

Scottish Catholic Observer

Dear Priests of Scotland,

In light of the ongoing coronavirus outbreak and restrictions I'd like to give you an update from the Scottish Catholic Observer and how you can still get the latest news about the Church in Scotland and around the world. Many of you will have received your papers over the last 24 hours and I thank you all deeply for the loyalty you have shown the paper over the years.

The main update is that, given the cancellation of public Mass, this week's edition is free. **There will be no charge, it's on us!** However, I am requesting a huge favour by asking if you could help publicise this to your parishioners and if possible distribute them to the sick, housebound and isolated you will encounter over the next week.

Our subscriptions offer is advertised on this week's front page and we hope that regular readers who have to self-isolate and cannot attend private prayer or Adoration will take out a **subscription priced at £10 for six weeks which will be delivered directly to their door.**

If your parish community is coming together to help those in self-isolation why not pop one of your copies of the SCO through their letterbox. I have no doubt that your parish SSVP, youth groups, Legion of Mary and Caritas pupils will be ready to help the Church if they can. If they are doing extra-ordinary things during these tumultuous times then please let us know about them too, so we can share the positive elements to this crisis.

We have already had advertisers pull from the paper this week. With pilgrimages and events cancelled, this trend will continue as long as the crisis does. With Masses cancelled indefinitely there will be a significant loss at Scotland's only indigenous Catholic newspaper which has operated every week since 1885. Myself and the other three full time staff members at the SCO will give everything we have to keep the paper alive – but need your support.

If you are opening your church for private prayer and Adoration throughout the week, please let people know the paper is still for sale, with this week's edition on us. If you can go one step further and promote the paper online via Facebook, Twitter and other platforms I would greatly appreciate it.

I know this will be an utterly odd situation for you all to be in too. I can't begin to imagine how unusual it must be to celebrate Mass without your people and be assured you are all in my prayers. I'm sure it is everyone's hope that something good can come from this crisis. Perhaps we, as a laity, will begin to appreciate the value of the Church a little more, how much we (unconsciously) rely on it and the nourishment we get from taking part in and receiving the Sacraments.

It will be a very joyous reunion – of that I have no doubt. But for now, I ask once more that you continue to look out for us in these uncertain times.

Yours,

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