

Weekly Message from Fr William for Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020

Dear People of St Mary's and online visitors to our parish, I hope you're well and keeping safe..

I celebrated Mass with the school last Wednesday, me in church and the children in their bubbles = classrooms. We missed the singing, and of course Holy Communion for those in Years 5 and 6. Thanks again to all who have contributed to our livestream equipment and made this possible.

We're facing as a nation another possible tightening of covid restrictions as we continue to balance the needs of the economy against the need to reduce transmission and bring the R value back down below 1. Pubs, restaurants – the hospitality sector – may be in line for temporary closure again.

There is no talk at the moment that places of worship might be asked to close their doors at this time. But we need to be prepared for this. It's happened in Israel. It could happen in the UK. If it comes it's our opportunity to help in the fight against Coronavirus. We're also well placed. We can continue to celebrate Mass by livestream. And the closure of places of worship is arguably not a big hit to the economy compared to many other sectors.

The current regulations allow us to continue celebrating Mass by physical attendance. As I've said before in earlier messages to you, I fully respect the decision of those who choose to physically attend, and I fully respect the decision of those who choose to remain with livestream participation, for example to minimise the risk of transmission in the community.

We are of course free as a parish and as individuals to go beyond the Covid measures required by the government, for the greater good. Let's continue to work together in this time of Coronavirus to minimise the risk of transmission in the community where we can, and thereby keep open as far as possible our schools and other priority sectors of the economy, as well as keeping each other safe.

After Sat 19<sup>th</sup> Sept I'm putting a pause on the opening of the church to individual visits. There has not been much uptake on this – typically 1 or 0 individuals per two hour opening. The stewards have willingly given up their time to facilitate this and there's been no suggestion from them to pause this. But it's a big ask for a small take up and the decision to pause is mine. Big thank you to the stewards for facilitating this for the last five or six weeks trial period. Keep up the prayer in your cars and homes etc..

Keep well, keep safe, keep each other safe



Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> September 2020