

Transcript – Week 1 Message from Bishop Richard

Hello everyone. This is going to be the first of a weekly video I'm going to send out while the coronavirus crisis continues. I'm conscious this isn't an ideal start to my ministry as your Bishop. On Saturday I will be licenced and installed in the Cathedral as the 106th Bishop of Hereford. Of necessity this will be influenced by only a few people, but I hope you'll be able to share the prayers and listen to my inaugural sermon at a later date online. My relationship with you as Bishop is a key part of diocesan life. I want to assure you of my personal support and prayers for all that you are doing in these challenging times for our nation.

I'm sure you will understand the overriding need to keep safe and follow the best advice offered by the NHS and Government. Its particularly important that those of you identified as being in a high-risk category should follow the suggested advice. I realise that your instinct will be to want to be out and about supporting and providing for the needs of others. I'd urge you to consider your own health and where appropriate stay at home.

When I was a Diocesan Mission Advisor, one of the questions I would ask churches on Vision days was, "If you had no church building, and you couldn't meet on Sundays, what would be left." Well, now is the time when we are going to have to ask that question of ourselves in our churches. The letter from the Archbishops yesterday has challenged us all to develop different ways of being church in these coming days.

There is much that we can do to continue pastoral contact with folk through telephone, email and social media. This crisis has bought out the best of us and many people have set up forums to try to help neighbours, particularly the vulnerable and elderly. Do participate in those locally and if such things don't exist yet consider whether your church could be a hub for something. However, many people are also giving in to anxiety – as manifested in the stock piling of food and sharing wild uncorroborated stories about the virus on social media. It amazes me how many people seem to have connections with well known virologists!! Let's be a calming, hopeful and rational presence in the midst of all of this.



We'll continue to send out daily updates by email and on the web. The rhythm of daily prayer is continuing in the Cathedral. I shall be saying the Office at 8 and 5 every day – do join me at that time. We'll also put up links to resources for prayer and suggestions for pastoral care.

We believe that Jesus Christ is risen from the dead and therefore in all circumstances we have hope.

Paul as he reflects on his trial says this.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So, we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

Blessings

+Richard