

## Easter Message from Fr. Michael

My Dearly Beloved Brother - Fr Frank,

Good afternoon & how do you do? I normally would have written you a mail ahead of the Easter season to send my brotherly wishes to you, your family & friends, & your parish communities. This has taken an even greater meaning & significance to me as we live day-by-day in these strange & anxious times. I thus thought to touch base with you, to know how you're doing as we all live through what is obviously a difficult time individually & communally. I certainly worry each passing day for you & all the good people of the three communities you love & care for, given the rising threat of the COVID-19 pandemic in the United Kingdom. I hope you're keeping well & safe. What we see on television daily about the infection & death toll call for real concern. I know we can only keep praying, while doing all that the experts are asking us to do & hoping the tide would change for good sooner than later.

Even in these worrisome times though, I must also say a happy feast day to you my dearest brother! So, this is sending you, Fr Terry, Fr Isaac, Fr Brian, Fr Geoffrey, Fr Michael & Rev Robin my thoughts, words & prayers today as always. As we commemorate the very beginnings of our Sacred Priesthood in Christ, may the good Lord who by his grace & mercy called us to serve him in his people, strengthen & keep us faithful to his divine will... & may we continue to do that which he has asked us to do in his memory - serving his Eucharistic community/people, & bringing him to them in every situation, to his greater glory & the welfare of our communities through Christ Jesus our Lord... Amen 🙏!

I watched with joy & reassurance your brief but insightful YouTube post on the 25th of March to your parish communities. Joy because it afforded me the privileged opportunity to see your brotherly face again after a good few months. Reassurance because thanks to technology, you/we're able to find a way to reach at least some of our people & reassure them of God's love & presence in their lives through this difficult time.

Over here as you would imagine, life has ground to a halt as is the case almost everywhere in the world. It's truly a new reality that I guess no one saw coming. How long this may last before a semblance of normalcy returns remains a thing of guess. I'm careful, or rather reluctant to use the word 'frustration' to describe how one feels at not being able to reach those who might need us most in their pain & broken heartedness. Serving & celebrating the sacraments for our communities, & being there for them in their times of need have never meant more to me now than ever before. Yet, one can't do so. It's truly tough. Although we're able to still leave our churches open in some places, we can't celebrate Mass & other sacraments with anyone in attendance in the last four weeks now. The lockdown also means I'm not even able to get to the parish where I'm assigned to support on weekends. It's all surreal. But I'm sure we'll overcome this.

My family is okay for now. We try to keep in touch with each other. Mom is actually with me at the moment. I had brought her over as she was to undergo eye operation for cataract last week Wednesday being April 1. With the impending lockdown, I thought it might be better to have her where I was, since going to see her in the village would pose real challenges if anything went amiss during the lockdown. Dealing with our police & security operatives here under such circumstances can be tricky. My 'son' Chijioke who's in college is also home

following the closure of schools by government due to COVID-19. So, with the housekeeper, I have a congregation of 3 for Masses daily... something I'm thankful for.

Amy's immediate elder sister (Uloma) lost her husband exactly 2 weeks today, from an apparent fatal heart attack. He was aged 53, & died in the car while on his way with the wife to a medical appointment following a bit of discomfort. Please kindly remember the family he left behind, as well as his beautiful soul in your Masses & prayers. His name is Mike Ogbonna. By this time last 2 weeks, I was still looking for a funeral home where I could deposit his mortal remains, while Amy who was due to return back to the US had to deal with minding her bereaved sister & her four young kids. The pandemic enforced lockdown has made any funeral arrangements unlikely at the moment. We're taking things one day @ a time.

Anyway, I hope the good Lord keeps us all safe from this raging illness ravaging many communities. I hope too you've not suffered any fatalities from the virus. I shall get off the computer now to go do Mass of the Lord's supper with my little congregation. I want you to know I am thinking of you & praying for you dearest Brother. Be talking to you again soon. Until then, give my love & prayers to your brother & family, Marina & Robin & theirs, Andy, Fr Isaac, Fr Terry & Fr Brian & the parish communities. To the sick & afflicted, my thoughts & prayers for quick healing & recovery. To the bereaved, prayerful consolation. We will smile again....

Your brother,

Michael Chimezie EUGENE-OGUZIE

*"For all that has been, THANKS! For all that shall be, YES!" - Dag Hammarskjold.*