

31st July 2020

Dear Parishioners,

Apologies for the length of this email, but it contains important information about our re-opening this weekend and I urge you to read it if you are planning to attend Mass.

I am delighted to let you know that this weekend we will be re-opening our doors. To begin with, Mass will be only celebrated at 6.00pm on Saturday and 11.00am on Sunday, although we hope to add some weekday Masses in time.

There have been plenty of changes made inside the church, and the services will be a little different too, so this email is to let you know what to expect, and to make sure that if you decide to attend then you come prepared. Please note, *The Catholic Bishops of England and Wales have continued to offer dispensation regarding the obligation of Sunday Mass attendance*. If you are in the shielded or vulnerable group you may prefer to log in to one of the several Masses live streamed from the Cathedral in Northampton.

We have completed a full risk assessment, and have put in place cleaning and stewarding protocols. There is hand sanitiser available to use as you enter and leave the church.

The doors to the church will be opened no more than 10 minutes before a Mass. We will be operating a one way system, so entry is through the main doors at the back of church, and exit is through the side door at the end. Please listen to instructions from the stewards, who will invite you to enter the church in turn, and show you where to sit. Please do not move pews once you have sat down.

For test and trace purposes, you must bring with you to Mass a piece of paper with your name and the name of everyone in your household who is attending with you, and their contact phone number or email address. When you enter the narthex please put this in the basket for this purpose. The details will be stored securely for 21 days and then shredded.

We have re-arranged the pews to ensure that parishioners will be 2 metres away from those in a different household; in order to achieve this there will only be 13 pews open and so capacity will be greatly reduced. Once the church is full there will be a sign by the back door indicating this. If this is there when you arrive please do not try to enter the church. For now, we will be operating a first-come-first-served system, but this will be reviewed weekly and we will move to a system of pre-booking if we need to. If you arrive before the doors open, please ensure you maintain a 2 metre distance from your fellow parishioners in the car park.

As parishioners will be sitting 2 metres away from other households masks are not mandatory, although they are highly recommended. We will not be providing masks, so if you would like to wear one please bring your own, and ensure you have read guidance on how to wear a mask safely:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/when-and-how-to-use-masks>

There will be no newsletters or Mass books, so please bring your own to follow the Mass, or print a copy of 'Sunday Message' from our website before you come:

<http://www.staidanslittlechalfont.co.uk/newsletters/>

The toilets and baby change area will be closed, as well as the choir area, gallery and chapel.

The Mass will be a little shorter than usual, with no singing, only 1 reading, and a short homily. There will be no sign of peace, and the collection will be as you leave church at the end of Mass.

Communion will be under one kind in the hand only, and stewards will direct parishioners to come up in turn. Communion will be distributed in silence, and there will be no blessings.

Please take care to take all your belongings away with you as you leave the church, and please do not congregate in the car park afterwards with others not in your household.

Those who use the envelope system: envelope boxes are on a table in the narthex. Please collect yours as you enter the church, taking care to only touch your own.

It goes without saying, please do not come to Mass if you are showing any signs of COVID-19 infection, or have had symptoms in the last 7 days, or are self isolating for any other reason. All UK government guidance around self-isolation should be followed.

Please bear with us for the next few weeks and months. I am sure there will be some teething problems we have not anticipated, and I urge you to be patient as we all get used to this new way of celebrating Mass. If you have any questions please email the office.

With every good wish,
Louise (Parish Secretary)
On behalf of Fr Ken.