



ARCHDIOCESE OF SOUTHWARK

Sunday 11 April 2021

A Joint Commitment to Healing and Collaboration - Re Good Friday and Christ the King Polish Catholic Church, Balham

On Good Friday, 2 April 2021, the Liturgy of the Lord's Passion at Christ the King Polish Catholic Church in Balham, South West London, was brought to an end by Officers of the Metropolitan Police Service. The Church is situated in the Archdiocese of Southwark. On Holy Saturday, 3 April 2021, the Archbishop of Southwark, the Most Reverend John Wilson, made a pastoral visit to the Parish. Together with the Metropolitan Police Service, a process of reflection has taken place resulting in the commitment of all parties to work together for healing through renewed collaboration and engagement in a spirit of friendship.

On the Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday, 11 April 2021, Archbishop Wilson, together with Superintendent Roger Arditti and Detective Superintendent Andy Wadey of the Metropolitan Police Service visited the Polish Catholic Church of Christ the King.

At the end of the 10.45am Mass, Archbishop Wilson and Detective Superintendent Wadey each addressed the congregation. A message was also read on behalf of Mgr Stefan Wylężek, Vicar Delegate of the Polish Catholic Mission for England and Wales. The text of each of address is given below.

Address of the Most Reverend John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark

Dear brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ

Chrystus zmartwychwstał!

It is a great joy to be able to greet you with these words on this Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday. Christ is risen; He is risen indeed. In a special way we give thanks to God for the life and witness of St Maria Faustina Kowalska, the Apostle of Divine Mercy; and we thank St John Paul II who established this Feast of Divine Mercy throughout the whole Church. Thank you, Poland, for giving us these two remarkable saints. St Faustina and St John Paul, please pray for us.

The Gospel of St John recalls that, after the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the disciples were gathered in fear. But the risen Christ broke through the barriers of separation. He came and stood among them and said to them: *'Peace be with you.'*

Dear friends, we are all deeply saddened by the events that took place in this church on Good Friday afternoon. Since then, the genuine concerns of the Polish Catholic Mission, and Christ the King Parish community, have been heard directly by the Metropolitan Police Service. We all share the same desire to move forward in friendship, working together for the common good. We are committed to enabling freedom of worship for everyone, in safe and secure environments. We place our sorrow before the risen Lord who asks us to be instruments of his peace.

Today, I am pleased to be accompanied by Superintendent Roger Arditti and Detective Superintendent Andy Wadey from the Metropolitan Police Service. We come at the invitation of the Rector of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales, Mgr Stefan, and your Parish Priest, Mgr Władysław. I thank them for their kindness and the very fruitful conversations we have had together with the Police this past week. In a moment Detective Superintendent Wadey will address some words to each of you present here in the Church, and to every member of the Polish Catholic Community in Balham. Our presence with you is a sign of our commitment to work together for healing.

Immediately after this Mass, Superintendent Arditti and Superintendent Detective Wadey will meet with me and your parish clergy and representatives to begin a conversation how the Polish Catholic Community in Balham and the Metropolitan Police Service can work to enhance communication and engagement with each other.

On this beautiful Feast of Divine Mercy we remember some words of St Faustina: *'The past does not belong to me; the future is not mine; with all my soul I try to make use of the present moment.'*

My brothers and sisters, let us make use of this present moment, of every present moment, in the service of reconciliation. *'Peace be with you,'* said the Risen Lord. Let us speak and hear these words to and from each other.

I assure you of my prayers and blessing - to you, to your families, and to loved ones.

Address of Detective Superintendent Andy Wadey, Metropolitan Police Service
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Metropolitan Police Service - Frontline Policing

South West BCU Senior Leadership Team

Message to the Polish Catholic Parish of Christ the King, Balham

I would like to start by thanking you all for your invite to myself, Detective Supt Andy Wadey, and my colleague Supt Roger Arditti who is responsible for the local neighbourhood policing teams, to join you today, the Second Sunday of Easter, Divine Mercy Sunday. It is really important for us to be here, and I thank you all for the hand of friendship that you have shown us, and the Metropolitan Police.

The last year has been terrifically difficult for everyone in London. The pandemic has caused significant challenges for us all, and we have all had to live our lives differently. The restrictions have been challenging for everyone, including faith communities, and also on occasions for the MPS as we seek to keep people safe. The MPS is a community based policing service, and we are proud to serve all the communities of London, including all of you here and the wider Catholic and Polish communities. We are all aware of the events that happened here in the afternoon of Good Friday. The intention of the MPS is to protect and support communities in staying safe during the pandemic. We know, however, that many people were very upset by what happened on Good Friday and we deeply regret that.

Since then, there has been significant reflection and learning by myself and Roger; our colleagues who work with us locally, and also Senior Leaders at New Scotland Yard.

The Metropolitan Police truly wishes to serve and protect you in the best possible way. I truly hope that today marks the start of a renewed deep and lasting relationship, with the Parish of Christ the King, Balham and also the wider Polish communities.

Once again, thank you for inviting us to join you today.

Address of Mgr Stefan Wylężek, Vicar Delegate of the Polish Catholic Mission for England and Wales (Read by the Chancellor of the Police Catholic Mission, Canon Krzysztof Tyliczszak)

Dear Sisters and Brothers

Today's liturgy, which we celebrate as Divine Mercy Sunday, marks the end of the octave of the Resurrection of Our Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus came to his disciples in the evening of the day when He rose from the dead, He gave them two gifts: the gift of peace and the power to forgive sins. He did not rebuke them for their little faith, nor did He lecture them about how they should have conducted themselves during His agony and passion. He embraced them with His love, shocked and bruised as they were following the events of Good Friday. He embraces us today with that same love. Just as the Apostles moved on from their grief, so should we rise above the heartache. We need to be healed. All of us need healing: we, the priests under the leadership of Archbishop John; we, the parishioners of the Polish Catholic Mission in England and Wales; and the officers of the Metropolitan Police. All of those have something to say on the path to healing. Let us listen attentively to what each one has to say and hear what is said. Jesus said to Saint Faustina '*I wish for the Feast of Divine Mercy to be a refuge for all souls.*' It is important that we should all want this.

I am unable to be with you in person today, since I have a long-standing commitment to visit the Parish of Divine Mercy in Slough, but I am with you in word and in spirit. I thank the Archbishop, who is with us once again at this difficult time as our Bishop. Thank you, Archbishop John, for being with us as we open our hearts to the presence of the Risen Lord. I thank fathers Władysław, Aleksander and Teodor of this parish. I would also like to thank the representative of the Metropolitan Police for their presence.

Jesus will not come here today to show us his wounds, but it is He, who through the work of the Holy Spirit, will open our ears and our closed doors enabling us to accept that He lives and, that His merciful love precedes us on our journey through this life.

Response of Mgr Władysław Wyszowadzki, Priest in Charge of Christ the King Parish

The interruption of the Good Friday liturgy was very painful for our parish community, but in the spirit of the Gospel, we willingly extend our hand to the representatives of the Police authorities in order to further build a deep and lasting relationship between us, based on mutual respect and regard for the rights of worshippers to freely practice their faith.

We ask you, Excellence, to bless both our work and that of the Police, in this difficult time of the pandemic. We would like to thank everyone for coming.