



**A message from the Bishop to the people of the Diocese during the public health crisis,
26th April 2020**

I send this short message to you as we continue to walk day by day through this crisis. I know that tens of thousands have been able to join me in the Cathedral via livestream, yet I am conscious that I have not been able to speak personally to many others in the Diocese. I want to assure you, whether you find yourself today in our hospitals and care homes; in self-isolation at home; or living amidst the many restrictions of this time, that we remain united in prayer. Be assured that you have a place in my prayer every day.

I particularly want to thank your priests and deacons who have continued to serve in so many generous ways, not least in the care of the sick and dying and above all by the daily offering of the Mass celebrated alone. I know you are held in their daily prayer. I also want to record our gratitude at this moment in history to all the doctors, nurses, care workers, cleaners, our police and shop workers and all of the essential services together with so many volunteers. I know many others are praying and interceding hidden from human sight. Pope Francis reminds us, it is all of you who are quietly and heroically writing the story of this time.ⁱ

In the Gospel, we hear how even in the most desolate and bewildering moments, the Risen Jesus walks with us even when we fail to recognise Him. He allows our hearts to once more burn within us and inspires the prayer, "Stay with us, Lord Jesus." I hope the re-opening of our churches will not be too long delayed so that we can recognise Jesus Himself as the first disciples recognised Him in the breaking of the bread – in the mystery of the Holy Eucharist with all joy renewed.

In the meantime, let us continue to pray wherever we find ourselves: Stay with us, Lord Jesus as we walk through these days.

May God bless you and all your loved ones,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

ⁱ Cf. Urbi et Orbi Message 27th March 2020