

## SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

- when we receive "*Spiritual Communion*" we mean that if at any time we cannot receive the Sacrament of the Lord's Body and Blood itself, then God gives us the graces of the Sacrament in answer to our real desire to receive them. It does not mean that we can get on just as well without receiving Holy Communion: it does mean that, if the opportunity of reception is denied to us, God will not withhold its blessings. So an "*Act of Spiritual Communion*" is the form of prayer in which we tell God that we should have liked to receive him in the Blessed Sacrament.

We should prepare by reading a passage from Scripture and by making an act of contrition. Then a prayer like this: -

*"In union, O Lord, with the faithful at every altar of your Church where your death and passion are pleaded before the Father, I desire to offer you praise and thanksgiving.  
I present to you my soul and body with the earnest wish that I may be united to you for ever:  
and since I cannot now receive you sacramentally, I ask you to come to me spiritually. I unite myself to you and embrace you with all the affection of my soul.  
Let nothing ever separate me from you:  
let me live and die in your love. Amen"*

Another prayer (especially apt at this time) could be:

*"What will befall me this day? my God I do not know.  
All that I do know is that nothing can happen to me which you have not foreseen, permitted or ordained from all eternity. I adore your eternal and inscrutable designs.  
I submit to them with all my heart for love of you;  
and whatever sacrifices I might have to make this day I unite with that of Jesus my divine Saviour:  
asking you in his Name, and by his infinite merits, for patience in all adversity. Amen"*

*"O Saviour of the world  
who by your cross and precious blood has redeemed us;  
save us and help us, we humbly beseech you, O Lord.  
Most sacred Heart of Jesus have mercy on us"*

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St James's Roman Catholic Church, Spanish Place  
22 George Street, London W1U 3QY

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22nd March 2020  
Fourth Sunday of Lent  
[Laetare Sunday]

### TODAY'S LITURGY

1 Samuel 16:1,6-7,10-13; Ephesians 5:8-14;  
St John 9:1,6-9,13-17,34-38

Psalm Response:

**The Lord is my shepherd;  
there is nothing I shall want.**

*Music at the streamed Mass (10.30am):*

Kyrie, Mass in C minor *Mozart*;

Laudate Dominum *Palestrina*;

Agnus Dei, mass in B minor *Bach*;

Aus tiefer Not schrei' ich zu dir (BWV 686) *Bach*

**Last week's giving £2,005-00**

*(includes envelopes but not bankers' orders, etc.)*

It may be useful to give the parish's bank details so that donations can continue to be made despite the suspension of the normal Sunday pattern.

**HSBC 69 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5EY**

**Sort code: 40-05-20 Account no: 91094394**

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**The Reverend Christopher G. Colven (Rector)**

**The Reverend Canon Stuart Wilson**

**The Reverend Mark Elliott Smith** (in residence)

**Telephone: 020 7935 0943** [www.facebook.com/spanishplace](http://www.facebook.com/spanishplace)

Email: [spanishplace@sjrcc.org.uk](mailto:spanishplace@sjrcc.org.uk)

Web: [www.sjrcc.org.uk](http://www.sjrcc.org.uk)

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## The Rector writes . . . . .

First of all an apology. In last week's newsletter, I confused the Fourth and Fifth Sundays in Lent, saying that the Marian consecration was due to take place on Mothering Sunday March 29<sup>th</sup>. But, of course, events have overtaken us, and the situation this weekend is very different from last. I am presuming that the re-dedication of this country as Our Lady's Dowry cannot go ahead as planned but I will offer the suggested prayers before the Golden Lady next Sunday at Midday and invite you all to join in spirit wherever you are – together we will ask Our Lady for her protection and prayers through these difficult days.

As you will have seen from the media, all public services in the Catholic churches of this country have been suspended for the time being. Saint James's will remain open from 7am to 7pm each day, and the Blessed Sacrament will be exposed for much of that time. It is hoped that people will use the church for private prayer and that our Catholic churches will be oases where people can find the consolation of the Lord's Presence. The Mass will continue to be offered each day but without a congregation. The Mass intentions already dedicated will be offered but not always on the booked date. On Sundays we will be streaming a Sung Mass at 10.30am.

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_QES\\_fHotyQ0tA0pH8dTsg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_QES_fHotyQ0tA0pH8dTsg)  
on your devices.

I have included a suggested form for making a Spiritual Communion which you may like to use in church or at home. The sacrament of penance will not be available in church at the usual times but in the cases of any grave disturbance of conscience confessions may be heard in the rectory, if a priest is available. One of us will be on call throughout this confusing period so please do not hesitate phone if it is thought we can be of help to you.

None of us finds the restrictions that are being imposed on us easy. But we do talk a lot as Catholics about the "*common good*" and now is the time to give fresh meaning to that concept. Saint Benedict reminds us that obedience to our ecclesial superiors is obedience to God: "*this obedience itself will then be acceptable to God and pleasing to men, if what is commanded be not done timorously, or tardily, or tepidly, not with murmuring or the raising of objections. For the obedience given to superiors is given to God*".

In a recent statement, the bishops of Ireland challenge us to put our reaction into a fuller context: "*as people of faith we are called to face the fears of this moment with a courage not our own and with a generous heart. God is with his people in good times and bad. In our hour of trial Jesus calls on us, his followers, to serve the common good by taking responsibility for each other and to prioritise the most vulnerable in our community ahead of our individual wants and aspirations. At this time our first concern has to be for the elderly, the ill and those with underlying medical conditions*".

While in this unprecedented time we must act responsibly, taking the necessary precautions for our own well-being as well as that of our neighbours, we do have an opportunity and a responsibility to act as Christians. Jesus became incarnate to reveal the nature of God as a trinity of love. All around us people are alarmed and fearful – the blogosphere is full of dire warnings (and much fake news). – we need to be realistic but steady in the current atmosphere, holding out our deepest conviction as expressed by Saint Paul at the end of his Letter to the Ephesians:

*"this, then, is what I pray, kneeling before the Father, from whom every family, whether spiritual or natural, takes its name. Out of his infinite glory, may he give you the power, through his Spirit, for your hidden self to grow strong, so that Christ may live in your hearts through faith, and then planted in love and built on love you will, with all the saints, have strength to grasp the breadth and the length, the height and the depth, until knowing the love of Christ, which is beyond all knowledge, you are filled with the utter fullness of God. Glory be to him whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine; glory be to him from generation to generation in the Church and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever"*.

**Christopher Colven**

The Cardinal has prepared a Pastoral letter for this weekend (copies are available at the back of church). He concludes by saying:-

"We know that this time of crisis is not going to be brief.

We are involved in a lengthy battle.

We encourage each other. We pray for each other.

Together we turn to Mary for her special protection, especially on 29 March when again, in keeping with our ancient tradition, we offer ourselves and our country to her, as our gift, and seeking her protection.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, pray for us

Mary, Mother of Sorrows, pray for us

Mary, Mother of Joys, pray for us. **Amen.**