



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

The Feast of SS John Fisher and Thomas More 2020

Dear Friends

Well what a week! I would like to say a huge thank you to all those who made it possible for the church to open for private prayer. Thanks to the hard work of those who got the church ready last weekend, printing notices, putting up hand gel dispensers, putting up posters and labelling benches, and those who volunteered as stewards and as cleaners; we managed to open on the first possible day of opening and we are one of the few churches in the diocese to open seven days a week. I am so pleased to see so many people coming into church to pray. Thank you too to all those who have been expressing thanks for all that we have been doing as a Parish. This is very much a team effort and we have pulled together to make this happen in a most wonderful way.

In very old churches you will often see plaques placed there memorializing some great figures of the past, and you will invariably see on these plaques the letters in capitals ADMG. You may have wondered what these letters mean. Well they stand for the Latin motto *Ad Majorem Dei Gloriam* – 'for the greater glory of God'. This means that the individuals memorialized wish the glory of their achievements to be attributed to God rather than themselves. That is what we have done this week, and what we will continue to do, not to feel proud of our achievements for ourselves, but to do what we do to bring glory to God.

So many people have been asking when the church might be open for public Mass again. My answer has been the same, I really have no idea, my speculations will be as accurate as yours in regard to this. I hope and pray that it might be soon, but it is

really too hard to speculate when there is so much we don't know. I think that we should be heartened that the threatened spike following the public demonstrations in London and in major cities around the country has not happened. We witnessed on the news that there was not much in the way of social distancing happening at these demonstrations and yet infection rates have not gone through the roof some three weeks following the first large demonstration. I am not party to the ongoing discussions between faith groups and HM Government in regard to when public worship might be resumed, but what does seem evident is that there are not many people in Government who are actually practicing members of faith communities. If there were we would have a loud voice at the heart of government demanding a set date for resuming public worship because these things really do matter. Rest assured, when such a date is set, I am determined, with your help, to resume public Masses on the day that it is actually allowed, and every day following. What a wonderful day that will be. Pray for it to be soon, and please pray hard.

People have also asked about live-streaming Masses and if this will continue after we are allowed back to public worship. Can I reassure everyone that this is going to continue for the very long term. There are many in our community who will want to continue to access the Mass, but for many reasons will not feel able to come out of lockdown any time soon. The Mass is for everyone and will continued to be live streamed from St Theresa's for those who for whatever reason cannot attend in person. At the moment the set up is a bit 'heath robinson' but, when the patron saint of technology is praying for us, it works well. We will need to invest in a permanent solution in the long term, but that is for another time.

Do please continue to pray for each other, be assured of my prayers for all of you, and please pray for me and for Deacon Des too.

With my love and blessing

Fr Lee