

**The Parishes of
St. Joseph's, BATLEY CARR
&
Our Lady & St. Paulinus, DEWSBURY
DIOCESE OF LEEDS
Registered Charity no: 249404**

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Lent 2021

Dear Friends and Parishioners,

These few words are for all and meant especially for those who feel that could do with a little more support at this time. Thanks to so many of you who have kept in touch with messages, phone calls and encouragement. Your care shows we can all be messengers of God's love to others.

The last twelve months have been really challenging and stressful. There have been upheavals to our routine, education and work. We haven't been able to meet relatives and friends or go where we like when we need to or want to. A number have been really ill either with COVID 19 or through another illness or condition. We have lost relatives, friends and parishioners. Our loss may be the hardest thing for us to cope with. All this saps our energy. How many of us feel spiritually and emotionally wrung out?

Some worry about loosing their jobs whilst others have been working flat out. You may be are a carer, nurse, cleaner or pharmacist in a residential home or hospital. Perhaps you deliver to keep supermarkets stocked or work in an office to keep things running smoothly. You may teach or keep schools safe. As a mum or dad you may now be an expert home schooler.

The good news is that hope is on the horizon, relief on the way. Soon we should be more free to move about and meet up rather than just chat through a screen or phone. Our thanks are due to all those who are helping us through and can carry those who need it.

So many of us have stepped up finding answers to the challenge of the virus so we can find a way to get through. If you have been shielding and not been able to get out and help shoulder the load, thank you for the times that you are keeping others in prayer. This spiritual boost you give to the parish offers a whole new dimension to how we care for each other.

All year Mass has been celebrated in both St. Paulinus and St. Joseph's. After a few weeks praying on my own, believe me it was a joy to open the doors again and it is wonderful to see people coming back to worship together. As the weeks pass I really hope that more people will have the confidence to come to the celebrations in both churches. No one is forgotten in the church prayers, no matter how cut off, lonely or bored they might feel.

Up to press it has been difficult to visit homes with Holy Communion. That may change soon. Please get in touch and we can arrange this when it's allowed. Please also let me know about anyone in hospital. I might be able to visit, put them on the newsletter, pray for them and light a candle.

If you cannot get to church yet, feel free to ask for a Mass to be celebrated for you or your family. Perhaps you want someone to light a candle in church for you. It will be my pleasure to join you in prayer.

It will be a joy to celebrate baptisms with parents and families and later the sacraments of Confirmation and First Communion. Every one of us is included in our community. No exceptions. If you want to be accepted as a member of God's family, you are welcome.

This season of Lent is a preparation for the joy of Easter. Let us hope for a wonderful celebration this year. Please keep safe and secure and know that the Lord, the Giver of Life is always very near to you and your family.

Every Blessing,

Rev. Jonathan Hart