



26 March 2020

Official Statement: Good Friday

All Headteachers and governors in Archdiocese of Southwark Roman Catholic schools
CC'd colleagues in Local Authorities

Dear colleagues,

On behalf of Archbishop John, can I again thank you for your extraordinary work and dedicated service in these unprecedented times. We can only begin to imagine how challenging this has been for you all. Please do continue to follow guidance and advice relating to the appropriate arrangements for your staff and pupils.

Some of you have asked what should happen on Good Friday. This is because you are being asked by local authorities to maintain high quality care and supervision for vulnerable children and the children of key workers, who are also tirelessly working through this crisis, during the Easter vacation period.

Normally schools would be closed and Catholics would attend the Good Friday Liturgy and, many, Stations of the Cross at 11:00 or in the evening. This is the Church's most solemn day. However, this year, there is no 'normal'. There will be no public liturgy, so no attendance would be possible. Archbishop John and I have discussed this and propose the following:

- If your school is required to be open on Good Friday for the common or greater good, please keep it open – thank you for supporting the nation's efforts to tackle COVID-19.
- Where possible, please arrange for a live stream of the Good Friday Liturgy to be made available in school. Any activities can be paused to enable staff and pupils to participate as if in a 'narthex'. We will provide, nearer the time, a list of links to places of worship intending to stream their private Liturgy such as the shrine at Walsingham.
- Archbishop John will provide a short video reflection which will focus on the key themes of Good Friday and we encourage you to use this as the day's collective act of worship, separate to the Good Friday Liturgy at 15:00. We will send this to you in due course, and host it on the website.
- Please respect the reasonable requests of any member of staff who holds a deeply held conviction that they should observe Good Friday in a more traditional manner.

We hope this proposal makes it easier for you to plan with your local authorities how best to serve some of the nation's most vulnerable children and those whose work is essential to the care and treatment of the sick and dying.

Holy week

All of the above pre-supposes that your school will have been open during Holy Week, and will be open in Easter Week, to facilitate care for those children who need it. Please apply the same logic to collective acts of worship, as above. We assume you could arrange, for example, for participation in the Chrism Mass on Maundy Thursday, by video link or other online means.

Archbishop John and I both keep you in our thoughts and prayers.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Hughes'.

Dr Simon Hughes
Director of Education