



THE REVD. DAVID CHESTERS, OBE

Until 2020, only once in its very long history has St John's been closed to the faithful on the instructions of authority. (I am ignoring the temporary closure immediately following the Reformation and the period under Edward VI when the Crown stole the treasures of the Church, and the mis-use of the Church by the Parliamentary soldiers who used it as their Headquarters and Battery during the siege of Chester in 1646.

The earlier closure had nothing to do with plague and pestilence, but was purely political (*St John's had remained open during the Black Death in 1348 and subsequent plagues*). On 23 March 1208 the English and Welsh Bishops under the orders of Pope Innocent III put England and Wales under a General Interdict. This Interdict meant that the Sacraments were forbidden, attendance at Mass was forbidden, burials in consecrated ground were not allowed, in other words England and Wales were without the benefits of 'Holy Mother Church' because the Pope and King John could not agree as to who should be Archbishop of Canterbury. The Pope's answer was of course an absolute disgrace, but then he was known as a megalomaniac and King John just liked to stir up trouble!

The closure of Churches, Synagogues, Mosques and other places of Worship was based on an assessment of how the COVID 19 plaque was spread and it therefore became more understandable, but it denied a large section of the population of all faiths the consolation of a place of Worship. It later became a bit nonsensical when clergy were forbidden to pray in their own Churches which remained closed.

This Parish took the step of videoing all our services and setting up a YouTube Channel (St John the Baptist Chester and on this website). I felt that it was important, very important, to make the faith of Christ available though worship, even if I was the only one allowed to be present. St John's is a liberal Catholic Church in the centre of the Anglican Tradition, where the central act of Worship is the Holy Eucharist (The Parish Mass).

For me as the Rector of this Parish it has been heart-breaking that I could not celebrate the Eucharist for my people, take the Sacrament to their homes or visit them in hospital. I wasn't allowed to Baptise, Marry or conduct large funerals, but hopefully we can begin to see things slowly, very slowly get back to normal. As Churchill said.... This is not the beginning of the end, but the end of the beginning.

We must all hope and pray not only for those throughout the world who have been affected by COVID 19, but for all those people in the NHS, Pharmacies, Shops, those who deliver our milk and Post, collect our refuse etc. Let us give

worship and to ordinary visitors.

Services are as follows:

Sunday

8.00am

Holy Communion (BCP)

10.00am

Principal Eucharist

Noon

Baptisms

6.30pm

Evensong (Compline last Sunday
of the month)

Wednesday

10.00am

Holy Eucharist

Friday

12.00 noon

Holy Eucharist

For Services on Holy and Saints Days see our Schedule of Services for the month