

Letter from Cardinal Vincent Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster, 18th
March 2020

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith.

“It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, at this time we must not gather for public acts of worship in our churches.

“Our churches will remain open. They will be a focal point of prayer, where you will find solace and strength.

“However, the celebration of Mass, Sunday by Sunday and day by day, will take place without a public congregation. Knowing that the Mass is being celebrated; joining in spiritually in that celebration; watching the live-streaming of the Mass; following its prayers at home; making an act of spiritual communion: this is how we share in the Sacrifice of Christ in these days.

“We want everyone to understand that in these emergency circumstances, and for as long as they last, the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days is removed.”

“[Another] vital aspect of these challenging times is our care for each other. There are so many ways in which we are to do this: being attentive to the needs of our neighbour, especially the elderly and vulnerable; contributing to our local food banks; volunteering for charitable initiatives and organisations; simply keeping in touch by all the means open to us.”