

DIOCESE OF SALFORD



HOPE IN THE FUTURE

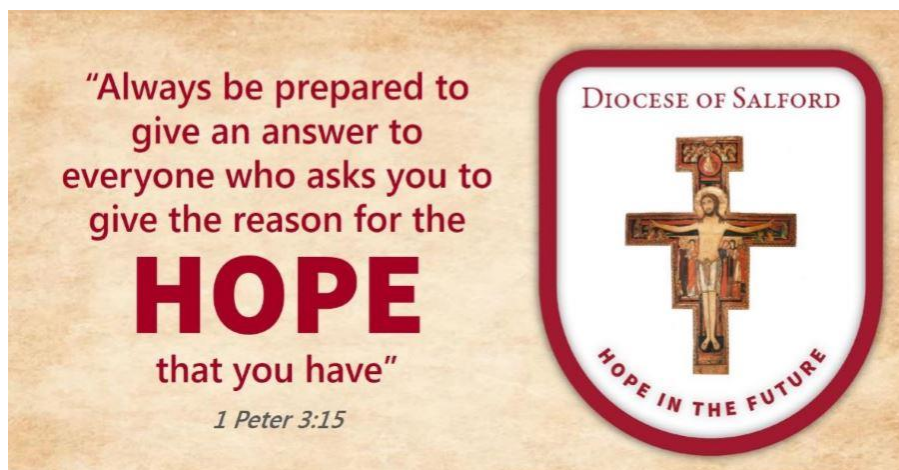
‘REBUILD MY CHURCH’

Ways forward in difficult times

Version 1 – September 2020

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INTRODUCTION FROM BISHOP JOHN

My dear brothers and sisters,
I wrote to you in June assuring you of my best wishes and prayers during the pandemic. I continue to pray for the people of the Diocese during this time.

As we emerge from the loss, suffering and uncertainty caused by the Coronavirus, we hope in the reality of the risen Lord and continue to respond to His command to St Francis and each of us to 'Rebuild His Church'.

Pope Francis reminds us of the priority of placing the needs of others before our own. We have seen this being expressed in so many ways during this time of pandemic.

Given the strangeness of our present circumstances, we think it necessary to have a period of reflection to discern what we have learnt during these challenging times and, in doing so, plan for a brighter "new normal".

Over the past few months, I have seen all around the Diocese a lot of energy being invested in encouraging "spirituality and prayer at home". Thank you for all you are doing. There was the remarkable opinion poll result recently that stated that, prior to the pandemic, 4% of the nation attended religious services and now it is about 25%, using electronic means. If that is true, we may well have a wonderful challenge of welcoming newcomers to our churches as they re-open.

On Sunday 4th October 2020 at 3pm, from the Cathedral, I will lead a Holy Hour before the Blessed Sacrament. Please join me via [Church Services TV](#) as we pray for all those who have died, have suffered and are grieving, and also as we give thanks to God for all the good works during this time. We will pray for God's grace as we continue on our Hope in the Future journey as Missionary Disciples.

After a period of reflection, and when the time is right, we will launch Stage 4 of our Hope in the Future journey, focussing on 'Proclaiming the Good News'. During this Stage we will be reflecting on how we can develop links between our Schools and Parishes whilst accompanying families. We will consider how we can help everyone to experience the Good News of Jesus Christ who come into contact with our parishes through the celebrations of baptisms, weddings, funerals, RCIA, Christmas and Easter Liturgies.

This resource is designed to be a 'living document' to help individuals and communities as we rebuild and strengthen our Faith and our communities while we emerge from the pandemic. This resource will be regularly updated on the Diocesan website.

Stay with us, Lord, on our journey.

+ John

Bishop John Arnold



**“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord,
“plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give
you hope and a future.”**

Jeremiah 29:11

WHERE WE ARE NOW...

Dear friends,

Since March 20th, we have been learning to be Church in a different way. In that time we have celebrated Holy Week, Easter, Pentecost and we should have celebrated the baptism of our catechumens, the reception into full communion of our adult candidates and the First Communions of our children, not to mention baptisms and weddings deferred. In addition, due to the pandemic, Pope Francis has decided to postpone the World Meeting of Families to June 2022 and World Youth Day to August 2023.

As a department, we have put together some resources and suggestions to help parishes, schools and homes in these difficult times. I hope you find them useful. Please do contact us if you require any more information and to share any good practice and feedback.

RCIA

[Bishop John's video message for those adults who should have been baptised or received into the Church this Easter](#)

[Further information & guidance on RCIA](#)

FIRST COMMUNIONS

[Bishop John's video message for the parents of and the children who were due to receive First Holy Communion](#)

[David Wells video message - Until we meet again – a message to those waiting to receive their First Holy Communion](#)

[Parents Videos](#) and [Catechist Videos](#)

[Letter to priests, headteachers and catechists with further information](#)

CONFIRMATIONS

Preparation for Confirmation will differ between different parishes and deaneries. Much of the arrangements are still being worked out but catechists, parents and candidates should stay in touch with their local parish/deanery/school for more information. [This page](#) includes an update video and will be regularly updated as more information become available.

NEW DIRECTORY FOR CATECHESIS

[Information on the Directory for Catechesis](#)

[Order a copy from the Cathedral Bookshop \(by phone or email only\)](#)

[Reflections on the new Directory](#)

None of us know quite how the next few months will unfold. Many people are talking about the 'new normal.' What this means for our parishes, and particularly for our preparation for the sacraments and other catechetical activities, we don't yet know. But somehow, despite the tragedies of these days for so many, and the uncertainties for very many more, God is at work.

As we look to the next stage of our journey, I hope this resource might help.

May God bless you and your ministry,

Fr Paul Daly

Episcopal Vicar for Formation



POPE FRANCIS - URBI ET ORBI MEDITATION

Jesus Calms the Storm – Mark 4:35-41

“That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, “Let us go over to the other side.” Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, “Teacher, don’t you care if we drown?” He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, “Quiet! Be still!” Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. He said to his disciples, “Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?” They were terrified and asked each other, “Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!””

“When evening had come” (Mk 4:35). The Gospel passage we have just heard begins like this. For weeks now it has been evening. Thick darkness has gathered over our squares, our streets and our cities; it has taken over our lives, filling everything with a deafening silence and a distressing void, that stops everything as it passes by; we feel it in the air, we notice in people’s gestures, their glances give them away. We find ourselves afraid and lost. Like the disciples in the Gospel we were caught off guard by an unexpected, turbulent storm. We have realized that we are on the same boat, all of us fragile and disoriented, but at the same time important and needed, all of us called to row together, each of us in need of comforting the other. On this boat... are all of us. Just like those disciples, who spoke anxiously with one voice, saying “We are perishing” (v. 38), so we too have realized that we cannot go on thinking of ourselves, but only together can we do this.

It is easy to recognize ourselves in this story. What is harder to understand is Jesus’ attitude. While his disciples are quite naturally alarmed and desperate, he stands in the stern, in the part of the boat that sinks first. And what does he do? In spite of the tempest, he sleeps on soundly, trusting in the Father; this is the only time in the Gospels we see Jesus sleeping. When he wakes up, after calming the wind and the waters, he turns to the disciples in a reproaching voice: “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” (v. 40).

Let us try to understand. In what does the lack of the disciples’ faith consist, as contrasted with Jesus’ trust? They had not stopped believing in him; in fact, they called on him. But we see how they call on him: “Teacher, do you not care if we perish?” (v. 38). *Do you not care:*



they think that Jesus is not interested in them, does not care about them. One of the things that hurts us and our families most when we hear it said is: “Do you not care about me?” It is a phrase that wounds and unleashes storms in our hearts. It would have shaken Jesus too. Because he, more than anyone, cares about us. Indeed, once they have called on him, he saves his disciples from their discouragement.

The storm exposes our vulnerability and uncovers those false and superfluous certainties around which we have constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities. It shows us how we have allowed to become dull and feeble the very things that nourish, sustain and strengthen our lives and our communities. The tempest lays bare all our prepackaged ideas and forgetfulness of what nourishes our people’s souls; all those attempts that anesthetize us with ways of thinking and acting that supposedly “save” us, but instead prove incapable of putting

us in touch with our roots and keeping alive the memory of those who have gone before us. We deprive ourselves of the antibodies we need to confront adversity.

In this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about our image, has fallen away, uncovering once more that (blessed) common belonging, of which we cannot be deprived: our belonging as brothers and sisters.

“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” Lord, your word this evening strikes us and regards us, all of us. In this world, that you love more than we do, we have gone ahead at breakneck speed, feeling powerful and able to do anything. Greedy for profit, we let ourselves get caught up in things, and lured away by haste. We did not stop at your reproach to us, we were not shaken awake by wars or injustice across the world, nor did we listen to the cry of the poor or of our ailing planet. We carried on regardless, thinking we would stay healthy in a world that was sick. Now that we are in a stormy sea, we implore you: “Wake up, Lord!”.

“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” Lord, you are calling to us, calling us to faith. Which is not so much believing that you exist, but coming to you and trusting in you. This Lent your call reverberates urgently: “Be converted!”, “Return to me with all your heart” (*Joel 2:12*). You are calling on us to seize this time of trial as a *time of choosing*. It is not the time of your judgement, but of our judgement: a time to choose what matters and what passes away, a time to separate what is necessary from what is not. It is a time to get our lives back on track with regard to you, Lord, and to others. We can look to so many exemplary companions for the journey, who, even though fearful, have reacted by giving their lives. This is the force of the Spirit poured out and fashioned in courageous and generous self-denial. It is the life in the Spirit that can redeem, value and demonstrate how our lives are woven together and sustained by ordinary people – often forgotten people – who do not appear in newspaper and magazine headlines nor on the grand catwalks of the latest show, but who without any doubt are in these very days writing the decisive events of our time: doctors, nurses, supermarket employees, cleaners, caregivers, providers of transport, law and order forces, volunteers, priests, religious men and women and so very many others who have understood that no one reaches salvation by themselves. In the face of so much suffering, where the authentic development of our peoples is assessed, we experience the priestly prayer of Jesus: “That they may all be one” (*Jn 17:21*). How many people every day are exercising patience and offering hope, taking care to sow not panic but a shared responsibility. How many fathers, mothers, grandparents and teachers are showing our children, in small everyday gestures, how to face up to and navigate a crisis by adjusting their routines, lifting their gaze and fostering prayer. How many are praying, offering and interceding for the good of all. Prayer and quiet service: these are our victorious weapons.

“Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” Faith begins when we realise we are in need of salvation. We are not self-sufficient; by ourselves we flounder: we need the Lord, like ancient navigators needed the stars. Let us invite Jesus into the boats of our lives. Let us hand over our fears to him so that he can conquer them. Like the disciples, we will experience that with him on board there will be no shipwreck. Because this is God’s strength: turning to the good everything that happens to us, even the bad things. He brings serenity into our storms, because with God life never dies.

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his



cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is* 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

"Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?" Dear brothers and sisters, from this place that tells of Peter's rock-solid faith, I would like this evening to entrust all of you to the Lord, through the intercession of Mary, Health of the People and Star of the stormy Sea. From this colonnade that embraces Rome and the whole world, may God's blessing come down upon you as a consoling embrace. Lord, may you bless the world, give health to our bodies and comfort our hearts. You ask us not to be afraid. Yet our faith is weak and we are fearful. But you, Lord, will not leave us at the mercy of the storm. Tell us again: "Do not be afraid" (*Mt* 28:5). And we, together with Peter, "cast all our anxieties onto you, for you care about us" (cf. *1 Pet* 5:7).

If we act as one people,
even in the face of other epidemics
that threaten us,
we can make a real impact. [...]
May we find within us the necessary antibodies of
justice, charity and solidarity.
We must not be afraid
to live the alternative - the civilization of love. [...]
In this time of tribulation and mourning,
I hope that, where you are,
you will be able to experience Jesus,
who comes to meet you,
greet you and says: "Rejoice" (cf. *Mt* 28:9).
And may this greeting mobilize us
to invoke and amplify the Good News
of the Kingdom of God.

Franciscus

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

Some questions could be discussed by parishioners and parish teams:

- What has this whole experience taught us as individuals and as a parish?
- What should we continue and develop as individuals and as a parish?
- What new things come to mind that God is calling you to and calling us to as Church?
- What has been lost during lockdown which must stay lost?
- What has been lost during lockdown which we must regain?
- What was ok/we are grateful for in this season but must be laid down?
- What has been gained that must be retained or developed?

The Archdiocese of Liverpool have produced further questions for reflection [here](#).



PRAYER RESOURCES

*O God,
our refuge and our shield,
even when we walk in the shadow of death you are there at our side.
Be with your people in this time of danger: bring strength to the afflicted and protection to
those untouched by disease. Give us love and courage, that we may trust in your power to
save and reach out to all who need our care. Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.*

[Diocese of Salford COVID-19 Resources](#)

[Hope in the Future Resources](#)

[Archdiocese of Liverpool Resources](#)

[Pray as you go](#)

[Universalis](#)

[Magnificat Prayer Book](#)

[Morning/Evening prayers](#)

[The Liturgy Office - Prayers to be used in times of sickness/flu](#)

[Church of England – Faith at Home](#)

MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

During this difficult time, it is important we look after our own mental health and support those around us with acts of kindness. Here are some links you may find useful:

[Mental Health Foundation – Kindness Matters Guide](#)

[Every Mind Matters](#)

[Mind – For Better Mental Health](#)

[Premier Christian Helpline](#) (to speak or for prayer) or call 0300 111 0101



“We believe that Jesus died and rose again; and so it will be for those who died as Christians; God will bring them to life with Jesus. Thus, we shall always be with the Lord. Comfort one another with these words”

1 Thessalonians 4:14,18

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT & RESOURCES

During lockdown many families have experienced bereavements and haven't been able to give their loved ones the funeral service they would have liked to. Some parishes may wish to arrange individual memorial services or hold a joint service; ideally this would be in November when the Church remembers especially the faithful departed but that will need to be planned nearer the time to take account of any ongoing restrictions or held virtually.

Bereavement support for Catholic families who have experienced a COVID-19 death – Caritas Diocese of Salford

We are able to offer a limited number of spaces to families or individuals who are ready and would like to engage with a bereavement support group specifically related to a COVID-19 death. The meetings will initially be offered via video conferencing whilst social distancing restrictions remain in place and will be professionally facilitated by Bernadette O'Neal.

Bernadette is a qualified psychologist and bereavement counsellor in addition to her extensive experience in education, but most importantly too, she has a deep understanding of the Catholic Faith. For more information email Mark Wiggin

M.Wiggin@caritassalford.org.uk or Kath Ansley k.ansley@caritassalford.org.uk

[Funeral Guidance Notes](#)

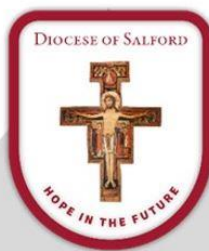
[Archdiocese of Liverpool Bereavement Resources](#)

[The Art of Dying Well](#)

[Cruse](#)

[Support for Young People - Winston's Wish](#)

THE DOMESTIC CHURCH



DEVELOPING & SUPPORTING LINKS **HOME | SCHOOL | PARISH**

Our Vision

Our parishes, schools and families working together in partnership to develop a shared faith journey for our young people.

Our Mission

To provide resources and to facilitate opportunities that enable our parishes, schools, and families to develop closer links, encouraging our young people to grow and develop their faith within their community.

For more information please visit [here](#).

You can view the school & parish links handbook [here](#).

Reflection from Fr Chris Lough on the Domestic Church is available [here](#).

This reflection is also available as a video [here](#).

Church at Home video reflections from Bishop John:

- [Church at Home](#)
- [Time and Space for Prayer](#)
- [Types of Prayer](#)
- [Praying for others](#)
- [Prayer of silence](#)



ONLINE FORMATION

[Holy Communion Preparation](#)

[CaFE \(Catholic Faith Exploration\)](#)

[Hope in the Future Stage 3 Pastoral Messages & Worksheets](#)

[A Journey through Mass Youth Resource](#)

[Schools Stage 3 Resources](#)

[CAFOD Children's Liturgy of the Word](#)

[The Bible Society](#)

[The Pastoral Center \(USA\) 'Faith @ Home'](#)

[The Great Story of Jesus](#)

[The Bible in 7 minutes \(Love Chooses You\)](#)

[Alpha/Youth Alpha](#)

[Sycamore](#)

[The Ministry of the Wild Goose](#)



“Those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.”

Isaiah 40:31

REOPENING SUGGESTIONS

Parish Hope in the Future teams, along with other volunteers, will be key in supporting the reopening of churches. Here are some questions to think about:

- Do we have a team in place to ensure visitors are welcomed safely?
- Could we continue to provide online streaming for the housebound of the parish encouraging those who can attend in person to do so?
- How can we support our priest in arranging a large number of baptisms, memorial services and first holy communions?
- Can any online formation/family catechises, which has worked well, continue?
- Can we improve our communications strategy and compile a parishioner database so we can communicate with them if a similar situation should arise again? (following GDPR requirements which are available [here.](#))
- Can we encourage people to set up [planned giving](#) and to [gift aid](#) their donation? Could a 'donate' button be added to our website linking people to [this](#) page?

*Divine Renovation have produced a reopening toolkit.
A blank template which may assist parishes to plan (using local government/diocesan guidance) can be found [here \(on page 50\)](#).*



**“May your love be upon us O Lord,
as we place all our hope in you”**

Psalm 32:22

VIRTUAL TO IN PERSON

“There was the remarkable opinion poll result that stated that, prior to the pandemic, 4% of the nation attended religious services and now it is about 25%, by electronic means. If that is true, we may well have a wonderful challenge of welcoming newcomers to our churches when they re-open.”

Bishop John Arnold

Here are some suggested ways to invite those who have been following Mass online to attend in person, especially those who had not been regular church goers:

- At the end of your streamed Mass (on Facebook, YouTube, website or similar) you could create and display a slide which say ‘We hope you enjoyed our streamed Mass. Why not visit us in person at (address) for these Masses (Mass times)? We would be delighted to welcome you to our parish community.’
- You could produce a short video/slideshow (30-60 seconds) which showcases parish life and has a similar message to above.
- The above messages could be shared on your website, newsletter and social media and sent by email/text to any contacts you have on your parish database.
- For those who have little understanding of the Christian faith you could guide them to an online/in person Alpha course (or similar).



“The Church finds itself once again in rough waters. Down the ages, across space and time, the barque of Peter has been beset by similar storms, as Dr. Bullivant shows here. But our hope is not finally in the comfort and security of this passing world. Our hope is in Jesus Christ—the Christ who died for us, and by dying, destroyed our death. This Christ is alive; he guides the Church and is present to it even now. He is sending each one of us, in our own way, on mission—even now, even during this crisis. If we look around at the waves, we will sink. But if we keep our eyes fixed on him, we will walk on the water.”

Bishop Robert Barron

FURTHER RESOURCES

[Divine Renovation Resource Pack \(Ministering in the new reality\)](#)

[Catholicism in the time of Coronavirus - Stephen Bullivant \(Free PDF book\)](#)

[Engaging Seekers Video – Fr James Mallon & Sherry Weddell](#)

[Life after the Pandemic – Pope Francis \(Free PDF book\)](#)

[CJM Music Podcast - Life as a Socially Distanced Disciple – Jo Boyce & David Wells](#)

[Setting up a Shared Leadership Team Guide & Videos](#)

[Papal audiences on the theme of the pandemic](#)

[Parish Guide to Disability](#)



JOIN THE CONVERSATION

To share your ideas and feedback, contact:



DIOCESE OF SALFORD

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