

Weekly Message from Fr William for Pentecost Sunday 2021

Dear People of St Mary's, on Monday (17th May) the Diocese issued its updated guidance for our churches and parish halls, based on the government guidelines issued for Step 3 in the government roadmap out of Covid 19 restrictions. For baptisms, confirmations, weddings, funerals, these are all permitted and I will guide you through each of these on an individual basis.

Our current mass provision is unaffected and will continue as in recent weeks, with two in-church celebrations of mass each Sunday. All three Sunday masses will continue to be livestreamed.

If you are celebrating mass in-church, the same regulations continue to apply: Please book online from the website at least 24 hours before mass begins. Face coverings and social distancing continue to apply. Please continue to sanitise your hands on arrival and before receiving Holy Communion. Communal singing continues to be prohibited. However, it is permitted again to say 'The Body of Christ' to each communicants, and for you to respond 'Amen'.

This latest diocesan update includes this caveat:

Whilst current data indicates that the rate of infection has slowed dramatically, assisted considerably by the government's vaccination programme, this does not give reason to think that it is now safe, as there is still a significant number of people contracting Covid daily. Some areas of Yorkshire still have high R rates compared to the rest of the country.

I will continue to administer Holy Communion outside as I have done since the beginning of the pandemic. This is to keep the hosts free from aerosol contamination. Before Mass the hosts are transferred by me from an airtight container to a ciborium, after first donning a face covering then sanitising my hands, in an aerosol free environment (a rarely used room). The ciborium is then immediately closed, placed on the altar for consecration, and remains closed until I've taken it outside for distribution.

In the event of heavy rain, the thick fir tree has on many occasions acted as an almost perfect umbrella for the distribution of Holy Communion. Distributing it in the Atrium on your way out is still an option of last resort, especially if it's windy as well. You always have the option to forego communion if you feel it's not covid safe.

I'm now inviting candidates who have completed the preparation course to receive their first Holy Communion. This will be on an individual basis with their family. They will have the option to receive Holy Communion in church from a dedicated ciborium, which will have been prepared for their family as detailed above.

God bless you!



Pentecost Sunday 23rd May 2021