

Message from Fr William on Sunday 14th June 2020

Dear People of St Mary's and online visitors to our parish

The government has given places of worship the option of opening for individual prayer from Monday 15th June, but that 'places of worship will still have the discretion over when they consider it safe to open, and may decide to remain closed or re-open at a slower pace if they wish'. This is corroborated by the Diocese of Leeds: 'No parish priest should feel obliged to facilitate the opening of a church even when permission has been given.'

I know some will be wondering if we might take this opportunity to open our church at least for individual prayer. However, I believe this would put people at an unnecessary risk – not just the individuals that would visit the church and their contacts, but also the volunteers that would be needed to facilitate this. Government and Diocese would require volunteers at all times to supervise the church throughout opening times, and volunteers to clean, to disinfect surfaces, our upholstered chairs, door handles, toilets. This is not only a big ask for anybody to undertake, but also puts them and their families at risk, and by extension the wider community.

In light of this I've taken the decision to continue as we are until it really is safe to open and won't be putting people at unnecessary risk. I have consulted the Parish Pastoral Council, and although they too look forward to returning to church, their advice to me is in support of this decision.

By putting the safety of each other and the wider community first I believe we are living our calling as Christians to love our neighbour. We continue to do our bit as the Catholic Church in the fight against coronavirus by keeping many of our churches closed until it is safe to open our doors again.

Meantime, let your homes become places where you can pray. And let's continue to come together in real time on Sunday by livestream to celebrate mass as a parish community. Thank you to those that I know (and those I don't know) who are helping parishioners with no previous internet access to get online or use Smart TV to access our livestream mass. Email me with your success so far and we can pool experience and know-how.

Happy Corpus Christi !



Corpus et Sanguinis Christi 14th June 2020