

The Finchale Partnership

An update on how we are all keeping in touch



A message from Fr. Andrew Downie, the Partnership Dean.



What strange times we find ourselves in. The coronavirus pandemic has turned the world upside down. We can't visit our families and friends. Most of us can't go to our workplaces. Travel, shopping and leisure are severely limited, and our church buildings are closed.

How do we live out our Christian faith in a time like this? What does it mean to be a Church when we can't celebrate the sacraments together? This edition of the Finchale Partnership Newsletter shows some of the ways that the people of our Partnership are responding.

The Lord's commandment to love our neighbour is as important as ever, and our parishioners have stepped up to the challenge. No one in our communities needs to feel isolated, or to lack the practical help that they need. We can't celebrate Mass together, but we can still pray. The Word of God is still alive and active among us. Many of our people have used technology imaginatively, to gather and pray online.

The task of reopening our churches will be a long and difficult one, because everyone's safety has to be our utmost priority. We will be moving forward together into a new situation for the Church. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit empowered the disciples to go out and preach the Good News to the whole world. Let us ask the Spirit to guide us through this time of change and challenge.

Supporting each other

All our parishes have been working hard to contact and support people who are isolating, or ill, during the COVID-19 lockdown.

- Priests and volunteers have been phoning those they know may need help, and newsletters and websites have asked people to let us know if they need anything.
- Volunteers from Durham Martyrs have been delivering newsletters and prayer packs to those who are not able to access them digitally.
- We have advertised the support available to anyone going into hospital, and the availability of hospital chaplains.



Where have you been 'going to Mass'?

Although we aren't live streaming Mass from any of the churches in the Partnership, we have all been sharing information about the availability of Mass on line. Many people have been joining Mass from the Cathedral in Newcastle, particularly over the Easter Triduum. But people have also joined Mass from places all over the world, including:

Rome
Hexham
Franciscan Friary, Athlone
Pasadena

Ampleforth
Edinburgh
Seattle
Farm Street

Lanchester
Clonard Monastery, Belfast
Blackfriars Oxford

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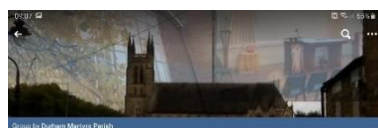
Prayer & Reflection

Many of our parishes are encouraging prayer and reflection during this time of lockdown:

- ❖ Bl. Edmund Duke parish have left candles and blessed palms outside some churches for people to collect on their daily walks.
- ❖ Durham Martyrs have used Facebook live for Lectio Divina, Rosary in the mornings and Exposition in the afternoons.
- ❖ St. Patrick's publish the words of the hymns for each Sunday in their bulletin and encourage everyone to sing along.
- ❖ St. Cuthbert's have a reflection and discussion on the readings of the day every Sunday morning on Zoom. They also share the bidding prayers and the organist shares a recorded version of the hymns we would have been singing.
- ❖ St. John Boste share the readings of the day on Facebook every day and Fr David suggested people pray together – 'not in the same room, but each in our own homes, sitting in our favourite armchair, at 12 noon each day'.

Keeping in touch on Facebook

Since lockdown began, 4 Facebook Groups have been set up in the Partnership, and we now have more than 250 members. Here are just some of the discussions that have been going on in the groups:



- ❖ I've amazed myself over the past week with the amount of technology I've mastered.
- ❖ Friday, 8th May, marks the 75th anniversary of VE Day, the end of the Second World War in Europe. At St. Joseph's Ushaw Moor, we don't have a WW2 Memorial, and a group of us have been talking about possibly having a memorial made.....
- ❖ . Can I just ask you all for prayers for our teachers, Catholic and other, who are still working in our schools....
- ❖ A good book I can recommend with all this time on our hands....
- ❖ I was Furloughed today!
- ❖ How is everyone doing? If you have any prayer intentions comment below ↓ and we can all pray for each other. 🙏
- ❖ Thank you to everyone who took part in today's Virtual Coffee Morning.....
- ❖ What is everyone doing for their daily exercise?..... I'm mostly walking along the river banks past the racecourse. today I saw an otter and a kingfisher.
- ❖ Happy Easter to all my friends. In better times it could be done face to face. Ah well, here's hoping for next year.

It's not too late to join the Facebook groups and get involved. Please keep in touch.