



St Theresa's Presbytery
High Lane
Stansted Mountfitchet
CM24 8LQ

Monday of Second Week of Easter 2020

Dear Friends

Christ Is Risen! Alleluia!

We continue with our Easter journey into its second week. We are still in lockdown and will be for some time, at least another few weeks, and maybe longer. I have been reflecting on the wonderful things that have been happening in the parish over this strange period. Last week I thanked many of the people responsible for keeping us together and keeping the Church actively engaged with our mission of spreading the Gospel. Together, we have met the challenge of the Corona Virus lockdown and overcome it. Looking round at other parishes in the deanery and the wider diocese, I can say that our attempt has been among the best responses that have been made, for this we should be thankful and proud of our achievements.

But one area that I think we need to address as a matter of some urgency is our finances. As your priest I am always in awe of the generosity of parishioners. Your generous contributions meant that before the lockdown the parish was on a fairly secure financial footing, and it needs to be again as we face an uncertain future. I know that the financial security of many families and individuals has taken a considerable knock during this crisis. Some people have lost their jobs, and many have been furloughed meaning that they retain employment, but their incomes are considerably reduced. This will inevitably mean that the finances of the parish will also be reduced for the present and for the future too. This is what is happening right now - our income has been greatly reduced, yet our outgoings have remained largely the same. This is mainly because of the way that you generously give your money, many parishioners have been used to making a financial contribution by placing a cash donation on the collection plate at Mass, and sadly this cannot now happen. Some people had already switched to making a regular donation through their bank and their donations have largely continued, and for that I am very grateful. What I am asking now is for your generosity to continue, and perhaps for you to change the way that you make your donation to the running of the parish if you normally give cash.

There are different ways to give:

1. You can set up a weekly or monthly standing order with your bank over the phone or electronically. Our account details are:
Sort Code: 40-13-22
Account Number: 41017519
Account name: Catholic Church Stansted St Therasas

2. The diocese has set up a way of donating electronically. You can do this by following the instructions on the parish website (<https://www.sttheresastansted.org/donations/>), and we can provide expert help with this if you let me know you are experiencing any difficulty.
3. We can also accept cheques that you can post to the presbytery but made out to the parish please: St Theresa Catholic Church Stansted.

Obviously sending cash via the post is not a good idea as it could go missing and we would prefer not to have to count large amounts of cash with the danger of infection.

Could I also ask those who are **UK tax payers to consider Gift Aiding** your donation. The parish does not need to know any of your financial details, but we can claim back from the UK government 25% of your donation to the Church. So, for every £1.00 you give we can claim an additional 25 pence making your total donation £1.25. Further details of Gift Aid can be obtained by emailing Angelo at stansted-giftaid@dioceseofbrentwood.org

Finally, can I ask that if you are in a position to increase your offering, even by a small amount, to do so. This will help offset the reduction in our giving. Again, thank you so much for considering this action.

If we can address these financial difficulties in the way that we have addressed the problem of being the Church in an age of lockdown, I believe that we can thrive as we face the future together. Our response to the lockdown as a Parish has been exemplary, I am sure that this will be recognised by the hierarchy of the Church when responses to the pandemic are examined. I know that many parishes in the deanery and in the wider diocese have been following what we have been doing and some have sought to implement our great ideas. As I have said above, we should be thankful for what we have achieved and justifiably proud of our collected efforts.

We are an Easter people and Alleluia is our song!

With my love and blessing

Fr Lee