



## Sacred Heart Church, Oxford

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Acting Parish Priest: Fr. Pius Duke

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Acting Priest: Fr. Vincent Omokpakpo

### 4<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY OF EASTER

Mass Times, Intentions and Services		
<b>Sunday</b> 03 <sup>rd</sup> May	09:30	Mass in Private – John PM (RIP)
	18:00	Mass in Private for all lonely or isolated
Monday 04 <sup>th</sup> May	09:00	Mass in private for all Health Workers
Tuesday 05 <sup>th</sup> May	19:30	Mass in private – Doreen McEneaney (RIP)
Wednesday 06 <sup>th</sup> May	09:00	Mass in private for All died from COVID 19
Thursday 07 <sup>th</sup> May	19:00	Mass in private for all suffering from COVID 19
Friday 08 <sup>th</sup> May	19:00	Mass in private for the wellbeing of our parish
Saturday 09 <sup>th</sup> May	10:00	Mass in private for Government and policy makers
<b>Sunday</b> 10 <sup>th</sup> May	09:30	For the people of the parish
	18:00	Mass in Private for all lonely or isolated

### Sunday Reflection from Fr. Pius Duke

Today, we celebrate Christ the Good Shepherd. The primary purpose of a shepherd is to care for the needs of the sheep and to make sure they are protected from threats of any kind. As a Good Shepherd, Christ knows his sheep. One by one He calls them by name; they know, hear and obey his voice (John10:4-5). This suggest the kind of bond formed between the sheep and himself. One may wonder what Jesus' voice sounded like. I imagine he spoke with a measured pitch and gentle volume. Not harsh but definitely wanting to impress upon his listeners that he was both honest and serious, not wanting to use a hard-sell approach, not wanting to soften the impact or apologise for the strength of his message. Sadly, we live in a world of strange voices. Being exposed to these voices has made it difficult to know which voice to believe and follow. With so many conflicting voices, messages and images, we get tired of trying to be careful. We sometimes give up or give in and so we listen to the most tempting voice. The one that tells us how to be wealthy, or thin, or beautiful and powerful, without having to go to too much trouble - the voice that tells us we can have all we want and all we need do is hand over our choices to someone who will go to all the trouble for us. Who wouldn't want that? On the other hand is a voice that suggests we can be poor, simple and happy. We can be content with loving faithful relationships with just one person. We can be happy by being of service to others. Why would we trust that voice? Why listen to a voice that goes against making the easy choices? A voice that is difficult to hear in a world that seeks to do things the easy and comfortable way even when it goes against God's principles. Sometimes it is only towards the end of our lives when we have looked, listened, loved and learned about life that the voice of Christ can sound soothing, and reassuring. In our prayer, let us ask for the grace to discern the Lord's voice and to respond to his invitation daily.

**Masses will be celebrated each day privately by the parish clergy for your intentions. New Mass intention should be send to sacredheartchurchoxford@gmail.com.**

**Offertory (collections):** Normal weekend collections cannot be taken under current circumstances. While recognising that this is a very difficult time financially for many people, others may still wish to continue their regular Sunday donations, if they are not already using the envelopes or standing order facilities. Donations may be sent to the Parish even through standing order. We do not receive any financial support from the Diocese, and other important activities like letting out the hall for community use have ceased, while our expenditure remains effectively the same.

### Mass Suspension Information

**COVID 19:** If you or someone you know in the parish is self-isolating and is in need of any support, such as help with shopping or a chat on the phone, please get in touch with the Parish Office: Email: sascredheartchurch.oxford@gmail.com Phone: 01865 776903 or 01865 762964. **Corpus Christi Parish in Headington will continue to be live streaming weekday and Sunday Mass, and more details can be found at <https://corpuschristiheadington.co.uk> <https://greyfriarsoxford.weebly.com>**

Also, you can visit the parish website: <https://sacredheartoxford.com>.

**PASTORAL LETTER  
OF THE  
MOST REVEREND BERNARD LONGLEY  
ARCHBISHOP OF BIRMINGHAM  
FOR THE FOURTH SUNDAY OF EASTER, 2/3 MAY 2020**

*I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ, dear friends,

We are living through the strangest and most unsettling of times together. None of us has ever experienced a Holy Week and Easter quite like this year's as the coronavirus took hold across our communities. I know that many of you have been anxious about your family members and friends who have been ill and our prayers are with those who have suffered bereavements in recent days. We pray that all those who have died will see the light on the face of the risen Christ.

Over recent weeks we have had to modify our way of life and our way of faith for the wellbeing and safety of one another and this has inevitably changed the way that we practise our faith day by day. I realise what a burden it is not to be able to visit your parish church or to receive the sacraments, but this sacrifice is contributing to the good of others.

As we continue our journey through the Easter season today's Gospel offers us consolation and encouragement just when it is most needed. Today is Good Shepherd Sunday – the moment in Eastertide when we hear the risen Christ calling us as our shepherd: *I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.* This year more than ever we need to hear the voice of the shepherd calling us forward – to be carried on his shoulders so that as his flock we may gain fresh strength and purpose.

Our Lord calls us to be watchful and attentive as the sheep of his flock, to recognise and love the sound of his voice. When the Lord calls us it is more than a beckoning – it is a vocation, a calling to be his disciples and to do his bidding. On Good Shepherd Sunday we pray for an increase of vocations within the Church – vocations to married life, to Religious and consecrated life, to the ordained ministries.

I would ask you to pray especially today for those in formation for the Permanent Diaconate and for the Priesthood. It will be a great blessing this year to ordain three of those who are currently in formation as Permanent Deacons and I know how much they will bring to the parish and chaplaincy communities they are looking forward to serving.

This summer we shall welcome our three newly-ordained priests at the conclusion of their studies and formation in Rome. I am also looking forward to ordaining four of our eleven current seminarians as priests. During the coronavirus pandemic all our seminarians have been stationed in parishes across the Archdiocese. I thank the clergy and the parishioners who have kindly made them so welcome during this unexpected pastoral placement. I also thank all the seminary staff who have continued to support them in their formation.

Priests and deacons witness and work in close collaboration with all the lay faithful, recognising and grateful for the wide range of charisms they have received from the Holy Spirit. The Church's life is enriched by the different vocations that come from the Good Shepherd. We have all been touched over recent weeks by the dedicated work of doctors, nurses and care-workers and I am grateful for the healthcare chaplains and volunteers who support them.

I am also grateful to those whose vocation finds its fulfilment in education. Thanks to our teachers and governing bodies, very many of our Catholic Schools have remained open, providing a vital local service for children and their families through their outreach work and care. Children and staff have been making food parcels and seeing them delivered to families and foodbanks. Some schools have been making PPE equipment for local hospitals and NHS workers or delivering hand-painted cards to lonely parishioners.

There are others whose vocation from the Good Shepherd lies in social outreach, making the Church's social teaching alive and active in our local communities. Father Hudson's Care supports the work of several agencies across the Archdiocese, making a real difference to those in need during the current pandemic.

In Birmingham Tabor House usually provides emergency night-shelter for those who have been sleeping rough on the streets of the city. It is currently helping the City Council to staff a crisis centre in a central hotel providing accommodation for over fifty people. In Smethwick the Brushstrokes centre has remained open, thanks to staff and volunteers. Last week it provided food for over two hundred destitute people, either delivered to their homes or safely collected from the centre. You will know of other good examples in your own neighbourhood.

In these difficult days I recognise the wonderful and courageous witness of those who work in our Care Homes and I ask your prayers for the six Catholic Care Homes in the Archdiocese. They have come face to face with the coronavirus and they have offered the consoling touch of the Good Shepherd to those who are sick and recovering, as well as those on their final journey to the Lord.

Many of us would have been preparing during the month of May for our annual diocesan pilgrimage to Lourdes. The experience of Lourdes has sparked or fostered many a vocation. This year I shall celebrate a special Lourdes Mass to be live-streamed from St Chad's Cathedral on the afternoon of Sunday 24 May, the Seventh Sunday of Easter when our pilgrimage was due to begin.

In all of these different settings the ministry of deacons and priests is greatly valued as they represent the Good Shepherd himself. On this special day of prayer for vocations, please pray for those in formation for ordained ministries at our seminaries and currently in our parishes. Pray also for those hearing or reading this who are aware of the calling of the Good Shepherd, that they may have courage and find in Christ the confidence they need to offer their whole lives to him.

Dear friends, we also pray for one another as we continue the journey in company with the risen Christ and always encouraged by his promise to us: *I have come that they may have life and have it to the full.*

Yours devotedly in Christ

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Bernard Longley". The signature is written in a cursive style.

✠Bernard Longley  
Archbishop of Birmingham

Given at Birmingham on the 1 May 2020 and appointed to be read in all Churches and Chapels of the Archdiocese on 2/3 May 2020

## Let us pray together ....

Today is sometimes known as Good Shepherd Sunday and in the Gospel, Jesus tells us that He is the gate of the sheepfold; all who enter through Him will be safe and will have life, life to the full.

We pray, Lord, that you will watch over our temporal shepherds, Pope Francis, his bishops and priests, especially Frs. Pius, Vincent and Mervyn. May they have the wisdom and strength to guide their flocks through this difficult time. **Lord in your mercy ...**

We pray for all those who risk their lives daily to care for those in need in the community. We remember especially our doctors and health care workers in hospitals and care homes, and those who care for the vulnerable in any setting. **Lord in your mercy ...**

We remember too those who, at real risk to themselves and their families, keep essential services running for the whole community. We ask the Lord to watch over all workers at this time and keep them in his care. **Lord in your mercy ...**

We pray for all those who have sadly lost their lives during this pandemic and we ask Jesus the Good Shepherd to bring them to a new life with Him. **Lord in your mercy ...**

We remember those who have lost loved ones and are unable to grieve for them and be comforted by family and friends. We pray that the Lord will support and console them in their loss. **Lord in your mercy ...**

As we enter the month of May, Mary's special month, we place all our fears, our hopes and our prayers in her hands as we say **Hail Mary ...**

God and Father of Our Lord Jesus Christ, though your people walk in the valley of darkness, no evil should they fear; for they follow in faith the call of the shepherd, whom you have sent for their hope and strength. Attune our minds to the sound of His voice, lead our steps in the path He has shown, that we may know the strength of His outstretched arm and enjoy the light of Your presence for ever. **Amen**

### **PRAYER FOR PROTECTION FROM CORONAVIRUS (Pope Francis)**

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope. We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick. At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith. You, Our Refuge and our Hope, know what we need. We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee, joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial. Help us, Mother of Divine Love, to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us: He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us, through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen