

Inside



***Daily Mass
with the Bishop
Page 2***



***What's so special
about Saturdays?
Page 3***



***Our Schools and
Children at Home:
Thought for the Day
Page 4***



***And finally...
Who is this?
Page 4***

Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

N@WS



**FURTHER MEASURES
IN RESPONSE TO THE CHALLENGE
OF THE CORONAVIRUS
PAGE 2**





PHILIPPUS DEI ET APOSTOLICAE SEDIS GRATIA EPISCOPUS PORTUS MAGNI *Further Measures in Response to the Challenge of the Coronavirus* DECREE

In response to new government restrictions for the sake of public health and safety, the following measures are to be put in place with immediate effect. These measures are to be read in conjunction with those put in place by the Decree of 19th March 2020, and in some cases modify or supersede them.

1. Churches. All churches and chapels in the Diocese of Portsmouth are to be closed with immediate effect until further notice. Priests will continue to say a daily Mass but without the faithful present.

2. Baptisms. Baptisms are to be deferred until a time when the government signals that people can gather again safely. In danger of death, baptisms may be celebrated privately with the necessary hygiene precautions and with strictly limited attendance.

3. Matrimony. Weddings are to be deferred until a time when the government signals that people can gather again safely.

4. Sacraments to the Sick and the Dying. It

may no longer be possible to administer the Sacraments upon request except to those in danger. Visits by the clergy to such people, especially when in care homes and hospitals, will need to follow the advice of those on infection control.

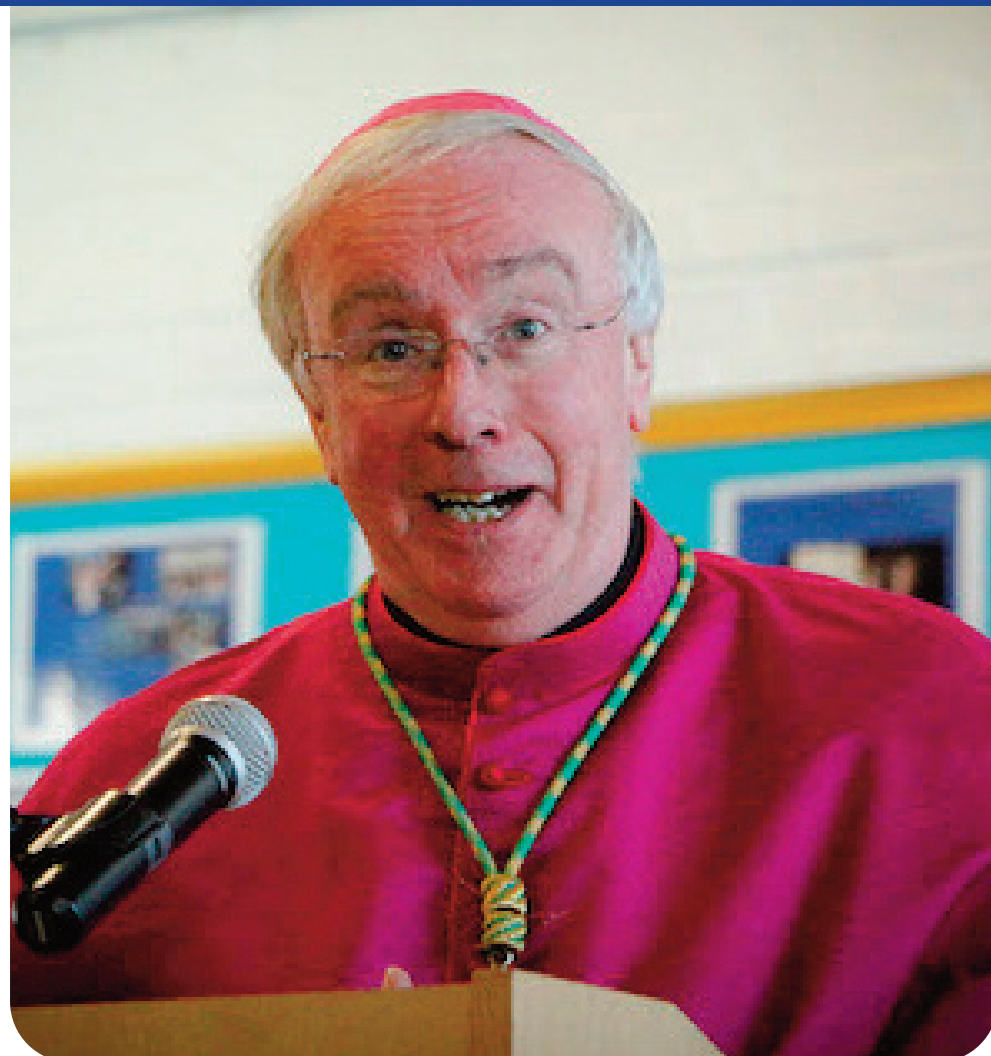
The Further Guidelines attached to the Decree of 19th March 2020, even if modified in the light of the latest government advice, remain in place, especially the need for the laity to avail themselves of alternatives to attending Mass, the necessity of prayer, concern for the needy and the importance of materially supporting the Church.

Given on this 24th March 2020.

+ Philip

Bishop of Portsmouth

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Daily Mass with the Bishop

I'd like to invite you each morning to join me for Eucharistic Adoration, Morning Prayer and Mass in my private chapel in Bishop's House, Portsmouth. I will be live-streaming the Liturgy over these next weeks.

The usual weekday schedule is as follows:

0730 Eucharistic Adoration
0810 Morning Prayer of the Church, with Benediction
0830 Mass

The liturgies will be simple. I will endeavour to offer a short message, inspired by the daily Readings. The

Readings and Collects of the Mass and the texts for Morning Prayer can be found at www.universalis.com/ and www.ibreviary.org/en/. At the Mass, you are invited to make a Spiritual Communion. There will be occasional variations in times: www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/ for the current schedule, or you can watch at <https://youtu.be/FuRFXBZA20A>

Live-streaming will begin this week on Wednesday, the Solemnity of the Annunciation. (The timings on Wednesday are exceptional. Adoration is at 8 am, with Morning Prayer at 8.40 am. Mass is at 9 am.)



Deacon Martin writes... Mini-series from John's Gospel Lazarus

Deacon Martin continues his exploration of the "mini-series" of John's Gospels during the remaining Sundays of Lent; this week's episode: Jesus raises Lazarus from the dead.

During the middle Sundays of Lent, we can enjoy a mini-series that's not available on television, or via Sky, Netflix or Amazon. We find it in the 3 Gospels from the evangelist John, of Jesus's encounters with the Samaritan woman at the well (Jn 4:5-42), with the man born blind (Jn 9:1-41), and with Lazarus (Jn 11:1-45). In the previous 2 weeks, I've explored how these 3 stories have a common pattern, which is characteristic of our own life in Christ:

First, we see evidence of an attitude or assumption that someone has, at the start of their encounter with Jesus, which is a barrier to developing their relationship with Jesus;

Then, we follow their encounter with Jesus, which is life-changing; This encounter causes a change of heart, which leads to a response of faith; And in 2 of the 3 episodes, that response leads to people affected becoming a witness of faith to others.

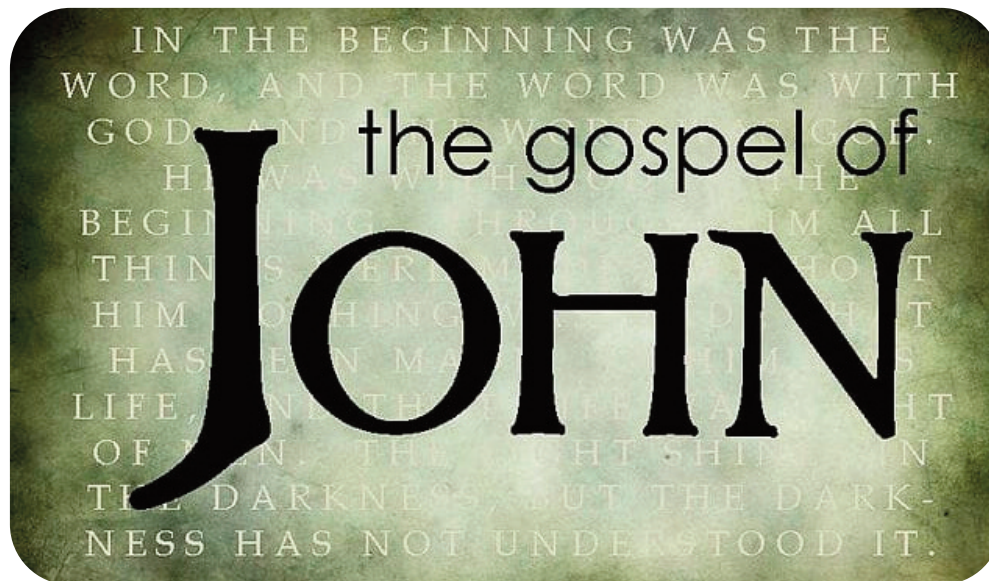
So, let's take a look this week at the final episode in this mini-series: Jesus bringing Lazarus back to life, from the dead. Because this week, the encounters with Jesus are mostly concerned with correcting false understandings, I'm going to briefly review the encounters first, and then go on to look at the attitudes and assumptions that are corrected.

Encounter with Jesus

This story is different from the previous 2 episodes: here, Jesus has no new encounters with individuals He has not met before; instead, He strengthens His identity with 3 groups of people: the disciples, the sisters Mary and Martha, and "the Jews". As for Lazarus, in whom there is the most dramatic change of all, there is barely any encounter to speak of: Jesus simply orders Him to "come out", and the dead man does so (Jn 11:43-44). This should suggest that the events themselves are not the focus, rather the emphasis is on Jesus Himself, on His identity – and on the development in faith of those who witness these events, and come to believe in Him.

Attitudes and assumptions

There are several misunderstandings throughout the story, most of which are patiently corrected by Jesus, in order to move each person to a greater understanding – in all cases, Jesus's intention is that the person's faith will increase: The disciples assume that if Jesus goes back to Judaea so soon after "the Jews wanted to stone [Him]" (see Jn 10:31-39 for the latter incident), the result will be that Jesus will go back to His death – and Thomas is determined "to die with Him" (Jn 11:7-16). Jesus responds to the disciples' objection by insisting on fulfilling His mission, using the "daytime" that is still available (Jn 11:9-10). In doing so, He is alluding to His eventual passion and death, but His "hour" has not yet come – yet His



hour will come soon, partly as a result of this episode, as we'll see later.

The disciples also fail to understand Jesus's reference to Lazarus "sleeping", so that Jesus has to tell them explicitly that Lazarus is dead, although this will lead to the disciples "believ[ing]" (Jn 11:14-15).

Some of the Jews know about Jesus healing the blind man, and wonder why He can't work another sign (Jn 11:37). (Note how the evangelist also uses this comment to subtly link this week's episode in the mini-series to last week's.) But the Jews' expectation is to prevent Lazarus's death; they have no capacity to hope for his resurrection. Jesus's action in raising Lazarus goes beyond anything they can hope for or imagine (see Eph 3:20), and it causes "many" of them to "believe" (Jn 11:45).

Mary and Martha express their disappointment (note: in identical words), that "if [Jesus] had been here, [their] brother would not have died" (Jn 11:21, 11:32). And both of them further assume that now that Lazarus is dead, there is nothing that Jesus can do: Mary continues to weep (Jn 11:33), and Martha is concerned about opening the tomb because of the smell, Lazarus having been dead for 4 days already (Jn 11:39). And it is Martha's partial understanding regarding Lazarus's eventual resurrection (Jn 11:24) that prompts Jesus to declare Himself as the resurrection and the life (Jn 11:25-26). He is not just "the One Who was to come into this world" (Jn 11:27): He has already come, and has brought light (Jn 8:12) and life (Jn 1:4). In this way, Jesus twice challenges Martha to "believe" (Jn 11:26; 11:40), so that she "will see the glory of God" (Jn 11:40).

Belief and Glory

This exchange with Martha reinforces the purpose of the whole episode from Jesus's perspective, which He had declared to the disciples early in this episode: "This sickness will end not in death but in God's glory" (Jn 11:4). This is similar to the purpose of last week's episode with the blind man, which was "so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (Jn 9:3). But the revelation of God's glory will occur in 2 ways: first, the obvious way, through

those who, like the Jews, come to "believe it was [God] Who sent [Jesus]" (Jn 11:42).

But the other way in which God's glory will be revealed is not yet known to any of the participants in the story, only to the evangelist as he unfolds the wider story, and as a result to ourselves: for immediately after this episode, some of the Jews report the raising of Lazarus to the Pharisees (Jn 11:46). This sets off a chain of events that leads directly to Jesus's passion, death and resurrection; the "hour" is finally coming when Jesus will be "glorified" (Jn 12:23). Ironically, therefore, raising Lazarus from death to life will result in Jesus's own death and therefore His glory. And we will witness these events ourselves, as next week's Gospel moves us into Jerusalem and into Holy Week.

Do you believe this?

These Johannine Gospels are read during Lent, especially when there are catechumens, and where the Scrutinies of the Rite of Christian Initiation would ordinarily take place. But the journey in faith of the catechumens – and the scrutiny or examination of their lives – must also be ours, especially during Lent, and perhaps most of all in this most extraordinary Lent. Are we ourselves being called today, in these unprecedented events, to believe, and to see, where others cannot yet see, the glory of God? Perhaps in this tearing away of those routines, both secular and sacred, that we value, we are being asked to clear away those false attitudes that we have allowed to build up, and to re-encounter Jesus ourselves, in a different, and more profound way than we have ever previously expected to meet Him. Perhaps those existing attitudes are constraining us from moving to a deeper level in our relationship with Jesus – and He is giving the order: "unbind him, and let him go free" (Jn 11:44).

We are experiencing a death of our own right now, the end (at least for the interim) of a life we knew and took comfort in. But Jesus tells us that "this sickness will end not in death but in God's glory" (Jn 11:4). Jesus is asking you and me to put our trust instead in Him – for He is the resurrection and the life, and if we believe in Him, we have, in Him, a life that will never die.

Around the Diocese of Portsmouth

What's so special about Saturdays?



For Catholics, each day of the week has a special devotional significance. Every day is not simply chronos ('linear time') but kairos ('an opportune moment'), sacred. No day is simply an ordinary day but a God-given opportunity. So, what's so special about Saturdays? Here, we continue the mini-series. I hope these few spiritual notes will help you in your prayer and discipleship, encouraging you to devote each day of the week to the Lord and His service.

Read more at
mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/whats-so-special-about-saturdays

Communicating in difficult times



Pauline Hanley from Our Lady & St Edmund of Abingdon Parish reports on the first webex meeting of their RCIA group, which meets on a weekly basis...

to find out more go to
mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/keeping-the-flame-alive-communicating-in-difficult-times

Please continue your financial support

The coming weeks will be difficult for all of us, and we are particularly mindful of those whose jobs and lives are put on hold because of this pandemic. We want to be here for you during these difficult times.



You can donate via
www.portsmouthdiocese.org.uk/support-our-work

Invited to rededicate themselves personally to the Blessed Virgin Mary



Next Sunday, 29th March, The Fifth Sunday of Lent, the Sunday after the Solemnity of the Annunciation, every single Catholic in England – and thus in our Diocese of Portsmouth – is being invited to rededicate themselves personally to the Blessed Virgin Mary so that England can shine once again as the Dowry of Mary. Unfortunately we cannot do this at a public gathering for Mass, but we can do it privately at home. Those who wish, may also gain a Plenary Indulgence, subject to the usual conditions. We are doing this in order to turn once again to Mary and to ask her to lead us, through these tumultuous times, to Christ Her Son. I wrote an article about the Rededication in last week's The Catholic Herald, which, in a slightly different form, you can read here.

The formulas to be used – how to do it go to mailchi.mp/portsmouthdiocese/dont-forget-the-rededication-next-sunday It's simple.

Our Schools and Children at Home: Thought for the Day

Last weekend, Bishop Philip sent the following message to the people of Portsmouth, parts of which was published in the Portsmouth Evening News:

For all of us in this great city, COVID-19 is an unexpected and grave challenge. Its effects can be seen even on our streets. The other evening, as I walked along Commercial Road saying the Rosary, everywhere looked deserted. I join the leaders of other faiths in Portsmouth to assure everyone of the prayers and love of the Catholic community. I have asked for the Cathedral and our churches to be kept open. Although we are unable to offer public Mass, I do want everyone to be able to visit God's house, to have space for reflection, to say a prayer and to find solace in this time of need. Praying is important for our human well-being as well as our spiritual. We have a lot to pray about at the moment, not least for a speedy end to this crisis. We should pray first for those who are sick, for the medical staff caring for the sick, and for the repose of all who have died. I pray too for the elderly and vulnerable, for those in self-isolation, for anyone anxious and worried. As we pray for financial security and stability, let us not forget to care for the homeless and the poorest. People ask me why



a loving God would allow all this to happen. I do not know the mind of the Lord, but what we do know is that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and that, in the words of St. Paul, nothing can ever come between us and the love of God made visible in Christ Jesus our Lord.

And finally...Who is this?

We continue to feature some of the best known and best loved clergy of our Diocese of Portsmouth – but in their younger forms. But who did this little boy grow up to be? Just [executiveassis-
tant@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk](mailto:executiveassisstant@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk) your answer to Deacon Craig by Friday for a mention. Don't forget to send in any photos of clergy from years gone by from your own collection to feature in a future issue!

Last week we finally defeated you all, as nobody managed to identify the mystery priest in issue 267. It was Monsignor Nicholas France MBE! See if you have more luck with this week's mystery cleric.



The whole world united in prayer

Our Father

who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come;
thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
Amen

