

Weekly Message from Fr William for Twenty-Eighth Sunday Ordinary Time 2021

Dear People of St Mary's,

Keeping the doors open during Mass to maintain through ventilation has been one of our most important covid measures to minimise the risk of viral transmission. But it's getting colder and time to review this as we go into Autumn. Following consultation on this last week I'll be keeping the doors closed from next Sunday 17th October.

This means that the other covid measures we have in place will become even more important to keep each other safe. We've known for some time from government COVID-19 guidance how the virus spreads through the air:

COVID-19 spreads from person to person through small droplets, aerosols and through direct contact. Singing, playing some musical instruments, shouting and physical activity increases the risk of transmission through small droplets and aerosols. Safeguards should be put in place to minimise opportunities for the virus to spread.

My current advice to you, since July, is that face coverings are optional but recommended, especially when singing. This remains my advice. But with the doors closed from next Sunday there is more reason to opt in for face coverings in order to keep other people safe. If you choose to opt out of face coverings, and some people will have legitimate reasons for doing so, then you should really opt out of singing too. The extractor in the ceiling helps to expel rising incense smoke and can be left running. I don't think we can assume this will make much impact on extracting aerosol with its very different fluid dynamic, but it might help a bit.

You'll have noticed I've dropped the Bidding Prayers since July. This was a suggestion that came from the diocese to minimise for everybody the time spent in a potentially covid aerosol space. For the same reason my advice to you has been to move to a fresh space after mass to be sure that you're not breathing in a potential accumulation of covid aerosol, or contributing to it. We've now opened the hall for refreshments after the Sunday 10am Mass, providing an alternative to outside for socialising. Covid measures are in place, including table service, paper cups and plates, through ventilation, no cash handling. Feel free to take face covering off once seated. Otherwise the advice remains that face coverings are recommended indoors to keep others safe.

The full list of current covid measures are still on the website homepage via the link 'Celebration of Mass by in-church participation'. This will be updated for next Sunday to reflect the switch from open to closed doors during Mass.



Twenty-Eighth Sunday of Ordinary Time, 10th October 2021