

# OUR MOST HOLY REDEEMER AND ST THOMAS MORE

LETTER TO PARISHIONERS

Sunday, 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2020

**Thank you.** I want to begin by thanking everyone who has sent an email, card or letter over the past few weeks. It has been good to keep in touch with parishioners. Furthermore, I am particularly grateful to those who have been able to keep up their standing orders or weekly offering to the parish. Though ways have been sought to reduce parish expenses, as you know, the bills still come in.

**The Pope's Prayer.** Along with this letter I am sending you the text of a prayer Pope Francis has written for us to use during the pandemic. The original text was in Italian and there are a couple of references which are particularly Roman. The pope first used this prayer during a video message on 11 March, seeking the intercession of Our Lady "dell Divino Amore". He has made many visits to her shrine on the outskirts of Rome, the "Santuario della Madonna del Divino Amore". In this prayer Pope Francis is following the example of Pope Pius XII, who at the outbreak of World War II there entrusted Rome to the protection of Our Lady and then, at the end of the war, attributed Rome's survival almost unscathed to that protection. Also in the prayer is a reference to another Marian devotion: "Salus Populi Romani", in Italian "Salvezza del popolo romano". This title does not translate easily into English as the Latin "salus" combines concepts which in English we would distinguish, i.e. "health" and "salvation". (There is a good Wikipedia article on the icon "Salus Populi Romani".) Pope Francis visited this shrine at the Basilica of St Mary Major when he walked alone through the streets of Rome on 15 March this year.

**Good Shepherd Sunday.** This Sunday, the Fourth Sunday of Easter, is traditionally known as "Good Shepherd Sunday", as the gospel in which Jesus likens himself to a good shepherd was read at Mass. It is a day when we are asked to pray for all those who exercise a priestly role in the Church. We must think first of all of Pope Francis and the way he has sought to encourage us to remain faithful disciples even if we cannot celebrate the sacraments as we would like to. Similarly Cardinal Vincent Nichols and his auxiliary bishops have been continuing similar work in this diocese. With the diocesan seminary, Allen Hall, in our parish we should include the staff and the seminarians in these prayers. In past years this Sunday would have been the day for our collection for the Priests Training Fund, but that has been postponed this year until September.

**Screen Time.** I know some of us find that we are spending too much time in front of a screen, but <https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/m00ohmvf/priest-school> is something different, and I hope you will find it interesting.

Please keep praying for all those affected by the coronavirus, directly or indirectly.

Canon Paschal Ryan

paschalryan@rcdow.org.uk