

LET US PRAY FOR AN END TO THE PANDEMIC

The Holy Father has called the Church to pray for an end to the pandemic “Let us call for the end of the pandemic together with the recitation of the Rosary together with shrines all over the world.”

In the United Kingdom we have seen remarkable progress in containing the spread of Covid-19 and can be grateful for the availability of vaccines and the efficiency of their distribution to a large proportion of the population. We know a third wave is likely, even though the people of our country and the most vulnerable now appear to be well-protected. However, the distressing scenes we are witnessing in India reminds us of the urgency of prayer in the face of a continuing pandemic.

POPE FRANCIS’S CALL FOR THE ROSARY IN THE MARIAN MONTH OF MAY

Pope Francis specifically calls for the praying of the Rosary across the world during the month of May. In the Holy Father’s vision this worldwide chain of prayer will proceed from the Marian shrines of the world. Our own national shrine of Our Lady at Walsingham has been given a pre-eminent place following the Vatican on the first day of May. The Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelisation explains, “At the heart of the Holy Father’s wish, the month of May will be dedicated to a marathon of prayer from the theme “From the whole Church the prayer to God went up incessantly” (Acts 12:5). The initiative will involve in a special way all the Sanctuaries of the world, so that they become promoters to the faithful, families and communities of the recitation of the Rosary to invoke an end of the pandemic. Some thirty representative shrines across the world will guide the Marian prayer, which will broadcast live on the official channels of the Holy See at 18.00 (Rome time) every day. Pope Francis will initiate this prayer on May 1 st and bring it to a conclusion on May 31 st .”

A letter from the Apostolic Nuncio to the Bishops of England and Wales reminds us that parishes and communities of every diocese are being called to be part of this spiritual initiative marking the month of May. A chain of prayer will be formed across the world and I would ask you, according to circumstances, to consider arranging at least one occasion to pray the Rosary publicly with the parish in union with Pope Francis. Amid continuing safety restrictions, this might be a livestreamed devotion encouraging people to join from their homes.

The Cathedral will take a special place in this intercessory prayer, with a nationally live-streamed Rosary Hour from 2.00pm to 3.00pm on Sunday 30th May.

THE ROSARY UNITED WITH WALSINGHAM

Walsingham has been chosen to be the Marian Shrine for the first day of Pope Francis's initiative and the praying of the Rosary will continue each day. Monday 24th May named by the Holy Father as the Memoria of Mary, Mother of the Church will a special day for all our schools and youth groups; Saturday 30 th May will be a relay Rosary through all the dioceses of England, Wales and Scotland in which Shrewsbury will take its part at the designated hour; and on Monday 31st May there will be a final Rosary online from Paisley Cathedral at 8.00pm. Link to follow the livestream events: <https://www.churchservices.tv/walsingham>