



Second Sunday after Trinity, 21st June 2020

Dear Friends,

I'm sure that you, like me, were excited by the announcement from the First Minister that our churches can re-open for private prayer. This is an important and decisive step towards emerging from this horrible period. However, I want to urge caution in case there are those of you who think that we have been given the green light to go down to the church on Monday and throw the doors open. Sadly we haven't. In her weekly message to the diocese today Bishop Cherry makes it clear that this is something which the senior team we will be working with us on in the coming weeks and months ahead. In the press release from the Church in Wales to this news it states that 'Churches that can meet the strict safety measures can re-open'. As I mentioned in my sermon last Sunday we are going to be dependent upon the support and good will of able volunteers to meet those strict safety standards, and I know that the wardens are discussing this at the moment to try and plan a way forward. If you think you may be able to help by offering your services to steward and to clean to help us meet those strict safety standards, then please do get in touch with the wardens.

I'm writing this on Friday, which is the solemnity of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus is a means of celebrating a boundless divine love which Jesus embodies in the flesh; a divine love which was poured out on the cross. Jesus' heart was speared with a lance on the cross, and from that earthly seat of divine love the Gospel tells us, came water and blood. Water representing baptism and blood representing the Eucharist: the two dominical sacraments which bind the life of Jesus to the life of the Church. The Church was born at that moment on the Cross and takes its life from that love.

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Our Collect this Sunday reads ‘Lord, you have taught us that all our doings without love are nothing worth.’ As we look towards the possibility of re-opening our buildings let us remember this as a maxim. It is no use us rushing to make something happen and to fail in our duty of love to protect and care for our members and those who come to our churches to encounter that love. Yes, our buildings are important, but the life of the Church is revealed in that love which is revealed in each one of you. Bishop Cherry finishes her weekly message saying ‘Our collect this coming Sunday reminds us that however fervent and well-meaning our planning and activity, they are worth nothing unless they flow out of our love of God and God’s love for us.’

May that love which Christ poured into His Church on the Cross, that emblem of love and suffering, help us to hold together the tension of our pain at our buildings being closed, and in our loving response of lives of service, giving of ourselves to breathe life into those places again.

Every blessing,

Fr Tom