



Sacred Heart Church, Oxford

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Acting Parish Priest: Fr. Pius Duke

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Acting Priest: Fr. Vincent Omokpakpo

SOLEMNITY OF SS PETER AND PAUL

Sunday Reflection from Fr. Pius Duke

Mass Times, Intentions and Services		
Sunday 28 th June	10:00	Mass (via Zoom) for People of the Parish
	18:00	Mass in Private for all lonely or isolated
Monday 29 th June	09:00	Mass in private for the sick and the housebound
Tuesday 30 th June	10:00	Mass in private for all Health Workers
Wednesday 01 st July	10:00	Mass in private for those suffering economic hardships
Thursday 02 nd July	10:00	Mass in private for the elderly and vulnerable
Friday 03 rd July	10:00	Mass in private for the wellbeing of our parish
Saturday 04 th July	10:00	Mass in private for all who died from COVID 19
Sunday 05 th July	10:00	Mass (via Zoom) people of the Parish
	18:00	Mass in Private for all lonely or isolated

Today is the Solemnity of the two pillars of the Church: Peter the head of the college of Apostles and the Vicar of Christ, and Paul the Apostle of the Gentiles. Both of them proved their love for and loyalty to Christ their Lord and Master by laying down their life. St Peter was a native of Bethsaida and was a married man and fisherman with his brother Andrew. Peter is remembered for his impulsiveness; his spontaneous actions earned him spitefulness as he denied his Lord three times because of fear but won accolades for his daring outspokenness regarding the messianic nature of Jesus. Paul was an erudite scholar who wrote almost half of the New Testament books. He was a professional tent maker and a religion genius. He became a posthumous apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Both great apostles, Peter and Paul were martyred for the cause of their faith and belief. We learn from these two great Apostles that no matter the force or amount of ammunition, absolutely nothing can stop the work of God. Peter being in chain and King Herod's persecution of Christians with heavy military guards could not stop God's intervention through the prayers of the disciples. When all odds were against the disciples, they resorted to prayers and God heard and answered them. Peter exclaimed: "now I know it is all true...the Lord really did send his angel and saved me from Herod and from all that the Jewish people were so certain would happen to me" (Acts 12:11). Paul too relying on the help of the Lord, said his "life is already being poured away as a libation" (2 Timothy 4:6). Therefore, he is not afraid because he does God's work with a clear conscience. Jesus confirmed this when he said: "no gates of hell will prevail against the Kingdom of Heaven" (Matthew 16:18-19). As we live through this great time of anxiety and instability in our world, let us pray for the faith and courage of the Apostles

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 sources of income like hall rental.

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: sacredheartchurch.oxford@gmail.com Phone: 01865 776903 or 01865 762964. **Live streaming of Mass from St Anthony of Padua church at 10.00 am every day.** Please visit: <http://www.stanthonyofpadua.org.uk/> or

https://www.facebook.com/Saop_Oxford-974143142974717/

Live streaming of the Mass also available at:

<https://corpuschristiheadington.co.uk>

<https://greyfriarsoxford.weebly.com>

Online Sunday Mass: Mass at 10.00 am via Zoom, live from Sacred Heart church. Please can parishioners mute their microphones before the service start, and wait until after the priest has left the alter before unmuting. Thank you.

If you like to be added to the mailing list, please contact Chris Breward Email: breward@maths.ox.ac.uk.

Volunteers: Adults between the age of 18 and 70 to kindly volunteer to help as cleaners and stewards in line with the current pandemic safety guidelines. PE and training will be provided and a minimum of two people will be on duty at any one time.

As the Body of Christ, let us pray...

Priest: With faith in God's love and mercy we bring Him our prayers

We pray for the church, for the clergy and religious and all who dedicate their lives to the service of God, especially Frs Pius, Vincent and Mervyn. May the Lord guide them in all that they do. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our parish community as we prepare to open St Anthony's for Mass in the near future. May we strive to reflect God's great love in our daily lives, as we support each other and our clergy at this difficult but exciting time. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for those whose faith is tested in times of challenge, and for those who seek to support them. May their faith be strengthened through the words of the Gospel and in the example of others. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for our political leaders. May they be guided by the principles of love and compassion for those most in need during these times of great economic challenge. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for all those who strive for peace and justice in our world. May peoples of all faiths and colour be united in the common goals of mutual respect and love for our fellow man. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for the sick of the parish and for those who look after them. We remember those in care homes. May the most vulnerable be protected against infection by Covid-19. **Lord in your mercy...**

We pray for those who have died, and for those whose anniversaries occur around this time. May they share the light of your presence, and may those left behind find comfort in their bereavement. **Lord in your mercy...**

Together with Mary, the mother of Jesus, we pray together: **Hail Mary ...**

Let us pray in silence as we offer our own intentions...

Priest: Heavenly Father we ask you to hear the prayers that we offer through the same Christ our Lord.
Amen.

A Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops of the Catholic Church in England

Dear Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On Tuesday we heard the announcement that, from the 4th July this year, places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services. We welcome this news with great joy. Since the lockdown began, members of all faiths have faced restrictions on how they have been able to celebrate important religious festivals. Our own experience of Easter was unlike any other we have known. Now, in our churches, and with our people, we can look forward again to celebrating the central mysteries of our faith in the Holy Eucharist.

The recent reopening of our churches for individual private prayer was an important milestone on our journey towards resuming communal worship. Our churches that have opened have put in place all the measures needed to ensure the risks of virus transmission are minimised. This includes effective hand sanitisation, social distancing, and cleaning. We remain committed to making sure these systems of hygiene and infection control meet Government and public health standards.

We want to thank everyone within the Catholic community for sustaining the life of faith in such creative ways, not least in the family home. We thank our priests for celebrating Mass faithfully for their people, and for the innovative ways in which they have enabled participation through live-streaming and other means. We are grateful for the pastoral care shown by our clergy to those for whom this time of lockdown has been especially difficult, and, in particular, towards those who have been bereaved. We recognise too the chaplaincy services that have played a vital role in supporting those most in need. Gaining from the experience of all that we have been through, and bringing those lessons into the future, we must now look forward.

With the easing of restrictions on worship with congregations, we tread carefully along the path that lies ahead. Our lives have been changed by the experience of the pandemic and it is clear that we cannot simply return to how things were before lockdown. We remain centred on the Lord Jesus and His command at the Last Supper to “do this in memory of me.” We must now rebuild what it means to be Eucharistic communities, holding fast to all that we hold dear, while at the same time exploring creative ways to meet changed circumstances.

It is important to reaffirm that, at present, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended. A significant number of churches may remain closed as they are unable to meet the requirements for opening for individual prayer. Fulfilling these requirements is a precondition for any church opening after the 4th July for the celebration of Mass with a congregation.

Please be aware that there will be a limit on the number of people who can attend Mass in our churches. This will be determined locally in accordance with social distancing requirements. We therefore need to reflect carefully on how and when we might be able to attend Mass. We cannot return immediately to our customary practices. This next step is not, in any sense, a moment when we are going ‘back to normal.’

We ask every Catholic to think carefully about how and when they will return to Mass. Our priests may need to consider whether it is possible to celebrate additional Masses at the weekends. Given there is no Sunday obligation, we ask you to consider the possibility of attending Mass on a weekday. This will ease the pressure of numbers for Sunday celebrations and allow a gradual return to the Eucharist for more people. Moving forward, there will still be many people who cannot attend Mass in person. We therefore ask parishes, wherever possible, to continue live-streaming Sunday Mass, both for those who remain shielding and vulnerable, and also for those unable to leave home because of advanced age or illness.

When we return to Mass there will be some differences in how the celebration takes place. For the time being, there will be no congregational singing and Mass will be shorter than usual. None of this detracts from the centrality of our encounter with the Risen Christ in the Eucharist. We ask everyone to respect and follow the guidance that will be issued and the instructions in each church.

“As I have loved you,” said the Lord Jesus, “so you must love each other.” (Jn 13:34) The lockdown has brought forth remarkable acts of charity, of loving kindness, from Catholics across our communities as they have cared for the needy and vulnerable. We have seen love in action through charitable works, and through the service of many front-line keyworkers who are members of our Church. Now we can begin to return to the source of that charity, Christ himself, present for us sacramentally, body, blood, soul and divinity, in Holy Communion. As we prepare to gather again to worship, let us, respectful of each other, come together in thanksgiving to God for the immense gift of the Holy Eucharist.

Yours devotedly in Christ

✠ Vincent Cardinal Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster

✠ Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool

✠ Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham

✠ John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

This letter is addressed to the Catholic Community in England; the opening of the Catholic Churches in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Assembly who are still evaluating their position on opening Places of Worship.