

SUSPENSION OF CHURCH SERVICES FROM TODAY 9TH JANUARY, 2021

Dear Friends,

To keep each other as safe as we can our church services are now suspended. Public Mass will not be celebrated this weekend. Several of our stewards and volunteers have rightly decided to shield in the coming weeks and I do not think we can open our churches safely. Only Funeral Masses and Funeral Services will take place in our churches for the time being.

The Government is telling everyone to stay at home to prevent the spread of the new variant of the coronavirus. We have to play our part too.

Mass will be streamed on our Facebook Pages "Parishes of St Chad and St Bede". (The quality of this streaming is not great. If the sound is difficult to hear from your device it has been suggested that you use ear-phones or a Bluetooth speaker.)

Mass is also being live-streamed from other local churches on this site:-

<https://www.churchservices.tv/county/lancashire/>

The Church continues to exercise its ministry of care through each one of us as we pray at home, take care of our loved ones and neighbours as best we can, and live in a spirit of trust that God is with us in these difficult days.

I know how difficult it can be to live alone. I find the isolation that is being asked of us a challenge too. If it would help please ring me on 01257 460154. I will be very happy to hear you.

Our office at St Bede's is now closed. Our parish administrator, Clare, is working from home. All enquiries should be addressed to me on 01257 460154 or by email stbedesclaytongreen@rcaol.org.uk or stchad.chorley@rcaol.org.uk

You will also find updates and our weekly newsletter on our parish websites.

www.stbedesclaytongreen.co.uk and www.stchads-southhill.org

God bless,

Fr Mark

I attach two messages, one from local Directors of Public Health, and another from our Dean, Fr Graeme Dunne, which have helped me make this difficult decision.

A message to all Church Ministers from [Lancashire County Council](#)

As Directors of Public Health representing Lancashire, we are strongly advising all faith communities to pause communal prayer and worship during the lockdown period, to reduce the possible spread of the new Covid variant.

We recognise that this is a big request, but it will help to protect our communities at this critical stage of the pandemic.

While we can't require our faith communities to do this, we are asking everyone to make this temporary change to protect each other.

You have already made changes to your worship arrangements, but we are asking for caution at this difficult and concerning time.

We're seeing increasing numbers of cases in Lancashire, and worrying increases in the number of people hospitalised from Covid, as well as increasing numbers of deaths. NHS and hospital capacity is under enormous strain across Lancashire...

From Fr Graeme, the Dean of the Chorley Pastoral Area.

In a letter to the priests of the Archdiocese, sent this week, Archbishop Malcolm wrote: "Although I have circulated the recent government advice on the opening of churches, I want to emphasise that the final decision in this regard is yours. ... You have to consider your volunteers and stewards. ... Now is the time to make wise decisions for the good of all. As priests I am very aware of how committed you are to your sacred ministry and that you will not leave your people without pastoral care."

In the light of these comments and the rising number of cases of Covid-19 and deaths, and the pressure being placed on our hospitals a number of priests in the deanery have decided to suspend public worship until the impact of the virus starts to fall, and the vaccine is more widely available. We hope this will be in the near future.

This was a difficult decision to take, but we feel it is the right thing to do and will be kept under review in the coming weeks. We thank you for your understanding and ask for your prayers.

Fr Graeme Dunne VF

Dean of the Chorley Pastoral Area