

Weekly Message from Fr William for Holy Week 2021

Dear People of St Mary's

The good news I've been hoping for! The data is out that the 8th March reopening of schools has not led to a significant increase in rates of viral transmission in England. On this basis I'll be starting a cautious re-introduction of in-church masses. This is coinciding with the Easter Season which is about to break upon us. In addition many in our parish have now had their first covid vaccination and are well on the way to building up their immunity.

I would love for everybody to be able to be in church for Easter Day. This is still not possible. Capacity remains limited to 45 due to social distancing. So, in parallel with the bishop's promotion of the Christmas Octave we will celebrate the Octave of Easter as a continuation of Easter Day, that is Sunday to Sunday, and it will be my intention to have three in-church masses during the Octave. These will all be a celebration of Easter. All being well I'll confirm in my message for Easter Sunday.

For Easter Sunday, I can confirm now that the in-church mass will be an additional mass that I'm putting on at 8am as you'll see on the bulletin. This is the approach I took at Christmas, and it maximises the probability that we will be able to accommodate those who really really want an in-church mass. Congregational singing is still prohibited for in-church masses. So this 8am mass will be without singing.

The other two Easter Sunday masses, 10am and 5pm, will be livestreamed, with singing, and with some of your favourite Easter hymns/songs, which I'm sure will give us all an additional uplift as we celebrate Easter mass together across the town, and an opportunity to sing as a parish. Our musicians and singers are putting together the recordings for Maundy Thursday, Easter Vigil, Easter Sunday 10am.

Bishop Marcus has encouraged us to promote the Cathedral services over the Sacred Triduum for diocesan unity in this sacred time. To support this I'm promoting the online celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday instead of having our own service this year. Details on the bulletin.

The purpose of this weekly message, introduced last March, is still to give you information about what's happening in the parish, and in particular arrangements for Mass during the pandemic. I hope you find it helpful.

Wishing you a wonderful Holy Week



Palm Sunday 28th March 2021