

Weekly Message from Fr William on Sunday 26th July 2020

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

This is my 18th weekly message to the parish, keeping you up to speed with what's happening at St Mary's in these exceptional circumstances.

I met with the Parish Pastoral Council on Monday (20th July) and consulted over the opening the church for the public celebration of mass and/or for individual visits. Following this consultation we will do the following:

In broad outline:

- The church will be fixed up for one physically attended mass per Sunday, plus stewarding and sanitising arrangements, and online booking arrangements. This celebration of mass will not be livestreamed. The other two Sunday masses will be livestreamed.
- By default this mass will be celebrated outside in the church garden to minimise the risk of transmission, and minimise the need for sanitisation afterwards. We will resort to using the church in the event of unsuitable weather.
- There will be a two hour period of opening the church for individual visits with plastic chairs, and clear direction from stewards to restrict visitors to these plastic chairs, to avoid the need for Coronavirus sanitising in case the church is needed for Sunday mass.

The opening for individual visits will be Saturdays from 10am to 12noon. The first opening for individual visits will be Saturday 8th August from. No booking will be required. Stewards will give directions.

We'll stick to just one physically attended mass per Sunday at this stage. This way the church will not need to be Coronavirus sanitised between masses. The first celebration of mass with physical participation will be the Saturday 6pm for Sunday 2nd August. As noted above the default will be to celebrate mass outside on the lawn and use the church only if weather necessitates.

Holy Communion will be distributed at a physically attended Mass.

The other two Sunday Masses will be livestreamed as usual, with no physical attendance.

Any celebration of Mass with physical attendance will not be livestreamed at least until the livestreaming camera has been fixed to the wall above head height. This is expected in November when the Historic Churches Committee (HCC) has met and given authorisation. The secretary to the HCC wrote to me from the outset of this project that he foresaw no obstacle to the HCC giving authorisation for fixing the camera to the wall.

If you want to physically attend a celebration of Mass for the foreseeable future you will need to make an Online Reservation. Click on the link at the top of the website homepage. You will be required to enter contact details. This is necessary for NHS Contact-Track-Isolation during the Coronavirus pandemic. In the unlikely event of an attendee showing Covid 19 symptoms in the days following the Mass it may be that all attendees at that Mass will be contacted and required to self-isolate for 14 days. Once you've filled in the online registration form you will be able to print off a ticket which you will need to bring and show to the stewards stewarding that Mass.

Anyone who does not yet have online access to the internet and would like to physically attend mass, please would you phone me for now, and I'll fill in the Online Reservation form for you over the phone and print off your ticket for you. It's important that the Online Reservation system has your contact details for Contact-Track-Isolation as explained in the paragraph above.

Physically attended Mass will be a different experience from what you are used to. There are seven pages of measures from the diocese that I need to put in place. Eg social distancing as directed by the stewards. I may need you to adapt to new ways of doing things. But it will be a happy occasion. We will be able to celebrate mass together. And Holy Communion will be distributed.

There's a 36 page risk assessment to be completed by our Health and Safety Officer, and signed off by diocese. This is all designed to keep you and everybody safe, and I'm grateful to Vince, our Health and Safety Officer, for the huge amount of work he is putting in to make this possible and safe.

I need volunteers please to take on the role of Stewards. Without stewards this can't happen. Volunteers need to be between 18 and 70, and obviously not shielding. Please get in touch with me today if you would be able to put yourself forward for this role. You will receive training.

I need volunteers please to take on the role of sanitising the church after mass if the church is used. Volunteers need to be between 18 and 70, and obviously not shielding. Please get in touch with me today if you would be able to put yourself forward for this role. You will receive training.

If you know of any parishioner who may not be getting this weekly message, keeping the parish up to speed with what's happening, maybe because they don't yet have internet, please consider printing this off and getting it to them.

God bless you all, and looking forward to seeing you at Mass soon!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wilson". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Sunday 26th July 2020