

PLAN FOR OPENING CHURCHES IN PHASE 3 TO CELEBRATE MASS

BACKGROUND

Since the last week of March our Churches have been closed to help prevent the spread of Coronavirus and to protect all those who would normally be at Mass. This is a unique situation that none of us have faced before and has given us many challenges.

CURRENT SITUATION

We are now in Phase 3 of the Government plan to ease lockdown restrictions. This means we are able to resume Masses in both our Churches. Sunday Masses will begin on the weekend of 25/26 July. Social distancing must still be observed and this will limit the numbers able to attend. To facilitate this a booking system will be in place. Once all the available spaces are filled anyone who is unable to attend the Mass of their choice will be offered an alternative. This will ensure everyone who wants to come to Mass gets a chance to attend. The booking system will also ensure nobody has a wasted journey.

The number of people able to be in the Church at any one time is approximately 20 in Holy Cross and 32 in St Margaret Mary's. The number can change a bit if members of the same household are attending.

As you know the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is currently suspended so you may wish to consider coming on a different day. In the week beginning 2nd August we will have one weekday Mass in each Church. We would hope to increase the number of Masses in the following weeks although this depends on the availability of volunteers to assist in a passkeeping role at these Masses. There are more stringent and disciplined procedures to be followed for all Masses for the foreseeable future. If you are free any mornings and think you would be able to assist please contact Fr Hand by E-mail.

BOOKING

You will be able to book for the Mass of your choice online via the parish website. The website address is at the top of every newsletter. Once you are on the website follow the link to 'Events' on the top right of the page and book for the Mass time you want to attend.

You will receive an email confirmation when your booking is received and further confirmation when a place has been reserved for you.

For anyone who is unable to use an online booking system and is not able to get someone to do this for them then we have set up a telephone booking line. The number to call **07546454419** You can call this number between 10:00 and 12:00 on weekdays. Please do not phone the parish number as this will cause confusion and lead to delays, or worse, lost bookings. We need to know Mass time, name and number of attendees. You will also require to give your contact details as we are obliged to retain these. We would encourage everyone who is able to use the online system.

The online booking system will open on a Sunday afternoon. All bookings received will be reviewed on Wednesday evenings. You will then receive notification regarding your booking request.

Please do not come to Church if you have not reserved a place as you will not be able to come in. I realise this is alien to all of us but it is very necessary in the current situation.

The booking system will be kept under constant review to ensure it is working properly and fairly for everyone.

In the week beginning 2nd August weekday Masses will begin again. Initially this will be in Holy Cross on a Monday and Saint Margaret Mary's on a Thursday. The same arrangements for booking will apply.

PROCEDURE FOR ATTENDING MASS

There will be passkeepers on duty at all times. They will check your name against the list of attendees as we are obliged to retain this information. They will then advise you on how to enter and leave the Church and anything else you need to know.

We would ask that people touch as few hard surfaces as possible. Doors will be open for you, holy water fonts will not be available and you will be unable to light candles.

You will be asked to sanitise your hands before entering the Church and to wear a face covering at all times. Please bring your own with you if you can. We will have a few available for anyone who does not have one.

You will be shown to a seat by a passkeeper. The Church will be filled from the front and working back to ensure limited crossover of people. The spaces to sit will all be clearly marked. Please sit in the space you are directed to go to by the passkeeper. Many of the pews are blocked to ensure social distancing in front and behind. Family members from the same household may sit together.

The Mass will be shorter than usual to limit the amount of time spent in an enclosed space. There will be no congregational singing for the foreseeable future as this has the potential to spread the virus, although often there will be music.

If you need to leave during the service for any reason please stand and attract the attention of a passkeeper who will assist you to leave.

The procedure for Communion needs to be revised. Communion **must** be taken on the hand at this time. Fr. Hand will say: May the Body and Blood of Christ keep us all safe to eternal life, to which the congregation responds Amen before commencing distribution of the host. This will then be done individually in silence. Starting from nearest the altar you will be invited to come forward by the passkeeper. Please stretch out your arms with hands on top of each other and receive the host. Then move to the side to place the host in your mouth (moving your face mask as required). Once you have done this please proceed to exit the Church via the side door. This maintains a one way system and prevents people passing each other. You should not come back in to the Church after receiving communion.

Please follow all instructions and maintain social distancing at all times. If anything is not clear please ask the passkeepers on duty who will be happy to help.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Every precaution will be taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus with the strict hygiene measures that are in place. However the risk can never be completely eliminated. If you are in an at risk category then you should consider staying away from any form of gathering.

If you are feeling unwell on the day, even if you had planned to come, please stay at home.

This protects you and others. Please be aware of all those around you at all times and respect social distancing. This applies at all time both inside and outside the Church. While you will undoubtedly see people you may not have seen for some time please do not congregate in groups before or after attending Mass.

We look forward to welcoming you back to Mass