

Weekly Message from Fr William for Fourteenth Sunday of Ordinary Time 2021

Dear People of St Mary's, we're really looking forward to the lifting of restrictions in a few weeks' time, in our everyday lives, and for our in-church celebration of Sunday Mass. The diocese has been efficient, detailed and swift in issuing guidance to our parishes throughout the pandemic at each stage, following each modification in the rules and guidance issued by the government. As a parish we will be in a position to lift the remaining restrictions as soon as we have the green light from the government and from the diocese. I anticipate this will mean the end of face coverings in church, social distancing, registration and the suspension of congregational singing. But to be absolutely certain, as throughout this pandemic, we wait and see.

Plans have been underway this last week to bring back Ministers of the Word later in July, and from the beginning of August to reintroduce Children's Church.

As mentioned in my message last Sunday, planning is underway for the reintroduction of cash giving once restrictions are lifted, for anybody that may want to return to this way of giving. This will almost certainly involve a different way of collecting these cash donations. And it will be dependent upon volunteers being willing to handle cash in the post covid understanding of hygiene and viral transmission, and whether it's even reasonable to ask this of volunteers. Remember this involves Collectors and Collection Counters.

The coronavirus pandemic, and our heightened awareness of viral transmission, has accelerated the societal shift away from cash and cheques towards contactless and minimal-contact modes of payment or donation. In light of this, plans are also underway to introduce an additional form of cashless giving for our parish, using a contactless or minimal-contact device that will be installed in the atrium. This will be in addition to the text giving option which has already proved to be a simple and popular way of donating to the Offertory Collection and to the Building Loan Fund.

Talking of text giving, this Sunday we're having our annual appeal from Stella Maris (formerly known as Apostleship of the Sea). This charity has also introduced text giving for those who would like to donate in a simple and safe cash-free way. Text giving details will appear on the wall at Mass after a brief video presentation of the valuable work this international charity has been able to achieve over the last 12 months.

A few years ago I pulled a Sunday 5pm mass in view of an important England international fixture, didn't I. I've just checked timing for next Sunday 11th July ... and all is well. No clashes. So mass provision next Sunday as for this Sunday as you'll see in the bulletin. And, praised be to God, next Sunday we'll be celebrating a couple more First Holy Communions with some of our young parishioners.

Happy Sunday!



Fourteenth Sunday of
Ordinary Time, 4th July 2021