



Nottingham Roman Catholic
Diocesan Education Service

Coronavirus and the 'God Who Speaks'



The God who Speaks Campaign

Who shall separate us from the love of God? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? Romans 8:35 (ESV)

We pray that you, your families, friends and communities are all well and coping at this challenging time.

Pope Francis' Prayer to Mary during the Coronavirus Pandemic

O Mary,
you always shine on our path
as a sign of salvation and of hope.
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick,
who at the cross took part in Jesus' pain, keeping your faith firm.
You, Salvation of the Roman People,
know what we need,
and we are sure you will provide
so that, as in Cana of Galilee,
we may return to joy and to feasting
after this time of trial.
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,
to conform to the will of the Father
and to do as we are told by Jesus,
who has taken upon himself our sufferings
and carried our sorrows
to lead us, through the cross,
to the joy of the resurrection. Amen.

Under your protection, we seek refuge, Holy Mother of God. Do not disdain the entreaties of we who are in trial, but deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.



The God who Speaks Campaign National Planning Team Invitation

We'd like to update you on how we're responding to the present situation, to assure you of our continued campaign momentum, and to ask for your participation in joint discernment.

This global crisis may become the most significant element of our campaign as we reflect on this year's turning point for everyone in England and Wales.

It therefore provides us all with a unique opportunity to:

- a) Listen to the God who Speaks in a profoundly radical way
- b) Deepen our faith in God and in each other through increased Scriptural reflection
- c) Build on our relationships across all dioceses and create a renewed Church community together spiritually and scripturally
- d) Explore, learn and be more creative in the use of all digital media, reach people in new and dynamic ways, and maintain good communication with local Scripture Champions
- e) Enable more Catholics to listen to the God who Speaks throughout the Bible at all times and in all places, and not just in a crisis or in 2020

With these opportunities in mind, we would like to suggest the following between now and Easter Sunday:

For God to speak to us and to enable us to listen deeply at this critical time, we invite all dioceses to begin a focused period of Scripture reflection and prayer for each other beginning on the Feast of the Annunciation – 25 March until Easter Sunday - 12 April.

25 March > Period of discernment>>>	
25 March – 12 April > Daily Prayer with the God who Speaks	13 April – 13 May > Period of feedback and sharing

As England will be re-dedicated to Our Lady on 29 March (30 March for schools), and Mary was the first person to hear the Word and ponder many things in her heart, she remains our perfect model.

Pope Francis in his most recent Scriptural Letter, *Aperuit Illis*, states that Mary not only gave birth to the Word but kept the word in her heart. This idea of *keeping the word in our hearts* no matter where we are or whatever is happening, is central to our campaign.

15. Along our path of welcoming God's word into our hearts, the Mother of the Lord accompanies us. She is the one who was called blessed because she believed in the fulfilment of what the Lord had spoken to her (cf. Lk 1:45). Mary's own beatitude is prior to all the beatitudes proclaimed by Jesus about the poor and those who mourn, the meek, the peacemakers and those who are persecuted, for it is the necessary condition for every other kind of beatitude. The poor are not blessed because they are poor; they become blessed if, like Mary, they believe in the fulfilment of God's word. A great disciple and master of sacred Scripture, Saint Augustine, once wrote: "Someone in the midst of the crowd, seized with enthusiasm, cried out: 'Blessed is the womb that bore you' and Jesus replied, 'Rather, blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it'. As if to say: My mother, whom you call blessed, is indeed blessed, because she keeps the word of God. Not because in her the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, but because she keeps that same word of God by which she was made and which, in her womb, became flesh" (Tractates on the Gospel of John, 10, 3).

Aperuit Illis, Pope Francis – Feast of St Jerome, 30 September, 2019.



The Virgin in Prayer, Sassoferrato, National Gallery, London.

By spending some time each day from **25 March – 12 April** asking God to speak to us more deeply, we're confident that new discernment will begin to emerge for our campaign.

While we are already committed to Lenten reading, prayer and reflection – this isn't designed to be an added burden. We wish to infuse all that we already offer in prayer with an intent to listen to God speak to us all more pro-actively in the light of this new crisis.

Feedback Process

We'd like to welcome feedback about emerging *God who Speaks* themes from 13 April -13 May inclusive. This feedback will shape our next phase with the campaign.

If we trust in God and the Holy Spirit to guide us through this crisis, ask Mary to protect us, and be accompanied by Jesus as he journeys to his death and resurrection, then there will be many fruits for us to share this year and beyond.

25 March > Period of discernment>>>	
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It's important that we do not suggest specific questions for you to answer during this discernment period, rather that we allow God to speak and we make time to listen well.

This feedback can take the form of:

Ideas, comments, key words or sentences, images, music lyrics, short videos or podcasts, short paragraphs and verses that are significant in your discernment.

Please do not send in tracts, sermons, essays or very long reports on what God has said. We want to remain flexible to the overall themes that emerge rather than re-create homilies or spiritual guides at this particular time.

Please email your feedback to Fleur on fleur.dorrell@biblesociety.org.uk from 13 April – 13 May inclusive.

Fleur will collate all the feedback to share with the 2020 Planning Team first. After we've looked at all the feedback, we'll share this information with you promptly. In this way, we'll continue to discern the next stage of our Campaign journey together, and in the light of what God is saying to us all throughout this Coronavirus crisis.

Solo Scripture – the Bible in times of Self-Isolation

Some suggested Scriptural texts for your praying, sharing and discernment

Moses and the Burning Bush	Exodus 3: 1-17
Moses and the 10 Plagues	Exodus 7:14-12:36
Elijah in the cave at Mount Horeb	1 Kings 19: 9-16
Tobit the Exile and Archangel Raphael's revelation	Tobit
Out of the depths I cry to you O Lord	Psalms 130
The Four Servant Songs of Isaiah	Isaiah 42: 1-9 Isaiah 49: 1-13 Isaiah 50: 4-11 Isaiah 52:13—53:12
Jeremiah buys a field.	Jeremiah 32
Ezekiel cast into the cistern and God saves him later	Ezekiel 38-39
The Annunciation to Mary	Luke 1: 26-38
Jesus withdrawals	Matthew 4:1-10 Matthew 14:22-23 Matthew 26:36-46 Mark 1:12-13 Mark 6:45-46 Mark 14: 32-42 Luke 4:1-13 Luke 22:40-46 John 6:15-17
Tearing of the Temple Veil	Matthew 27: 50-52 Mark 15: 37-39 Luke 23: 44-46
The Road to Emmaus	Luke 24.13-35
Jesus comforts the disciples	John 14
Jesus rises from the dead and appears to various people	John 20 - 21
Paul and Silas in prison	Acts 16: 16-40
The Christian spiritual life	Romans 8
Faith and good deeds	James 2
Sharing Christ for future generations	1 John 1-7

Scripturoo – Food for the Soul in times of Spiritual Hunger

Some suggested Scripture, Prayer, Reflection and Retreat resources links

The God who Speaks campaign	godwhospeaks.uk
Daily Bible Reflections	biblesociety.org.uk/explore-the-bible/daily-reflection/
Ignatian retreats	ignatianspirituality.com
The Liturgy Office	liturgyoffice.org.uk/
Magnificat online – daily readings	https://us.magnificat.net/free
Pray as you Go	pray-as-you-go.org/
Pathways to God	pathwaystogod.org/
Portsmouth Bible podcasts	https://www.godwhospeaks.org/media
Sacred Space	sacredspace.ie/
Stop! In the name of God	retreats.org.uk/stop.php
Thinking Faith	thinkingfaith.org/
Universalis	universalis.com/
You Version Bible app	youversion.com/the-bible-app/
David Suchet reads Mark's Gospel	youtube.com/watch?v=jjOgcMOXvSc

Who ART in Heaven – The Bible and Art for Meditation and Reflection

Some suggested resources for praying with the Bible and art

National Gallery's religious collection	nationalgallery.org.uk/
Christian Art Today – Gospel readings/images	https://christianart.today/
Art and the Bible directory of paintings and texts	artbible.info/art/ and www.wga.hu/
A Visual Commentary on Scripture and art	thevcs.org/
Lo and Behold – Catholic Stained Glass stories	https://loandbeholdbible.com/
The Gospel in Stained Glass	https://sites.google.com/site/bktrcia/the-gospel-in-stained-glass
The Bible in stained glass in Wales	http://stainedglass.llgc.org.uk/
Sacred Art Pilgrim	http://sacredartpilgrim.com/

The God who Sings – The Bible and Music

Some suggested Scriptural sacred music – traditional

Creation Oratorio – Joseph Haydn	Based on the book of Genesis
Juditha Triumphans Oratorio - Vivaldi	Based on the book of Judith
Canticum Canticorum cycle of motets - Palestrina	Based on the Song of Songs
Biblical Songs cycle (Opus 99) Dvorak	Based on the Psalms
Miserere – Allegri (Tallis Scholars version)	Based on Psalm 51
The Messiah - Handel	Based on the Old/New Testaments
The Magnificat - Schubert	Mary's Magnificat Song
Christ on the Mount of Olives - Beethoven	Luke's account of Jesus' last night
The Seven Last Songs - Haydn	Jesus' 7 last words before death
St Matthew Passion Oratorio – J.S. Bach	Based on Matthew's Gospel
The Stabat Mater - Pergolesi	The Virgin Mary at the Cross
The Apostles Oratorio - Elgar	The Story of the Apostles
Gregorian Chant	youtube.com/watch?v=VcT4jjwmD3k
Dominican Sisters of St Joseph – Divine Office	www.churchservices.tv/lymington

Some suggested Scriptural sacred music – contemporary

Bernadette Farrell	hymnary.org/person/Farrell_B ocp.org/en-us/artists/1092/bernadette-farrell
Matt Redman	https://www.worshiptogether.com/worship-leaders/matt-redman/ https://www.weareworship.com/uk/worship-leaders/matt-redman/
Jo Boyce	https://www.cjmmusic.com/
Margaret Rizza	https://www.margaretrizza.com/ - both tradition and modern
50 best hymns	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fOB73qRVGJs https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eVmlq_njEj0
Alone with God	Peaceful music - www.youtube.com/watch?v=qeYeogg4LXk

Popular Piety and Devotions

The Way of the Cross The Stations of the Cross The Way of the Cross by St Francis of Assisi	Focus on the characters encountered by Christ. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E6YqGa7pl2w https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZ9om4YElns
The Rosary - with the Pope	https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2020-03/pope-coronavirus-rosary-italian-bishops.html