

IF I CAN'T GET TO MASS IN A TIME OF SICKNESS

The covid-19 is just one reason why we might not be able to get to church even though we want to. Christians should be in church every Sunday but by reason of sickness or distance or other pressing need, e.g., a dying relative, it may not be possible.

During an epidemic we may be prevented from coming to church at all during an extended time. This note helps us with some prayers we might make. A time of epidemic is one where we should also keep an eye out for our neighbours. If you don't know your neighbours and would like some support, please contact Fr Owen or Fr Michael via the website. In the event that neither clergy is well, you may need to see what advice is available on the parish website – www.stgabrielspimlico.com.

The Church of England website - www.churchofengland.org/prayer-and-worship - offers a range of resources for daily prayers or you may have your own books such as the Book of Common Prayer or the Manual of Catholic Devotion.

Spiritual Communion

If you cannot receive Holy Communion, you can make the Act of Spiritual Communion, either the one given below or another, similar one. Spiritual Communion is the heartfelt desire to receive Our Lord, even when we are unable because of the distance or for some other reason. This desire to receive him through spiritual Communion is an act of love; the wish to live constantly in his presence. "The effects of the sacrament can be received by desire. Although in such case the sacrament is not received physically... nevertheless the actual reception of the sacrament itself brings with it fuller effect than receiving it through desire alone" (St Thomas Aquinas).

A Service

The following is a set of prayers which may be said in whole and in part when you would like to be at Mass but can't. The Collect and readings may be found at Church of England website. You can add to the prayers below with your own favourite prayers or the ones you feel you need to say.

Preparation and confession

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

I confess to almighty God,
and to you, my brothers and sisters,
that I have sinned greatly,
in my in my thoughts and in my words,
in what I have done and in what I have failed to do;
through my fault, through my fault,
through my own most grievous fault;
therefore I ask blessed Mary, ever virgin,
all the angels and saints,
and you, my brothers and sisters,
to pray for me to the Lord our God.

May almighty God have mercy on us, forgive us our sins, and bring us to everlasting life.

The Collect

You may read one or more of the day's readings.

Say your own private prayers and the 'Our Father.'

Make an act of Spiritual Communion using one of the prayers below.

Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that You are truly present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as being already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen. (St Alphonsus Liguori)

I wish my Lord to receive you with the purity, humility and devotion with which your most holy mother received you; with the spirit and fervour of the saints.

Give me, good Lord, a full faith, a firm hope, and a fervent charity, a love to the good Lord incomparable above the love to myself; and that I love nothing to Thy displeasure, but everything in an order to Thee. And give me warmth, delight, and quickness in thinking upon Thee. And give me Thy grace to long for Thine holy sacraments, and specially to rejoice in the presence of Thy very blessed body, sweet Saviour Christ, in the holy sacrament of the altar, and duly to thank Thee for Thy gracious visitation therewith, and at that high memorial with tender compassion to remember and consider Thy most bitter passion. (St Thomas More)

Thanksgiving

My good Jesus, I thank you with all my heart. How good, how kind you are to me. Blessed be Jesus in the most holy Sacrament of the Altar.

Conclusion

May the Lord bless us and keep us in everlasting life. Amen.

If I want to pray more?

The Church of England website gives resources for Morning and Evening Prayer as does www.universalis.com which also has the Mass readings.

