

**WELCOME- THE CATHOLIC FAITH COMMUNITY OF
OUR LADY AND ALL SAINTS, STOURBRIDGE.**

A COMMUNITY OF LOVE, PRAYER AND SERVICE

A COMMUNITY OF CHRIST'S FAITHFUL.

CHURCHES TOGETHER IN STOURBRIDGE - CTIS

PARISH WEBSITE www.olas.org.uk
LIVE STREAMING **NEWSLETTER**
WEBCAM -
www.watchmcnmedia.tv/camera/our-lady-all-saints
Our Lady and All Saints Catholic Church
13 New Road STOURBRIDGE
West Midlands DY8 1PQ

GO IN PEACE

**telling the Good News
sharing in the Breaking of the Bread
enriching the Community
through our talents, treasure and time:
transforming the Community
by prayer and by action.**

Give us, Lord God, a vision of our world as your love would make it; a world where the weak are protected, and none go hungry or poor; and give us the inspiration and courage to build it, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Holy Spirit of God, —
light a flame within me,
burning for justice,
glowing with kindness,
shining with hope
for the end of poverty
and the peace of all people
in this ever-turning world



TODAY WE CELEBRATE THE FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR - YEAR A 04TH/05TH JULY 2020

"A Judaeo - Christian Community in the Roman Catholic Tradition"

DATE	JULY	TIME	MASS INTENTION	FEAST
Saturday	04TH	5-00PM	Margaret Masterson RIP	FOURTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
Sunday	05TH	08-30AM	PEOPLE OF THE PARISH	
		10-30AM	Fr Ian Byrnes / Fr Anthony Eagleton	THANKSGIVING
Monday	06TH	9-00AM	Berry + Tony Dempsey RIP	ST MARIA GORETTI
Tuesday	07TH	9-00AM	Minnie + Barry Orchard RIP	
Wednesday	08TH	9-00AM	Hugh McCooey RIP	
Thursday	09TH	9-00AM	Kevin Barker RIP / Intentions Ray Butler	
Friday	10TH	9-00AM	Jim + Halina Doran RIP	
Saturday	11TH	5-00PM	Intentions John Giambone	FIFTEENTH SUNDAY OF THE YEAR
Sunday	12TH	08-30AM	PEOPLE OF THE PARISH	
		10-30AM	Intentions Susan Kirwin	

SERVED by and Contact Details:

OUR PRIEST DEAN OF DUDLEY DEANERY
CHAPLAIN HAGLEY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL
E-mail des56@hotmail.com
Fr Desmond Devenney 01384 395308 [24HOURS]
RUSSELLS HALL HOSPITAL RC CHAPLAIN
Rev Mr. Thomas Tranter 01384 395308

OUR PARISH SECRETARY/OUR PARISH GIFT AID ORGANISER/ PARISH CENTRE - INFORMATION AND BOOKINGS

Mrs. Sarah Price 01384 395308
PARISH OFFICE HOURS
E-mail olas.stourbridge@rcaob.org.uk

MONDAY/TUESDAY/THURSDAY/FRIDAY
11-00AM - 1-30PM WEDNESDAY - CLOSED
Sarah Price, our Parish Secretary, will be available between the hours of 11-00AM - 1-30PM Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.
Any communication must be made BY email
olas.stourbridge@rcaob.org.uk

Have a WONDERFUL Week - Filled with Faith + Joy, Love + Peace

Do Take Great Care Fr Des 04/07/2020 23-45PM
THANKYOU/VIELEN DANK /GRACIAS/ GRAZIE/ MERCI/ OBRIGADO

THE PARISH IS PART OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF BIRMINGHAM - REGISTERED CHARITY NO 234216

We pray that God will bless our Parish and all our homes and families for the many good unseen things that go on - which are always seen by God.

THANK YOU SO MUCH

**May the Lord's Touch Strengthen Us
May the Lord's Words Encourage Us
May the Lord's Ways Inspire Us**

JESUS SAID "COME TO ME ALL YOU WHO LABOUR AND I WILL GIVE YOU PEACE FOR YOUR LIVES."

We remember all those who have died recently – MARGARET PAKES, ETHEL MULCROW, JOHN JOSEPH FARRELL, RIP.

And all those who have died because of violence, terrorism, tragedy and the Corona Virus – and all those whose anniversaries occur at this time.

ETERNAL PEACE, GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD.

We remember in prayer Families and Friends who miss the presence of someone they love – all those who are bereaved. May they be reassured always of the Lord's Love and Care.

PRAYER SUPPORT ONLINE

<https://www.pray-as-you-go.org>

<https://www.sacredspace.iehttps://jesuitprayer.org>

<https://www.jesuit.org.uk/where-will-god-find-you-july>

***Without the Way there is no going /
Without the Truth there is no knowing /
Without the Life there is no living.***

THOMAS A KEMPIS

Our Parish Community invites each person to be an active and participating member in all the aspects of Parish Life.

We care for each other and we want to worship and to serve our Lord and one another.

Do please consider volunteering by participating wherever you feel you can help and serve.

A number of people have asked about the Offertory collections.

If you wish to make a payment to the parish to help us through this time -

- ***You could email: olas.stourbridge@rcaob.org.uk for our bank details.***
- ***Visit the Archdiocese of Birmingham and follow the information found by clicking the donate button, if you do donate in this way please can you contact Sarah at olas.stourbridge@rcaob.org.uk to confirm the payment made so they can be added to our accounts/gift aid system***
- ***Or you could just keep your weekly offerings to one side and hand them in when the churches can be fully opened again.***
- ***Please remember the best way to access the Webcam for Mass is to visit our website www.olas.org.uk and click on the live streaming link which can be found on the home page.***

FOODBANK SHORTAGES THIS WEEK - Small

packets of Breakfast cereals, Tinned meat e.g. Corned beef, Fray Bentos, Pies, Tinned ready meals e.g. meatballs, ravioli, Tinned potatoes/instant mash packets, Bags of rice (1Kg), Squash/cordial, Tinned fruit, Tinned rice pudding/custard, Jars jam/marmalade, Long life fruit juice (1L cartons), Long-life (UHT) milk 1L cartons.

A Simple Prayer –

In Jesus' Name, we continue to pray,

In Jesus' Name, we continue to serve,

In Jesus' Name, we continue to love,

In Jesus' Name, we continue to live.

In Jesus' Name, we continue to listen. AMEN

Don't Forget 6-00PM Each Day – OUR FATHER

Reopening of church halls and rooms in the Archdiocese of Birmingham.

In his statement on 23RD June 2020 the Prime Minister announced that community halls would be able to reopen from 04TH July. He also made it clear that conference centres are not permitted to reopen. Guidance on how to reopen community halls to hirers in a way which will make them COVID-19 secure has not yet been issued by the government, neither has there been any guidance about the activities which can be permitted in church halls. As soon as government guidance is issued, the diocese will issue detailed guidance for parishes. Until that time, church halls and rooms should not be made available to hirers

Norton Road Cemetery –

Thank you to all those who have contacted the Parish with their concerns about the Cemetery.

Chris, our wonderful gardens maintenance contractor, has unfortunately been unable to work due to Covid19. He is now back at work and ensures us (weather permitting) that he will have Norton Cemetery back to how it was before the lockdown as soon as possible. He does pass on his apologies for this and appreciates your understanding and your patience.

OUR THANKS

Thank you to our team of volunteers who cleaned, marked out the Church to ensure social distancing and organised the opening of OUR CHURCH following the documents of guidance and regulations we were given.

Please can you wear a face mask or face covering if possible.

If you or anyone in your family has symptoms please stay at home.

We would be really grateful if you develop symptoms within 2 weeks of your visit if you or a member of your family contact Fr Des. This ensures we follow regulations issued by Public Health England.

Act of Spiritual Communion

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

OPENING OF OUR CHURCH FOR MASSES

Our Lady and All Saints Church will open for Masses from Saturday 04 July 2020 at 5-00PM. In order to open safely space will be limited. We must follow the new seating capacity regulations for our Church.

I would personally very much like to welcome you all back straight away but realistically that cannot happen. As the Sunday Obligation for attending Mass is currently suspended do please remember that you can attend Mass at 9-00AM any week day.

Inside the Church the way we will do things now will be very different to the way things have been done in pre-Coronavirus Days [March 22] and so we can all expect to see changes.

Hygiene is paramount in keeping the Corona Virus at bay so we will be observing strict hand washing and social distancing in the months ahead. I ask you all to understand and comply fully with the guidelines that have been issued.

PLEASE DO NOT COME TO CHURCH [MASS] IF YOU HAVE ANY COLD OR FLU SYPTOMS.

- Our Church will be opened 15 Minutes before Mass begins. Please do follow strictly the guidance on Social Distancing outside Church.
[The Sacrament of Confession cannot be celebrated before Masses].*
- Because of the social distancing requirements there will be a huge reduction in our seating capacity. Social distancing of 2 metres must be observed in the church at all times.*
- Entrance to Mass will be on a first come, first served basis. Our Church may be filled with its new capacity when you arrive. When we are full we cannot let anyone else in. We are really sorry.
Please be understanding about this.*
- Please do not share or offer lifts to people who want to go to Church unless you live in the same household.*

SOMETIMES, the longer you wrestle with a tough problem, the more difficult and complicated it seems to grow. When this happens, it makes sense to push away the problem and take a break. Often, when you come back to it, a solution will emerge.

- In order to track and trace, all attending Mass will be asked to leave their name and contact details with us.
[These will be held securely in accordance with GDPR Rules].*
- A one-way system will be in operation.*
- The Holy Water stoops will remain empty.*
- Please be aware -
the Parish Centre will be closed.
No toilet facilities will be available.*
- For your own safety and the safety of others we ask all attending Mass to use the hand sanitiser provided on entry and exit and to wear a face covering, which may or may not be a surgical mask. The face covering should cover your nose and mouth and must be worn for the duration of Mass.
[Our Church will not provide masks / face coverings. Please do bring your own].*
- You will be directed to your seat by a steward. This will not be where you would normally choose to sit. Please be compliant - seating will be limited as many of the benches cannot be used.
Please do follow the instructions given by the Stewards at all times.*

There will be no Mass books provided. The Lighting of Candles will not be available.

Candles will be lit at the Font, at the Lectern, and on the Altar before Mass.

- At this time and in accordance with Diocesan Guidelines, there will be no Singing,
Prayers of the Faithful, Offertory Processions, Sign of Peace.*

I value enormously all our Ministers for Mass - Altar Servers, Readers and Eucharistic Ministers. Again, at this time, we cannot avail of your services. [social distancing / hygiene regulations].

How does this work? One psychologist puts it this way: "Your mind is like an iceberg. The most important part remains submerged.

- *To limit movement and the always possible contamination inside our Church, Holy Communion will be distributed at the end of Mass. A Steward will direct you to Holy Communion and so, please wait for instructions before getting out of your seat. It will not be possible to return to your seat after you have received Holy Communion. Please therefore keep your belongings to a minimum and ensure you take everything with you. Any item left will unfortunately have to be disposed of.*
- *A basket for the weekly collection will be available in the porch as you leave Mass.*
- *While it will be lovely to celebrate Mass together – please DO resist the urge to congregate afterwards.*
- *If you are in the vulnerable category please heed Government advice and keep yourself safe by staying at home.*

These regulations may seem very severe but they are very necessary at this present time for all of us.

Understandably, too, many people will be/are/may be uneasy at the prospect of returning to our Church at this time.

PLEASE REMEMBER: OUR BISHOPS HAVE SUSPENDED THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND MASS.

You do not have to attend Mass and those who are afraid or vulnerable in any way are strongly encouraged to stay at home and follow Mass using our Live Stream. [www.olas.org.uk]

Please continue to be very careful and take every precaution to keep yourself, your loved ones, and us all safe. The Corona Virus has not gone away. By working together we have a chance of making our country and world COVID 19 free. Keep in your Prayers that that day may come soon.

Thank you to all those who have volunteered to help with the Opening of Our Church for both Private Prayer and for Mass. Anyone who has volunteered has been contacted and a rota has been organised. The guidance has now changed and those over 70 are able to help as stewards/cleaners. However you must not have any underlying health issues or live with someone who is in the clinically Vulnerable Category. Please do think carefully before you volunteer as we do not want to put anyone at risk.

If you are able to help please contact Fr Des or email Sarah (who is working from home) at olas.stourbridge@rcaob.org.uk. We will need more volunteers as this may be our "PRACTICE" for the weeks ahead.

Finally, I want to thank Sarah, Steve and Mervyn – along with our volunteers and stewards – for their time, commitment and goodness at this most difficult of times,

*As I say – TOUGH TIMES NEVER LAST BUT TOUGH PEOPLE DO.
And – GOD BLESS FOR THE MOMENT.
FR DES*

PS

Thank you so much for volunteering so that Church can be open. Apologies to anyone we did not contact regarding our Church opening for Private Prayer. Things changed so quickly that we did not have the opportunity to include everyone. We are opening for Mass this weekend and will need at least 4 volunteers for each Mass - if not more as parishioners/visitors get used to our "PRACTICE" with a limited capacity in our Church.

Please can you let me know your availability for both weekend Masses and in the week (Mass will be celebrated at 9-00AM Monday-Friday).

The rules has now changed slightly and we can have volunteers over 70. However we have been advised if you have any underlying health issues that put you in the extremely clinically vulnerable category we cannot accept your help - advice from the Government is not to visit Places of Worship until 1 August 2020.

GRACE AFTER THE MEAL:

*Lord Jesus,
as we depart from this table
may we never depart from you,
but live always in the awareness of your Real Presence.
We ask this in your Holy Name.*

*We try to give
our children
everything – when
all they need is love
and certainty.
PAM BROWN, B.1928*

*Those who die in grace
go no further from us
than God
and God is very near.*

Guidance for the Celebration of Mass

Introduction

The Government has announced that from 4th July 2020, communal acts of worship will be allowed in our Catholic Churches. This guidance, issued by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales for the Celebration of Mass, assumes that the general guidance published by the Conference, based on Government Guidance on the safe opening of Places of Worship for individual prayer, is in place.¹

In particular, the maximum safe operating capacity of the church, based on social distancing guidelines, should be clearly signposted at the door and the number and position within the church of people attending at any one time should be overseen by volunteer stewards.

Social Distancing - IMPORTANT

The Government maintains that the 2m social distancing requirements should be applied where possible. The Government has said it is possible to go to "1m plus;" this means you can space people more closely (with a minimum of 1m) providing a mitigation of risk is also applied. In the case of our churches, this would mean the compulsory wearing of a face covering for members of the congregation.² If those on the sanctuary are sufficiently distant from the congregation, there is no need to wear face coverings.

Priests should remain mindful of their own personal situation with respect to potential exposure to virus transmission. It is permissible for those in the 70+ age group, and those who are vulnerable to infection, to celebrate Mass, but it is strongly advised that they do not distribute Holy Communion and take particular care to be constantly socially distant from the congregation. They should return to the sacristy directly after Mass is ended.

Celebration of Mass within Church Buildings

Before the Mass

Only those necessary should be in the sacristy before Mass. The celebrant, sacristan, or server should prepare everything for the celebration of Mass with care. Single-use gloves should be worn at this stage. Particular care should be taken over the preparation of the elements for Holy Communion. The altar breads for distribution to the people should be placed into a clean covered ciborium (a pall can be placed over a dish paten). Sufficient altar breads for each celebration should be placed within at this stage. A separate ciborium/paten should be prepared for each person who will distribute Holy Communion. The cover of the ciborium or dish paten should not be removed until the time for distribution of Holy Communion.

The priest should prepare his own chalice and paten with a large altar bread for consecration. The chalice should have a purificator and a pall. The purificator should be used only once and then laundered. He should prepare the cruets of wine and water and his own bowl for the lavabo. Again, the towel should be used only once and then laundered.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-announces-easing-of-lockdown-restrictions-23-june-2020>

All hymnbooks and missals and other published material normally used by the congregation and not meant for single use should be removed from the church. The Holy Water stoups should be dry. Until further instruction is given on singing, there should be no congregational singing at Mass.

During the Mass

Any worship aids (missalettes etc.) should be for single use and taken with the user when the Mass ends. They should not be left in the church at the end of Mass.

The priest, and if present, deacon and server, should remain socially distant at all times on the sanctuary during the celebration of Mass. This is particularly important at the Gospel (for the deacon's blessing), the Preparation of the Gifts, and during the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

Readers should be supplied with single-use gloves and should avoid touching the microphones or the Lectionary during the Liturgy of the Word, apart from page turning. The homily should be brief, to minimise the time that people are congregated in the church building. The Prayer of the Faithful should be omitted.

There should be no offertory procession of the gifts of bread and wine to the altar; the priest should have these on the credence table or the altar before Mass begins. There should be no sharing of the collection plate or bag. People should be encouraged to make their donation to the church online or via standing order. Plates or other collecting boxes for cash offerings should be placed at the entrances and exits of churches, and this should be overseen by stewards. The collection should be consolidated into plastic bags, sealed, placed into a secure location and left for 72 hours before counting. Counters should wear gloves when doing this task and the area should be well ventilated and cleaned before and afterwards.

The Communion Rite

Members of the congregation should not exchange the sign of peace.

After the prayer and its response "*Behold the Lamb of God...Lord I am not worthy,*" the priest should hold up the Host to the Congregation and say audibly "The Body of Christ" to which the people should respond "Amen." In the same way, he elevates the chalice and says, "The Blood of Christ" and again the people respond "Amen." The priest should receive Holy Communion under both kinds using his own Host and Chalice. The priest will need to explain this to the congregation at this point.

There are two options for the distribution of Holy Communion. In both cases, because the people have already acclaimed the presence of the Lord, at the Priest's Communion, the People's Communion is distributed in silence with no dialogue between minister and communicant.

- Option 1

Once the priest has received Holy Communion, he should cleanse his hands with alcohol sanitiser before opening the pre-prepared ciborium for the Communion of the people. If there is a deacon assisting, or any other Minister of Holy Communion, they should similarly cleanse their hands and then receive communion from the priest from the people's ciborium, and under one kind only. They should then cleanse their hands again before receiving their ciborium from which they remove the covering or pall if it is still in place.

At the place where communion is to be distributed, a physical barrier should be placed, for example a prie-dieu (kneeler on the priest's side) or small table to socially distance the priest

distributing Holy Communion from communicants. Communion must be given silently in the hand only, with the communicant standing, and avoiding any physical contact. People should wait in their pews until instructed to move forward to the priest for Holy Communion by the Stewards, always aware of the regulations on social distancing in the orderly queue. When they approach the priest, they should do so with arms at “full stretch” so that there is a good distance between the priest and the communicant. Their hands, palms upwards, one on top of the other, should be extended as flatly as possible. Having received Holy Communion, communicants should move back to their pews in an orderly manner.

Once Communion is complete, the priest returns to the altar and places the unused Hosts, without touching them, into the Tabernacle and he cleanses the sacred vessels himself in the usual way.

✓ • Option 2

The priest receives Holy Communion as described and immediately cleanses his paten and chalice. He then holds a reverent silence before the Prayer after Communion, giving the Blessing and dismissal. At this point, the other Ministers of Holy Communion who will assist the priest come forward, cleanse their hands and receive Holy Communion under one kind. They then move to the points for distribution and communicants are stewarded forward in an orderly manner to receive Holy Communion as above, and then immediately leave the Church. The remaining Blessed Sacrament is placed into the Tabernacle and the vessels cleansed in the usual way.

After the Celebration of Mass

The procession from the sanctuary at the end of the Mass should ensure good social distancing. The sanctuary party should return to the sacristy after Mass. If the clergy wish to greet the people, they should remove their vestments first and not engage in any physical contact with parishioners, who should be encouraged to return home and not remain.

The celebrant should place the used altar linens into a receptacle for laundry. All sacred vessels should be washed in hot water with a little neutral soap and dried completely before storing. Any discarded printed materials should be removed and bagged for disposal.

The church should be closed after the Mass has finished in order to clean the space according to the Bishops’ Conference guidelines on individual prayer. If there is cause for concern regarding the possible contamination of clerical vestments worn during the celebration of Mass, these should be washed in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, using the warmest water setting allowed for the fabric and allowing time for them to dry completely.

Celebrations of Mass Outdoors

If there is space for the celebration of Mass outdoors around the Church, which allows for the social distancing guidelines of Government to be fulfilled, and that all of the above liturgical advice can be done safely, then there is no reason why Mass cannot be celebrated outside of a church.

Rev. Canon Christopher Thomas
25th June 2020
Revision 6

Email to Diocesan Clergy - National Guidelines for the Celebration of Mass and Confession

Jenny Davies <jenny.davies@rc-birmingham.org>

Fri 26/06/2020 13:34

 4 attachments (410 KB)

2020.06.24 - Guidance for Acts of Worship - Confession - Revision 4.pdf; 2020.06.25 - Guidance for Acts of Worship - Mass - Revision 6.pdf; 2020.06.24 - Archbishops' Letter - FINAL.pdf; Mass Sign Off Sheet.docx;

Dear Fathers, Dear Deacons,

I attach the National Guidelines for the celebration of Mass and Confession. Please do take some time reading them and noting all the details. I will not be referring to them all in this email, which I am sorry is necessarily lengthy. These are not straight forward matters.

Churches that have uploaded their Risk Assessment and opened for individual prayer may begin celebrating Mass in accordance with the guidelines from the 4th July. There is no need for a further Risk Assessment. By celebrating public Mass the parish priest is saying that he has read the guidelines and is fully complying with them.

Churches that have not completed the Risk Assessment for individual prayers may not open for public Mass. Funeral services may now be Funeral Masses, in accordance with the guidelines on Mass in conjunction with the remaining appropriate and relevant guidelines for funeral services.

No priest is obliged to begin celebrating public Mass on the 4th July. No one should feel pressured to do so. I understand some parishes will be better placed than others in meeting the requirements of the Guidelines. You will see the Mass Guidelines are labour intensive and will require volunteers to help with stewarding and cleaning. It is perfectly acceptable to begin public Masses at a later date.

The use of live-streaming Masses should still be promoted. If a Mass is to be live-streamed with the congregation present and that is a new for the parish, then the live-streaming guidance, which is available on the intranet under GDPR, must be followed:

<https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/gdpr>

There is no obligation for people to attend Mass on Sundays. Please reassure your people by sharing the Archbishops' letter. Please encourage people to attend Mass on days other than Sundays.

Social Distancing in Churches

The National Guidance gives some discretion about the requirements on social distancing. It is for each Bishop to decide upon this point. Although the 2 metre rule is the norm, where that is not possible or practicable then "1 metre plus" is permitted from the 4th July. Our Diocesan Guidance is that the "1 metre plus" is the more practicable solution for our churches, it is permitted and should be followed. Many of our churches have a layout that makes the 2 metre rule impracticable. Further, the distribution of Holy Communion and people moving around, will, inevitably, breach the 2 metre rule. Rather than have different guidance in different churches, the Diocese recommends the "1 metre plus" approach in all

churches. This guidance will have to be kept under review in light of Government advice in the weeks ahead.

In time signage and markings in church will need to be adapted to a one metre radius separation. For clarification that means people from different households must be 1 metre apart in all directions. This will still severely restrict the number of places in church but will of course allow for more people and more volunteers than the 2 metre rule allows.

Obligatory Use of Face Coverings

With the use of "one metre plus," face coverings must be used by people in church. This is a Diocesan Policy as a consequence of using the one metre plus approach. This is the "plus," the mitigating factor that permits the one metre social distancing.

This requirement will need to be advertised, managed and strictly enforced by clergy and volunteers. Please note it is face coverings that are required, which may be masks or not. They can be homemade face coverings. It is the responsibility of the person attending church to provide a face covering for themselves, though some parishes may have stocks of face masks that could be used.

Government advice is that those with severe breathing difficulties and the under 5's are not required to wear face coverings. For the adults who cannot wear face coverings the advice is that they stay 2 metres distant from others. Children must be with their families and so distant from others.

The presiding priest is not required to wear a face covering if he maintains a 2 metre distance from others. However in keeping with the "1 metre plus" and in setting a good example for the people, we strongly recommend all those distributing Holy Communion wear a face covering for that action, even though nothing is said at that point. This is what happens in Europe and to our mind is a sensible precaution as social distancing under 2 metres is necessarily compromised.

Distribution of Communion

It is for the priest to decide upon which of the two options in the guidelines he will use. Consistency over time will help the people, no doubt. It will be helpful to explain to the people how Holy Communion will be distributed. Holy Communion may only be distributed under one kind and in the hand only.

Communicants will obviously have to partly remove their face coverings to consume the Host. Adults and children may present themselves for a blessing at that point. If that happens we recommend a silent prayer is shared with an out-stretched hand that does not touch the person.

Given the layout of the church and to maintain social distancing as best as people can, if it is better for the priest/minister to go to the people individually for distribution of Holy Communion, then that is an option. It may have to be distributed to the infirm by this method.

Clergy and Volunteers who are over 70 or have underlying health issues

Government advice is still that people over 70 or those with underlying health issues are more vulnerable than others and so should limit social contact. However advice has been relaxing over recent weeks. Bearing that in mind, clergy, volunteers and parishioners who are over 70 or have underlying health may preside, volunteer or attend Mass. It is a matter for the individual to make an informed decision. Please be prudent about selecting all volunteers. Clergy in these categories should not feel any pressure to return to a more active ministry and should follow the guidelines and not distribute Holy Communion.

Managing Numbers

Each church will need to calculate its new maximum capacity. It can do this either by allocating specific individual places with one metre separation in the same manner as with the individual private prayer to date. This is the simplest method but may underestimate your capacity. Alternatively capacity can be calculated by setting aside and allocating some rows specifically for family groups. The latter approach gives the benefit of enabling families to worship together in designated benches and so provides greater capacity. This method will better mirror what will happen as families attend.

If the latter method is used, it is essential that if family groups are allocated benches then they cannot be used by the equivalent number of people from two or more households who are required to be social distant. For example, a row allocated for a family of four could probably be used by two individuals if they remained over one metre apart.

It is recognised that the capacity will fluctuate depending on the family make-up of the congregation. That is unavoidable. The essential thing to monitor and enforce is that people from different households must be at least 1 metre apart and must be wearing face coverings. We will need flexibility and common sense in monitoring how many people can be in church for each Mass.

I attach a single sheet risk review Word document that you should upload to xcenta once you have assessed capacity for Mass and know when you will be beginning public Masses. Deacon Paul O'Connor can offer advice on capacity and the attached document.

We do not know how many people will wish to return for Mass. People may be wary. They may be very enthusiastic. If you have any means of assessing general demand, then do so.

There is no other option other than local clergy and volunteers will have to manage numbers at Mass as best as they can if more people turn up than can be accommodated safely. Practical options may include first come, first served, a means of reserving places in advance or any other creative means. If you choose a reservation process, then please bear in mind not all parishioners will be computer literate and also people will just show up. It is a matter for each parish to discern on how to proceed and I recognise this is not a simple matter. This will be a time of learning as we go along and I trust good practices will be shared by clergy.

The dispensation from the Sunday obligation is still in force. So please encourage people to come to Mass on days other than Sunday.

Additional Masses

To accommodate the people, clergy have reflected on offering more daily Masses. That is a matter for each individual priest to discern. As you discern please be aware that the church

It will need to be closed and cleaned after every Mass. That is a labour intensive and time consuming activity that requires willing and active volunteers. Back to back Masses with no cleaning are not permitted. So regular Sunday Mass times may have to be revised in some churches.

Please be aware that the usual limit of no more than three Masses per day is in part for the welfare of the priest. Please be realistic about what you offer as these restrictions will, no doubt, be in place for many weeks if not months to come.

Sacristy and Sanctuary

It is sensible to limit the people in the sacristy and on the sanctuary to those who need to be there. This will assist social distancing. Please clarify this and clarify roles with Deacons, MCs, Eucharistic Ministers, servers etc so that there is no upset.

Confessions

I do not have any additional comments on this guidance other than there is hierarchy of methods to avoid cross infection:

1. Outside satisfying social distancing
2. Outside with mitigation measures in place – the position of chairs, the use of face coverings
3. Inside socially distanced in a location away from the sanctuary and individual prayer
4. Inside socially distanced on sanctuary subject to cleaning before and after
5. Use of Roman style confessional boxes with additional perspex screen

The use of confessional rooms is strongly discouraged at present as that is the most likely means the virus would be spread. It would also require very regular cleaning.

I recognise that these are burdensome guidelines and I thank you for your patience, generosity and understanding. There is no rush to be ready for 4th July. There is no expectation on my or the Bishops' part to begin public masses on that day. We all must proceed carefully and safely.

I have not received guidelines for Marriages or Baptisms yet. I will share these when I receive them.

Deacon Paul O'Connor and I are willing to advise as best as we can.

With prayers,

Canon Stephen Wright VG

Canon Stephen Wright VG
vicargeneral@rc-birmingham.org
Direct +44 (0) 121 230 6237

Address: St Chads Cathedral "Cathedral House"
St Chad's Queensway

I hope you are all keeping well. I am conscious of the amount of guidance that has been sent out in recent days. I am loath to add to it. But I hope the following may assist with regards to some questions that have been raised by clergy and people.

Recording Worshippers for Track and Trace

You may be aware that the Government have asked places of worship to collate information of worshippers to assist track and trace. At present this is OPTIONAL for our churches and all places of worship. Last week the Government promised GDPR compliant advice to the Church on this. It has not been provided. In the absence of clear Government advice no church is expected to collate information about its worshippers. When we are able to pass on agreed guidance on how this may be done safely and in accordance with GDPR, we will do so.

The Use of Face-coverings

The use of Face-coverings is compulsory for Mass and will be compulsory for individual prayer if social distancing is less than 2 metres.

Government advice on children using face-coverings has not been consistent. At times they have said, 3+ years old must use them, 5+ years must use them and now children older than primary school ages must use them. So under 11's are not required to use them on the London Tube or in some hospitals, for example. It is better if children wear them, so we will stick with 5+ years old, but please be sensitive in enforcing children, especially young children, under 11, wearing face-coverings. We do not wish to cause unnecessary upset to children and their parents. Wearing face-coverings may well be a frightening experience for many children.

It is for each person to abide by good practice with face coverings. All of us are advised not to touch our faces or the front parts of face-coverings. When removing or refitting a face-covering it is advised that it is done so by using the straps around the ears. That may not be entirely practicable. I have received correspondence about this. Please note, all people, adults and children, will have used hand gel when entering and leaving the church. The church will have been cleaned before people enter and after they have left. People with symptoms are not to attend the church. People who live with people who have symptoms are not to attend church. These essential steps mitigate the risk of people spreading the virus by touching their face coverings or by any other means.

If clergy wish to offer the use of hand gel after people have necessarily removed their face covering to consume communion, then of course they may do so. But please be aware not to let this compromise social distancing.

Clergy Instructions to the Congregation

With Mgr. Michael Sharkey's permission I share his Instructions for Parishioners, which may help you. Within the overall Guidance, your instructions to your parishioners may well differ but it would be good to explain the new differences in

the celebration of Mass with your people at the start of Mass and perhaps at key points, such as Communion.

Toilets

Government advice now says that toilets should re-open if it is safe to do so. Our diocesan advice at this stage is to keep them closed. To open them is another very labour intensive requirement over and above managing the church. If emergencies arise then the toilet, basin etc... must be cleaned after each use. If clergy wish to open the toilets then they must do so in accordance with the guidelines below in the final link.

Marriage

Marriages may be celebrated from the 4th July onwards. I have received no Church guidance on this and so refer you to the national government guidelines below. The Government have imposed a maximum of 30 people at any wedding. This number is not to be exceeded. If the church capacity is lower than 30 you should not exceed the church capacity for a Marriage ceremony. Only churches that have completed and uploaded their Risk Assessment for individual prayer may open for Marriages.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-small-marriages-and-civil-partnerships>

This link below is the overall Government advice on places of worship opening for Public worship. It may answer any further matters that arise:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-4-july>

There is still no agreed Government Guidance on Baptism and Home Visits with Communion for the Sick. I will share these when I receive them.

Every blessing for this coming weekend.

Kind regards

Canon Stephen

Canon Stephen Wright VG
vicargeneral@rc-birmingham.org
Direct +44 (0) 121 230 6237



GUIDANCE FOR REOPENING CHURCH ROOMS UPDATED 1.7.20

Church rooms have been closed during the pandemic unless they are providing essential voluntary activities or urgent public support services. From June 1st schools have been able to re-open to more children. Some child care providers operate from church halls, and may wish to reopen to support the schools with which they work.

At the moment in almost all cases the only user of a church room will be a provider of child care. In these circumstances, if the childcare provider is an external organisation, the template letter provided with this guidance should be used, signed by the parish priest and countersigned by the child care provider.

This letter is effective only while that child care provider is the only user of the church room.

If childcare is provided by the parish, then please contact Geoff Taylor, Gerry Dryden or Clare O'Brien for guidance. Please also do so in respect of any organisation which usually bases its staff in a church room.

Although the Prime Minister announced that community halls (but not conference centres) would be able to reopen from 4th July, guidance on how to reopen community halls to hirers in a way which will make them COVID-19 secure has not yet been issued by the government. Neither has there been any guidance about the activities which can be permitted in church halls. As soon as government guidance is issued, the diocese will issue an appropriate Risk Assessment and detailed guidance for parishes. Similar to re-opening of churches the Risk Assessment will need to be completed and saved on the xCenta Health & Safety system

Until that time, church halls and rooms should not be made available to hirers. There is provided with this guidance a form of notice which can be sent to hirers who are keen to get back in, explaining the situation.

Even when the Risk Assessment and Guidance from the diocese are available, parishes will not be obliged to re-open church halls straightaway; particularly where it is not possible to provide a Covid-19 safe environment (e.g. lack of cleaning provision), or it may simply be uneconomic to open when considering income against any increased costs. We are conscious that many parishes will continue to focus on church re-opening at this time.

In the meantime, so that parishes can get ready for reopening when it is allowed, here are some pointers:-

- Each parish will need to carry out a risk assessment of their parish hall in relation to Covid 19, which will be based on relevant government guidance. There is also available via xCenta elearning modules for managers and employees about safe systems of working.
- Any potential occupier will need to carry out a Covid 19 risk assessment in relation to their use of the premises, and should confirm to the parish that they have done so before they can resume use of the church hall.
- Signs will need to be put up, covering
 - the need for those who are unwell not to attend or to go home as soon as they start to feel unwell,
 - the need to wash hands regularly and how to do so, and/or use hand sanitiser
 - catch it bin it kill it
 - the need for groups to clean all surfaces that are touched frequently at the end of each session
 - the need for windows to be kept open where possible
- Paper towels or hot air dryers will need to be provided for toilets.

It will also be necessary to give some thought as to how people will move into and out of the church room, and around the corridors and halls where applicable, to prevent congestion. Signage and tape on the floor to encourage social distancing will be necessary.