

# St. Rita's Centre

Augustinian Recollect Spirituality Centre

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Dear Friends, have you ever been at an event where there is a delay in starting and the restless crowd start singing, 'why are we waiting, oh why are we waiting' usually in good humoured banter. At this moment in time I feel restless just like those in the crowd waiting for the show to begin.

The pandemic reminds us how small our world is and how fragile life is on this the blue planet. Someone sneezes in China and the consequences reverberate around the world. A flu virus spread so fast that the whole world is threatened with a terrible illness. Who would have believed it, factories closed, pubs closed, parks closed and unbelievably churches closed and public masses forbidden?

The whole nation has been shutdown and the world has been turned on its head. For Catholics in times of grave national crises we turn to prayer but our usual means, the mass and the devotions in church have been denied to us. The strange thing is that it is not out of ill will that the churches are closed but for the mutual protection of the country especially the more vulnerable, mainly us – the elderly.

We seem to be devoid of any consolation during the long period of lockdown, yet there in the background is our own Lady of Consolation – patron of Senior Citizens. We can address her in our own homes and pray that she will bring us hope. Hope for a time when we can once more attend Holy Mass in a normal way as before and offer each other a sign of peace with a handshake or even a big hug.

Why are we waiting? We know that some shops, garden centres, public parks and restaurants with outside seating are opening and also some of our churches has been opened for private prayer and even for Mass in a safe controlled environment. We continue to patiently wait with Our lady of Consolation for the day when this pandemic will come to an end and Catholics all around the world will attend Mass as normal again.

May Our Lady of Consolation shine on you, brighten up your lives and bring comfort to those who have suffered the loss of a loved one during this pandemic. The Community here in Honiton will remember all of you in our Mass on her feast day, the 4<sup>th</sup> of September.

All of us here at St Rita's would like to thank you for your generosity and continuing support of our Order and its many and varied projects both here at St Rita's Centre and abroad in our missions. We do hope you can join us in our novena this year, especially those in most need of consolation.



Fr. Gerald Wilson OAR