

The Parishes of All Saints, Notting Hill and St Michael's Ladbroke Grove

A reflection for the Fourth Sunday in Lent 2020



As Christians, in times of difficulty, it is natural that we should want to gather together in order to pray with one another and support our brothers and sisters. It will seem very strange today that we are unable to do so, especially on Mothering Sunday. Both of our churches are full of beauty and reflect into our lives the love of God. Today I want to think briefly about the West Window in All Saints. It is a Jesse Tree window which depicts at its centre Christ the King. Below Him we can see Our Lady enthroned as Our Lady of Walsingham. Around these figures are the Saints (from throughout history) and some of the Old Testament prophets. Right down at the bottom, sometimes obscured by the altar reredos, are 5 figures. I like to think of them as 5 parishioners. They are dressed in uniforms of service because this window was put into Church after the Second World War. These parishioners who went before us, faced trials and tribulations, and changes to their daily lives as we do today. They also faced the fact their beloved All Saints, our beloved All Saints had to close for worship. What is important about the fact they appear in uniform is that they each engaged in a different way in serving their country and their brothers and sisters in the Lord in specific and generous ways. When Pope Francis declared the Year of Mercy he asked us to think about ways that we as Christians could carry out acts of Mercy to help build the Kingdom of God. In this moment of worldwide worry and strife we can each of us make a difference to the lives of others either spiritually or physically. I want to encourage you to acts of Mercy in your daily lives. Firstly in spiritual terms please pray – pray for one another, for your families, for the sick, and for the faithful departed. Pray for those who are serving this nation now in our hospitals and other key areas. Secondly, if you are able try to perform acts of mercy; this might include ringing a friend who is self-isolating, helping neighbours with shopping and other tasks, making your Spiritual Communion, and where possible sharing in reading scripture as a family or with friends. Remember the words of St Paul in his letter to the Ephesians 'Be generous with each other as God forgave you readily in Christ.' We are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses, the church on earth and in heaven. We need now more than ever to turn in prayer as our forbears did, trusting in God. On Mothering Sunday I had hoped we would be able to gather at the feet of Our Lady to ask her maternal intercession. I will do so on your behalf entrusting you all to her loving care with the words of the Ave Regina Caelorum: Hail O Queen of Heaven enthroned, Hail by angels mistress owns. Root of Jesse, Gate of Morn when the world's true light was born. Glorious Virgin, joy to thee, loveliest whom in heaven they see. Fairest thou where all are fair, plead with Christ our souls to spare, Amen. May God bless you all, your families and your friends this day and always.