without gathering publicly for Mass.

[www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/domestic-church-resources-parents-covid-19/](http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/news/domestic-church-resources-parents-covid-19/)

**CORONA VIRUS VOLUNTEERS:** Everything Epping Forest is managing a contacts database of people willing to act as "community volunteers" who could assist with deliveries etc to "self- isolating" people in the district during this outbreak. If you would like to be added to the database, and are happy to have your contact details passed on to anyone who requests them, please email [everythingeppingforest@gmail.com](mailto:everythingeppingforest@gmail.com) with: your name, contact number, Area (town, village, streets) you are willing to volunteer in.

**IF YOU NEED HELP** or assistance and would like to contact a volunteer in your area, please email [everythingeppingforest@gmail.com](mailto:everythingeppingforest@gmail.com) with "REQUEST" in the subject line or text 07710 447868 and state where you live. Please note that Everything Epping Forest will not be responsible for arrangements made between parties. Anyone taking part in this initiative does so on the understanding that the arrangements between volunteers and anyone in need are the responsibility of the individuals themselves. Everything Epping Forest will only pass on contact details to anyone requesting them as part of the volunteers' initiative.

**YOUTH MASS:** at 6pm, Sunday, 29<sup>th</sup> March, at St. Edmund's Church, Loughton, has had to be postponed, like many other public events at this time.

**JUMBLE SALE:** Our Jumble Sale will not go ahead as planned. Please DO NOT bring any jumble to the church at this time, as it is closed and we can not use it.

**EPPING LENT LUNCHESES:** Unfortunately the remaining lunches, including our own, have had to be cancelled for this year due to dangers from the Corona virus.