



GREAT NEWS – EVERY DAY IS A SUNDAY!!

From Saturday 4th July we will be able to celebrate public Mass once more. After such a long break, we know that people will want to return to Mass, but please, please be careful, be considerate and follow the rules. Mass will not be the same as before. Be prepared for a difference.

First of all, remember that the Sunday obligation remains suspended. We encourage you to attend Masses on weekdays to avoid over-capacity on Sunday. We are dependent on volunteers to steward Mass; if they are not present we cannot have Mass. Please consider if you can help as a steward to welcome people, assist with managing the procession for Holy Communion and to help people leave.

ESSENTIAL RULES TO FOLLOW AND COMPLY WITH:

The existing arrangements in place for individual private prayer will remain more or less the same: access for all via the side door and exit by the main door. Mandatory use of hand gel on arrival. When you light candles please use the tapers and light the candles from the top. Used tapers put in the box by the candle stand. There is a one-way system in operation and exit is via the main door towards the disabled car park.

There is no obvious fair and equitable way of allocating spaces for Mass. Therefore, it has been decided that it will be first come first served for spaces. When the church reaches capacity no further entry will be allowed. If you volunteer to steward, you have a place!

According to the guidelines from Government and Archdiocese it will permit social distancing of 1 metre + in our churches **SUBJECT TO COMPULSORY WEARING OF FACE COVERINGS** except for people with serious breathing problem and children below the age of five.

We will provide seating for family groups. At the front we will allocate two pews for family groups of four or five. Each pew has the capacity to accommodate three people or two couples from different households with social distancing. Only occupy the family accommodation if you are from the same household. A few seats in the Lady chapel and St. Catherine's chapel will be available if needed. If parents bring children, they must ensure they can satisfy the social distancing requirements. There will be no standing at the back of church.

The church will open 20 minutes before each Mass and be closed after Mass to allow the church to be cleaned.

DETAILS OF THE MASS

Mass will be shorter than a normal Sunday Mass. There will be no singing, no bidding prayers, a shorter homily and no offertory procession. The readers will be provided a printed copy of the readings and the same copy will not be used again. There will be close attention to detail to ensure social distancing and cleanliness during Mass by the celebrant.

After the Lamb of God ... the celebrant will raise the Host and say, "The Body of Christ" to which the response will be, "Amen" and then Holy Communion will be distributed on the hand only IN SILENCE.

The celebrant will not wear a face covering until it is time for the distribution of Holy Communion, but they will at that point. Holy Communion will be distributed only in One Kind. The distribution of communion will be at the normal place in the Mass and people must follow social distancing while coming for Communion. Stewards will guide people forward for Holy Communion or a blessing. As one approaches remove face covering, stretch out hands, receive Holy Communion, move across, consume, re-apply face covering, back to your seat.

OTHER POINTS TO NOTE

As there is no offertory, there will be collection buckets at the entrance and exit. If you are watching online Masses, please consider making an online contribution.

Toilets will remain closed because of high risk of infection. Practically it is not possible to clean the toilets after each use and the Diocesan instructions are that Parish Halls remain closed until guidance has been issued by the Government.

Please continue to request Mass intentions. Ensure that you let me or the parish secretary know the date on which you wish Mass to be offered and it will be arranged for a date as close to that requested as possible. If you do not request a date, then Mass will be offered whenever there is a day without a specific intention. If a funeral is due to take place on a day where a Mass has already been booked, the Funeral Mass will take precedence. Mass intention envelopes will be given on request and will not be kept at the back of the church. As usual, you can also email the Parish Office for Mass intentions.

These guidelines may appear to be so unusual and demanding. They are simple and necessary to help keep us all safe. Our churches will be the least likely source of potential infection. Let us keep worshipping our Lord Jesus Christ amidst of all these inconveniences.

God bless you all and hope to see you soon.

Fr. George Mathew SCJ

A Message from the Metropolitan Archbishops of the Catholic Church in England

Dear Brothers and sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

On Tuesday we heard the announcement that, from the 4th July this year, places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services. We welcome this news with great joy. Since the lockdown began, members of all faiths have faced restrictions on how they have been able to celebrate important religious festivals. Our own experience of Easter was unlike any other we have known. Now, in our churches, and with our people, we can look forward again to celebrating the central mysteries of our faith in the Holy Eucharist.

The recent reopening of our churches for individual private prayer was an important milestone on our journey towards resuming communal worship. Our churches that have opened have put in place all the measures needed to ensure the risks of virus transmission are minimised. This includes effective hand sanitisation, social distancing, and cleaning. We remain committed to making sure these systems of hygiene and infection control meet Government and public health standards. We want to thank everyone within the Catholic community for sustaining the life of faith in such creative ways, not least in the family home. We thank our priests for celebrating Mass faithfully for their people, and for the innovative ways in which they have enabled participation through live-streaming and other means. We are grateful

for the pastoral care shown by our clergy to those for whom this time of lockdown has been especially difficult, and, in particular, towards those who have been bereaved.

We recognise too the chaplaincy services that have played a vital role in supporting those most in need. Gaining from the experience of all that we have been through, and bringing those lessons into the future, we must now look forward. With the easing of restrictions on worship with congregations, we tread carefully along the path that lies ahead. Our lives have been changed by the experience of the pandemic and it is clear that we cannot simply return to how things were before lockdown. We remain centred on the Lord Jesus and His command at the Last Supper to “do this in memory of me.” We must now rebuild what it means to be Eucharistic communities, holding fast to all that we hold dear, while at the same time exploring creative ways to meet changed circumstances.

It is important to reaffirm that, at present, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended. A significant number of churches may remain closed as they are unable to meet the requirements for opening for individual prayer. Fulfilling these requirements is a precondition for any church opening after the 4th July for the celebration of Mass with a congregation.

Prayer, not panic; Faith, not Fear.

Please be aware that there will be a limit on the number of people who can attend Mass in our churches. This will be determined locally in accordance with social distancing requirements. We therefore need to reflect carefully on how and when we might be able to attend Mass. We cannot return immediately to our customary practices. This next step is not, in any sense, a moment when we are going ‘back to normal.’ We ask every Catholic to think carefully about how and when they will return to Mass. Our priests may need to consider whether it is possible to celebrate additional Masses at the weekends. Given there is no Sunday obligation, we ask you to consider the possibility of attending Mass on a weekday. This will ease the pressure of numbers for Sunday celebrations and allow a gradual return to the Eucharist for more people. Moving forward, there will still be many people who cannot attend Mass in person. We therefore ask parishes, wherever possible, to continue live-streaming Sunday Mass, both for those who remain shielding and vulnerable, and also for those unable to leave home because of advanced age or illness.

When we return to Mass there will be some differences in how the celebration takes place. For the time being, there will be no congregational singing and Mass will be shorter than usual. None of this detracts from the centrality of our encounter with the Risen Christ in the Eucharist. We ask everyone to respect and follow the guidance that will be issued and the instructions in each church.

“As I have loved you,” said the Lord Jesus, “so you must love each other.” (Jn 13:34)
The lockdown has brought forth remarkable acts of charity, of loving kindness, from Catholics across our communities as they have cared for the needy and vulnerable. We have seen love in action through charitable works, and through the service of many front-line keyworkers who are members of our Church. Now we can begin to return to the source of that charity, Christ himself, present for us sacramentally, body, blood, soul and divinity, in Holy Communion. As we prepare to gather again to worship, let us, respectful of each other, come together in thanksgiving to God for the immense gift of the Holy Eucharist.

Yours devotedly in Christ ✠ Vincent Cardinal Nichols, Archbishop of Westminster ✠
Malcolm McMahon OP, Archbishop of Liverpool ✠ Bernard Longley, Archbishop of Birmingham ✠ John Wilson, Archbishop of Southwark.

This letter is addressed to the Catholic Community in England; the opening of the Catholic Churches in Wales is devolved to the Welsh Assembly who are still evaluating their position on opening Places of Worship.