

Weekly Newsletter During the Covid-19 Pandemic 21st June 2020

Joint Parishes of St Joseph's and St Wilfrid's Gateshead

Parish Priest Canon Michael Brown

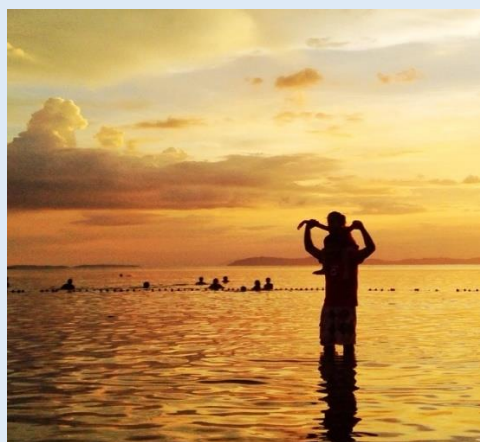
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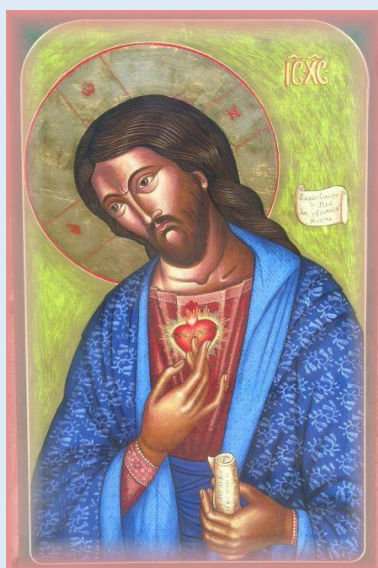
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A Very Happy Father's Day to All Fathers and to Canon Michael Brown Father to Our Parish family



Most Sacred Heart of Jesus



The devotion to the Sacred Heart is one of the most widely practised and well-known Catholic devotions, wherein the heart of Jesus is viewed as a symbol of God's boundless and passionate love for mankind. The heart has always been seen as the centre or essence of a person, (the heart of the matter, you are my heart, take it to heart etc) and the wellspring of our emotional lives and love.

Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is devotion to Jesus Christ Himself, but in a particular way of meditating on His interior life and on His threefold love - His divine love, His burning love which feeds human will, and His sensible love that affects His interior life.

The Friday which follows the second Sunday After Pentecost is the Feast of the Sacred Heart, many Catholics prepare for this Feast by beginning a Novena to the Sacred Heart on the Feast of Corpus Christi, which is the Thursday of the week before. On the Feast of the Sacred Heart itself, we can gain a plenary indulgence by making an Act of Reparation to the Sacred Heart.

From the earliest days of the church the mysteries of blood and water flowing from Christ's open side, have been meditated upon and it is in the eleventh and twelfth centuries that we find the first unmistakable indications of devotion to the Sacred Heart.

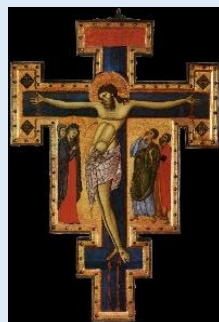
General devotion began in the Benedictine and Cistercian Monasteries of the time, especially in response to the devotion of St Gertrude the Great, but the popularization of devotions began with St Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690) when she had a series of visions of Christ as she prayed before the Blessed Sacrament. She wrote "He disclosed to me the marvels of His love and the inexplicable secrets of His Sacred Heart", during the visions Christ emphasised to St Margaret, His love and His woundedness caused by man's indifference to this love. He promised that, in response to those who consecrate themselves and make reparations to His Sacred Heart, that:

- He will give them all the graces necessary in their state of life
 - He will establish peace in their homes
 - He will comfort them in all their afflictions
- He will secure refuge during life, and above all, in death
- He will bestow abundant blessings upon all their undertakings

- Sinners will find in His heart the source and infinite ocean of mercy
 - Lukewarm souls shall become fervent
 - Fervent souls shall quickly mount to high perfection
- He will bless every place in which an image of His Heart is exposed and honoured
 - He will give to Priests the gift of touching the most hardened hearts
- Those who shall promote this devotion shall have their names written in His Heart
- In the excessive mercy of His Heart that His all-powerful love will grant to all those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in His disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. His Divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

The Heart of Jesus, pure and tender, feels all human emotions more intensely and yet is not ruled by them. His Sacred Heart is not hardened or cold like our own, and so the feelings He experiences are powerful and raw: love, anger, joy, pity, solace, grief. When Jesus faced His crucifixion and brutal death, He knew that this was the Father's will for the salvation of the world, but that doesn't mean that He didn't feel distressed or afraid or angry about what was to come - in fact, he felt everything more distinctly, and yet He was able to feel those emotions without allowing them to dictate His actions. Jesus stayed the course and persevered for our sake, even as His Heart was filled with dread. Sometimes when our emotions distract us from carrying out our plans, we try to numb our hearts and stop them feeling anything at all. But our hearts are a gift, to be nurtured and cherished, and if we lose touch with them, we will find ourselves without meaning or purpose. So how can we persevere in God's will as Jesus did without making ourselves numb to those inner cries of joy and anguish? Only when we connect to the Sacred Heart of Jesus will we perceive the immense graces which come from being in tune with our emotions and aware of how God formed our hearts. They are a compass for us as we discern His plans and seek to understand who He created us to be. We will see the beauty of our human emotions, even when they make it harder for us to do what is right. We will find mysterious grace of sharing in Jesus' sorrow, knowing that He walks along side us in our pain. We will remember His Passion amidst our greatest joys and His resurrection amid our deepest sorrows, and everything will be offered up to Him. Jesus will grant us the Heavenly perspective that will allow us to press onward through all the ups and downs of this life, knowing that this is not the end. Jesus invite each of us into His Sacred Heart, He has sacrificed for our redemption and cleansed us through Baptism, that we might enter His love and not be destroyed by the flames.

May we offer Him our whole heart, holding nothing back, so that He might transform it like unto His own.



Today is Twelfth Sunday in ordinary time

(OF) Readings for today are: -

First Reading	Jeremiah 20: 10-13
Responsorial Psalm	Psalm 69: 8-10,14,17,33-35
Second Reading	Romans 5: 12-15
Alleluia	John 15: 26, 27
Gospel	Matthew 10: 26-33

“Do Not Be Afraid”

Jesus tells us we are to proclaim His word and live lives as His followers out in the open, He warns that we will be scorned, possibly hurt physically, some even killed, when we live as He asks us to, spreading His message through word and deed. Jesus tells his disciples not to fear those who can kill the body for He has shown through His resurrection that we are saved, the only fear we ought to have is fear of eternal separation from Our Father in Heaven.

Fear destroys the adventure of life, it cripples us, disabling us from living life to the full, and fulfilling God's plans for us. Anxiety is today's illness; it spreads over everything we think and do. Jesus is asking us to have faith in Him, to know that whatever happens to us here on earth He is aware of and whenever we act in His name it is noted, just as we proclaim Him on earth so too will He stand by us in Heaven.

Jesus never promises that our lives will be free from pain or worries, the storms are many as we search for what is worthwhile in a constantly changing and challenging world, people are confused and bewildered, but in spite of all these difficulties we Christians must remain unafraid and full of hope, because the Word of God is present in the Church, in the Scriptures and in the Bread of Life; “I am with you always”, we have the remedy to cast out fear and anxiety, “Faith”. The word ‘faith’ used in the Scriptures means ‘trust’, believing in His power to act on our behalf, to give us the courage to stand up for His Truth in a world that appears mostly against it.

Third Sunday After Pentecost
(E) Readings for today are: -

Introit	Psalm 24: 16-18
Epistle 1	Peter 5: 6-11
Gradual	Psalm 54: 23, 17, 19
Gospel	Luke 15: 1- 10

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:1-10)

None of us can live our lives without being criticised at some point, either for something we have done or fail to do, sometimes the criticism may be fair and sometimes unfair, one cannot avoid criticism. Criticism can bring out the best or the worst in a person depending upon how they manage their response. When Jesus is criticised for mixing with tax collectors and sinners, He responds with these two wonderful parables, the lost coin, the lost sheep.

It all began with muttering, the Pharisees and their cohorts were complaining that Jesus wasn't attracting 'the right sort'; those interested in debating Religious things, not the regular Synagogue attendees, but a different crowd altogether, a type of person with whom the Pharisees disliked rubbing shoulders, they considered them to be unclean and to associate with them would bring uncleanness upon themselves. However, if they wanted to listen to what Jesus had to say they were forced to mix with those people they disliked, it wasn't comfortable, and this reflected upon Jesus.

The religious elite followed the Rabbinical dictum: "Let not a man associate with the wicked, not even to bring him to the law". Jesus does not just tolerate those unwelcomed by the Pharisees, He actively seeks them out, welcomes them and eats with them, inviting them to share in all He has to give, he sees they are ready to listen and learn, therefore He really does not mind the criticism being levelled at Him, instead He faces it with gentleness, assurance and positivity, using parables to teach the love of His father.

We are all very familiar with the parable of the lost sheep, perhaps a little less so with that of the lost coin, but in essence they hold the same message; seeking out something important to us and rejoicing at its discovery or our reunion with it.

"Then he calls his friends and neighbours together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.' I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner

who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent."

The lost sheep and the lost coin represent the sinner who has lost his way and the remaining sheep and coins represent the righteous. This is how Jesus responds to the criticism, you are happy for all your sheep, and happy to have all your coins, but it is when one is threatened or injured that you search and search until you find it, then you are so delighted that you want to share the joy with others. Jesus takes this parable from real life scenario and turns it into a spiritual application. God rejoices, angels rejoice, when one sinner repents, there is a celebration for every victory, for every person who is in jeopardy and rescued. Jesus redemption is no mass salvation, but one-by-one, person-by-person, name-by-name. To emphasise His point, for anyone still in any doubt about the nature of God's love and forgiveness for all, Jesus tells a companion parable about a woman who misplaces one coin and searches until she finds it, rejoicing at its return in the same way as the shepherd with his sheep. How we view these parables has a lot to do with how we view the Church's mission; it is our job to take care of the needs of the righteous who have gathered in our congregations, but it is also imperative that we seek out those who have fallen by the wayside; those who drop from regular Mass attendance, the teenagers who would rather play football or drink in the parks, the atheists who have turned away from God, the Muslims who think they already know. Who goes out to search for these lost sheep until they are found and brought home? Who asks the reason for their straying and tries to help them find the way again? Who is seeking the lost? Have we become like the pharisees- a bit superior, set in our ways and unwilling to reach out to those we consider 'unclean' or 'unwholesome'? These parables go far beyond teaching us of God's forgiveness, they reveal a God who is a searching, protective parent; going out of His way to find the lost souls and rejoicing when He finds them. An essential part of God's character is about extending mercy to the undeserving, not only those who happen to stumble upon it, but an active programme of seeking out the hurting and oppressed, the blind and the imprisoned. This is the message of the Cross; it is not a passive love but an active one. As disciples of Jesus it is our duty to become like our Master, we need to have the same passion as He; seeking out the lost, searching until we find them and upon doing so, rejoicing with both with and for them, loudly and passionately. We too must become searchers, rescuers and to rejoice in each lost soul found.



Father, sometimes I take you for granted. Sometimes I forget how you brought me to faith. Sometimes I forget to seek and search. Sometimes I am too comfortable, too busy, too full of excuses to be like you. To put myself out to do what you are doing. Forgive me. Renew and restore in me your passion for the lost. In Jesus' sacred name, I pray. Amen.

An Apology

To all those who feel I have been anything other than helpful, informative, and supportive during this time of great stress I apologise. To anyone who feels I have in some way been obstructive or have prevented them from having the comfort of their Parish Priest, I am deeply sorry. My intentions have only been good, but as my Grandfather use to say - "The road to hell is paved with good intentions" I hope you will forgive me. Shauna Devitt

Opening Our Churches

The following 'pilot Churches' in the Diocese are now open for private prayer, please consult the websites/newsletters/face-book pages of these parishes for further information about times and days of opening

(please note no young person under age 16 may attend unaccompanied)

- St Aidan's, Ashington
- St Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle
 - St Patrick's, Consett
 - St Mary's Sunderland

The opening of our churches is no easy task and our Priests have been given incredibly detailed and complex guidance notes on how safe opening can begin to take place.

Thank You to all those who have volunteered to help with cleaning and stewardship, Canon Brown will be in touch regarding the commencement of these roles; however, there are several steps which need to be taken prior to this.

If you would like to volunteer in any way, please email

shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk

OR

michaelbrown6@btconnect.com

giving your name, contact details, your availability (days, times etc), and what role you are prepared to undertake.

PLEASE NOTE:

NO-ONE OVER AGE 70 or WITH ANY UNDERLYING HEALTH CONDITIONS or if PREGNANT can volunteer - sorry, but this is for your own safety and the protection of the Church which has a 'Duty of Care' to each and every one of us.

It is hoped we will be able to return to Mass at the beginning of July, further information will be shared as soon as it is available.

Your continued patience, support and understanding are very much appreciated, and we ask that you continue to pray for the absolute best decisions to be made.



An Act of Spiritual Communion

When we are unable to receive Holy Communion, it has long been the catholic tradition to make an Act of Spiritual Communion.

St. Thomas Aquinas defined a Spiritual Communion as "an ardent desire to receive Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament and lovingly embrace Him as if we had actually received Him. One composed by St Alphonsus Ligouri in 1870 is: -

"My Jesus, I believe that You are 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 if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen."

Act of Perfect Contrition

When we cannot get to confession the Catholic Church has made provision for our reconciliation with the Father through an Act of Perfect Contrition, Cardinal Vincent Nichols recently spoke these words, "What the Church teaches us, is that God in His mercy, forgives our sins when we are truly sorry for them. And when we turn to Him and express our sorrow in an Act of Contrition, it's called an Act of Perfect Contrition when its focus is on the mercy and the love of God rather than on the burden of our guilt. So to make an act of Perfect Contrition, we simply need to turn to God and be, as it were, overwhelmed by God's mercy, and then express in our own words or in the words of the traditional Act of Contrition, the sorrow we feel for our offences against the goodness of God. When we do that in all sincerity of heart, we may rest assured that God forgives our sins and that we come away from that Act of Perfect Contrition freed from those sins And, as I say, the only thing we have to remember is, when it is possible to make a Confession again, that we mention the grievous sins which were forgiven by this Perfect Act of Contrition."



Thank You

To all those who have continued to make donations to Our Churches throughout the pandemic. Your support and sacrifice are very much appreciated, without your continued financial help our churches would not be able to survive.

If Anyone would like to continue with their weekly donations the details of how to do so are below: -

To donate via bank transfer:

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Gateshead St Wilfrid's

Sort Code 40-34-18

Account Number 01164120

Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle

Gateshead St Joseph's

Sort Code 40-34-18

Account Number 31164066

Please use reference: - Weekly Income

OR

Donate using a cheque made out to either parish

'DHN St Joseph's Gateshead' or 'DHN St Wilfrid's Gateshead'

St Wilfrid's

Ford House

Sunderland Road

Gateshead NE8 3QR

St Joseph's

Presbytery

High West Street

Gateshead NE8 1LX

KEEP YOURSELF UPDATED AND INFORMED

- Parish Website and Facebook pages are updated regularly
- Parish Newsletter is available on our website each week
- Diocesan website www.rcdhn.org.uk
- Bishops' Conference website www.cbcew.org.uk

Keeping us updated with your contact information

During this time of social distancing and self-isolation, Canon Michael Brown has tried to keep in touch with as many parishioners as he can to offer support and comfort. He has been able to do this only with those parishioners for whom he holds up to date contact details.

Please ensure your contact details are correct. Use parish email addresses or telephone to update your information.

Access to the Newsletter

If you know of anyone from either Parish who cannot access this newsletter via the website and would like to receive it by email, please ask them to give their email address to Canon Michael Brown email michaelbrown6@btconnect.com or Shauna Devitt at shaunadevitt@tiscali.co.uk

Diocesan News

Live Streaming of Masses

The following parishes have set up a live stream of Mass. Please visit the links for more details:

St. Mary's Cathedral, Newcastle

[Cathedral's YouTube Channel](#). Each day at 12.00 noon (Sunday at 11.30am) Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and devotions live streamed at 5.00pm each day.

Our Lady of Mercy Parish, Sunderland

[YouTube channel](#). You can also find details and information on their [Facebook page](#).

Billingham, St. Thomas of Canterbury

[Facebook page](#), Mass daily at 12.00 noon, Exposition at 1.00pm and Benediction at 2.00pm.

Chester le Street, St. Cuthbert and Sacriston, St. Bede

A recording of daily Mass via their [Facebook Page](#).

Darlington, St. Augustine's

Sunday Mass at 9.15am via their [Facebook page](#).

St. Mary's, Hexham

Via their [website](#) or [YouTube channel](#). Sunday Mass 10.00am, weekday Mass 6.00pm and Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament Sunday 4.00pm.

St. Paul's, Cramlington

[Facebook Page](#).

Stockton Family Parish

[Facebook Page](#).

Parish of Our Lady Star of the Sea

[Facebook Page](#), Mass daily at 9.30am.

Pope Video

The Pope Video is a monthly video with notes that highlights the Holy Father's monthly intentions for prayer. During this month of May the intention is for Deacons. Follow this link to watch and read. thepopevideo.org

Community Support

Gateshead Council have a dedicated page on their website offering a network of support for those who need help: -

<https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/15181/coronavirus-COVID-19-Community-support>

Or phone 01914333000

Alcoholics Anonymous Call free on 08009177650 or email help@aamail.org

Pastoral Care

As part of the pastoral care of parishioners and others during this time several qualified counsellors and listeners have generously made themselves available to anyone who may be troubled by the negative effect of the situation. These counsellors and listeners can be contacted through St Mary's Cathedral Listening Service on 01912326953

VERY IMPORTANT: European Union Citizens

All EU, EEA and Swiss citizens living in the UK are required by the government to apply through its Settlement Scheme to continue living, working, and accessing services here. The deadline for applications is 30 June 2021. Details and links to the application process can be found at: gov.uk/eusettledstatus. Please bring this to the attention of friends, relatives and fellow parishioners who may need to apply. Assistance for those who may have difficulty applying is available at: gov.uk/help-eu-settlementscheme. The Catholic Church in England and Wales stands in solidarity with all European citizens who have made their homes here. They are a valued part of our parishes, schools, and communities.

DAY for LIFE

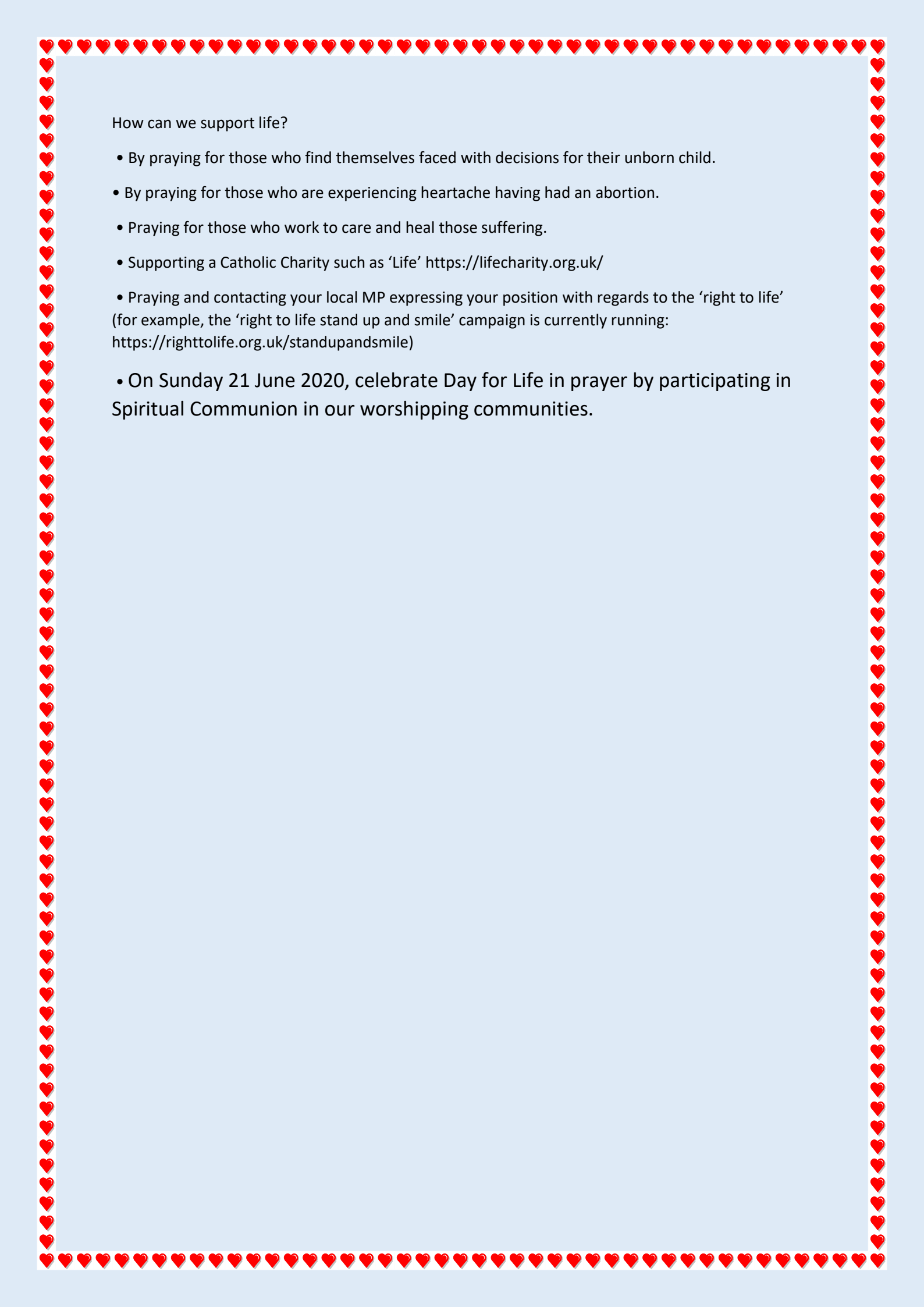
The Holy Father sent the following message – communicated by the Holy See's Secretary of State: "His Holiness Pope Francis sends prayerful good wishes for the celebration of the 2020 Day for Life in England and Wales, Scotland and Ireland. "The theme 'Choose Life' is particularly fitting in this twenty-fifth anniversary year of Saint John Paul II's Encyclical Evangelium Vitae, which summoned the entire Church to be 'a people of life and for life' (n: 78).

"In these days when our world faces the challenges of the coronavirus pandemic, the Holy Father asks the faithful to pray for all those families, volunteers and healthcare professionals committed, often heroically, to the care and healing of the suffering, and for all those who, amid the continuing 'pandemic' of poverty and war, work to uphold the God-given value and dignity of every human person.

"It is his hope that amid the present crisis, all will be led to a greater appreciation of the moral imperative to build a 'culture of life' marked by ever greater concern for nurturing, protecting and promoting the integral welfare of all God's children, beginning with the most vulnerable. With these sentiments, the Holy Father gives the assurance of his closeness in prayer and cordially imparts his Apostolic Blessing as a pledge of joy and peace in the Lord." <https://www.cbcew.org.uk/papal-message-day-for-life-2020/>

Bishop John Sherrington, the Lead Bishop for Life Issues, says: "This year, the Day for Life, message emphasises the care of the unborn child and pregnant women. We pray that minds and hearts may be opened to the sheer gift and wonder of every new life in the womb and thank those who work ceaselessly to protect this life more fully by legislation. We also draw attention to the hope and healing women and men can experience following the trauma of abortion."

"There are resources available on the Day for Life website (<http://www.dayforlife.org>) which offer prayers, information about the support which is available for pregnant women and their children, and hopeful testimonies from moving experiences at Rachel's Vineyard, a retreat for women who have had abortions and people who have been hurt or affected by abortion. We hear of the power of God's mercy.'



How can we support life?

- By praying for those who find themselves faced with decisions for their unborn child.
- By praying for those who are experiencing heartache having had an abortion.
- Praying for those who work to care and heal those suffering.
- Supporting a Catholic Charity such as 'Life' <https://lifecharity.org.uk/>
- Praying and contacting your local MP expressing your position with regards to the 'right to life' (for example, the 'right to life stand up and smile' campaign is currently running: <https://righttolife.org.uk/standupandsmile>)
- On Sunday 21 June 2020, celebrate Day for Life in prayer by participating in Spiritual Communion in our worshipping communities.