

Dear Friends,

Many of us were moved by the words that Her Majesty the Queen broadcast to the nation last night with its call to determination, its message of hope and also its advice to us to make the most of this strange time of lockdown. "We will meet again" had particular poignancy for us as we were unable to gather for Palm Sunday.

These times will mean different things for different people. Some of you will be using this unexpected space to pray, reflect and be still. Others of you are ministering more busily than ever, especially those co-ordinating relief to the hungry and vulnerable. Still others are balancing childcare needs and seeking to continue your children's education. Some of you have found a new gift for livestreaming or recording videos. Others know that it's best in your case to point out content that others are producing. There are particular challenges for those who serve a parish in which they are not resident and for whom a short drive now feels like a vast gulf.

The important thing is that we do not judge ourselves by the standards of others. Only you know how best to minister to your parish or parishes in unprecedentedly challenging times. And we all know that the work that matters above all in these days is the work of prayer, offered not just for, but also on behalf of, our communities. That work is more important than ever this week as we expect the virus to peak around Easter.

**This is Holy Week.** A full guide to Holy Week resources can be found on the Coronavirus section of the Diocesan website and most particularly on the briefing sent out on April 1<sup>st</sup>. In addition our Cathedral is putting out a daily meditation throughout the week which can be found on their YouTube channel [here](#).

It has been very inspiring to see how many people have placed crosses in their windows to bear witness to passers-by. Please keep sharing your images on social media. You can see images shared already here on the Diocesan [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) accounts.

**'Remote' Communion.** There has been some debate and a number of questions about ways to enable people to share in some way in the Eucharist in these days when public worship has been stopped. Please note that 'remote' celebration is not possible within the Church of England and is strongly discouraged, as is anything that might confuse people or give them the impression that they are receiving communion (for example eating their own bread and wine whilst watching a streamed celebration).

The best way ahead (and that used by the Bishop of Manchester in the service streamed by the Church of England yesterday) is to pause when the celebrant receives and allow people to make a spiritual communion. There are resources for this on the website.

**Domestic Abuse Guidance.** This is an area of especial concern to many of you. Lancashire Victim Services have issued new advice which is here:  
<https://www.blackburn.anglican.org/covid19-safeguarding-advice#heading-h2-7>

## **And finally...**

There have been so many inspiring stories of people reaching out in service over the past two weeks, and a particularly uplifting one comes from our secondary schools.

We have been hearing about how they are responding in the fight against coronavirus by making generous donations of equipment to the NHS and other care providers. It follows an initial email, making the request, to the Diocesan Board of Education from a member of the Board's Associate Advisory Team, whose daughter is a Senior Nurse at one of the main Lancashire hospitals. Equipment provided includes goggles (lots!) but also other things like gloves, masks and even curtain hooks. Some schools have even been using their 3D printers to make more equipment. Read the story, including a list of the schools donating equipment so far, [on the Diocesan website](#).

Any question or queries, please email: [coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org](mailto:coronavirus@blackburn.anglican.org). **Please also email if you are unwell or self-isolating.**

***Keep us, good Lord,  
under the shadow of your mercy  
in this time of uncertainty and distress.  
Sustain and support the anxious and fearful,  
and lift up all who are brought low;  
that we may rejoice in your comfort  
knowing that nothing can separate us from your love  
in Christ Jesus our Lord.  
Amen.***

Yours,

The Coronavirus Task Group