

We require from buildings two kinds of goodness, wrote the art critic John Ruskin. First, doing their practical duty well: then that they be graceful and pleasing in doing it.

We are fortunate to have a building here in Camberwell which lives up to Ruskin's criteria, if not perfectly then at least very well. It is truly a graceful, a beautiful building. Yet today it is to all intents and purposes deprived of its function, standing empty of worshippers except for our community of friars, who have to find new means to exercise our ministry of preaching until the end of this epidemic.

But today's feast is not just about a building, however important and beautiful. For churches of brick and stone exist for only one reason: to enable us who are baptized to be ourselves images of Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit.

God has no need of churches; indeed, God has no need of our worship. We need to worship, and to worship as communities, for the sake of our perseverance and our spiritual growth, in love of God and of neighbour. We need churches to be ourselves the Church. *The temple of God is sacred*, writes St Paul to the Corinthians, *and you are that temple.*

For the moment, the people of God in Camberwell are deprived of their place of worship, and it is a matter of great sadness. But if we think of all the labour and effort, the fund-raising and sacrifices that went into building this church, from the turning of the first sod in 1935 to its consecration on this day in 1960, then we can be sure that they will make this sacrifice too. We who are privileged to celebrate the Mass here this morning hold in our hearts and prayers all those who would be here if they could, and long for the day when we can throw open those doors and welcome them in once again. *Quod faxit Deus! [May God bring it to pass!]*

*Martin Wallace, OP,
Assistant Parish Priest,
St Dominic's Church
Tuesday, 31st March, 2020*