



WORCESTER CATHEDRAL UNDER LOCKDOWN

By Bishop John Inge

I'm the 113th Bishop of Worcester: the first was appointed in 680 when the original Cathedral was built.

It's my privilege to live closer to the Cathedral than any of my predecessors (or anyone else, for that matter): it looms over our house and gives me comfort in this time of crisis, as it does many. It is the most glorious of buildings and every time I look at it I am moved – and reminded of my mortality as I think of the tombs of my predecessors within.

It is the Dean and his colleagues who are responsible for running the Cathedral and I am normally out and about in the diocese, albeit virtually just at the moment.

The Cathedral is the mother church of the 280 churches in the diocese, which stretches across the county of Worcestershire and the borough of Dudley. This great building which has stood four-square for the good news of God's love in Jesus over so many years, offers inspiration to very many.

Although all our church buildings are closed, the work of the church goes on in this crisis – in new and original ways, bringing comfort, hope and practical help to those in distress. Those who normally worship in our churches are doing magnificent work in their communities during this time of crisis; manning food banks, delivering shopping and signposting people to other sources of help, as well as offering prayers and worship online through Facebook and YouTube.

The church is not a building, it is a company of people who have been touched by God's love and try to spread it. However, church buildings such as our wonderful Cathedral, remind us of the biblical description of God as a 'rock' on whom we can rely even in a crisis like the present one. Throughout its history, the Cathedral has seen many crises – famines, plagues and wars. The love for which it stands is stronger even than death: it stretches into eternity.

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