



**The Bishop of Chichester**  
*The Rt Revd Dr Martin Warner*

3rd April 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Here are some practical pieces of information and advice, including details of the celebration of Holy Week from Chichester.

Could I also encourage you to take seriously the poster campaign, encouraging you and your people to use your front window to proclaim the presence of the Church throughout every community.

**Funerals and PTO clergy over 70**

In more normal times, clergy with PTO who are over the age of 70 play a huge part in our ministry to the bereaved by assisting licenced clergy in the taking of funerals. We do ask those who should be self-isolating at home to follow the government guidelines and to stay safe at home. We love you and do not want to lose you to coronavirus!

**Days off and annual leave**

Some clergy have been in touch about additional burdens, especially those with families and young children at home, but others too.

It is absolutely essential that clergy continue to have a designated and publicised day off, even when most of our work has gone online.

It is also important that clergy continue to take annual leave for rest and refreshment from home-working: this might be when spouses or partners also take leave but applies to all clergy. Spreading annual leave across the year will also avoid undue pressure that might arise later in the year if too many clergy are on leave at the same time.

**Church Schools**

We are very much aware than many of our schools continue to offer a hugely valuable service to the children of key workers. This is often done on a rota basis with teachers coming in on different days to ensure support for these children. Please remember them in your prayers and, where possible, keep in regular touch with your school communities by email or

skype (or the likes). Sending a video or audio message to parents via the school portal in place of an assembly or end of term service is also a good option.

As our schools continue to support the national response to the health crisis, it may be that some will be open on Good Friday. The DBE are offering some resources to schools in this position to help them observe the character of this holy day. If possible, it may be that the local parish could also offer some support.

### **Holy Week from Chichester**

The Dean and Chapter have facilitated a programme of services for Holy Week as shown below. We are grateful to them for this contribution to our household of faith, enabling me to celebrate with you and for you, in these strange circumstances, the renewal of our commitment to Jesus Christ.

**Please make these the times of these services known to people in your communities.**

They will be streamed on the diocesan and cathedral websites.

**Please take particular note of the short Liturgy of Renewal of Ordination Promises on Maundy Thursday at 12 noon.**

#### **Palm Sunday, April 5**

10:30 am The Eucharist

#### **Monday of Holy Week, April 6**

7:30pm Compline and Address (audio only)

Led by the Chancellor, Dan Inman

#### **Tuesday of Holy Week, April 7**

7:30pm Compline and Address (audio only)

Led by the Dean, Stephen Waine

#### **Wednesday of Holy Week, April 8**

7:30pm Compline and Address (audio only)

Led by the Precentor, Tim Schofield

#### **Maundy Thursday, April 9**

12 noon Renewal of Ordination Promises

7:30pm The Eucharist

#### **Good Friday, April 10**

3:00pm The Liturgy for Good Friday

#### **Easter Day, April 12**

10:30am The Eucharist and renewal of Baptism promises

**This is to be a Holy Week like no other in living memory for most of us.**

**It is clear that parishes across the diocese are rising to the challenge as preparations are now in hand to present the drama of the Lord's passion, and the joy of his resurrection, in new and exciting ways.**

**My personal experience of Holy Week is that it feels like the beginning of a week in retreat. All other demands are set to one side. It's a busy and demanding time. Tempers fray, life is intensified, our limitations and priorities are exposed. These are indications of authenticity. They are the terms and conditions of our humanity, in which we enter Jerusalem, stand bereft at Calvary, and come starkly to the tomb.**

**Like any retreat, it takes a bit of time to get into the rhythm of the days. This year, we have the unprecedented gift of time, because there is nowhere else to go. How will you use that time?**

**There are already more than enough suggestions on our website, and on social media. So forgive me if I make another suggestion. I hope it will help you deal with the rest.**

**Do not make yourself busy. Resist the attraction of too much streaming and the temptation to check on what others did, and how many hits they got.**

**This Holy Week is a week for being re-created, for understanding the complexity of nature, even in its destructive manifestations, and marvel at it. Take God as your example, from the opening of Genesis. Do one thing well in each day. Review your day: discern the points at which you can rejoice and give thanks from what is good.**

**Keep an eye on the Genesis list. Rejoice in creation – sun, moon, stars, hills, rivers, seas, etc. Take note that the beasts of the field are made on the 5<sup>th</sup> day (Thursday), as the paschal lamb is prepared. Take note that humanity, the crown of God's creation, is made on the 6<sup>th</sup> day, as we are re-made on the wood of the cross.**

**And on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, take note of what sabbath rest is and does. It is the gaze of love that transforms irrevocably what it sees, in its intensity and delight. It is eternity at peace with itself, capable of whatever space is needed for the recovery of what was lost (the harrowing of hell).**

**Do not make yourself busy but delight on Easter Sunday in the 8<sup>th</sup> day of creation: God's new work. This is the day of the new creation. It is the day of your baptismal renewal when you became a pledge and sign of the perfection of God's work.**

**The truth of this holy week is not diminished by the limitations on our freedom to assemble. Death is a part of the whole story. Fear and grief are the part we play in the story; joy and peace and glory must be the conclusion that we can demonstrate to the people among whom we live and whom we are called to lead by hope and love into the future.**

**Please be assured of my prayers for each of you. May God bless you in the sabbath rest and re-creation of the paschal mystery of Easter.**

**And keep your eyes fixed on Jesus, who was wounded for our sins, that you might bear in your life and ministry, the love and joy and peace, which are the marks of Jesus in his disciples.**

+Martin