

Masses at St Mary's from 5th July 2020

We are very excited that we are allowed to celebrate Mass with a congregation from 4th July. This is subject to strict guidelines that have been agreed between the Bishops of England & Wales & Government. To make coming for Mass as safe as can be during a pandemic, there will be some changes. These are outlined as simply as possible below. The obligation to go to Mass each Sunday is still suspended, so you are not obliged to go to Mass on any day of the week. However, we are pleased to be able to offer you the opportunity. The new rules are outlined below. Some of them seem counterintuitive to our belief that our church is open to everyone. It still is open to all, we just need to make some different preparations before we come to Mass to ensure the safety of all our parishioners.

“How do I know when I can go to Mass?”

- There will be five Masses per week: Sundays 9.00am, 10.30am, 5.00pm; Wed 10.00am; Friday 10.00am
- Each Mass is as important as any other, whether on Sunday or on a weekday.
- The number of seats in the church has been reduced (61 parishioners, 1 priest, 1 sacristan, 4 stewards). This is because we are using 1m+ social distancing measures.
- To avoid us all turning up to Mass at the same time, & people being turned away due to lack of seats, we will be using a booking system.
- Booking online: You will need to book seats online using Eventbrite. You will be able to get the Eventbrite link from the Parish website on Wednesdays from noon. Eventbrite Booking will CLOSE at 9.00pm Saturday evening for the SUNDAY MORNING Masses & one hour before Mass for all other Masses (Including Sunday 5.00 pm). You will be sent a ticket via email.
- Booking by phone: We have set up an answerphone (07415000566) for those who do not use the internet. You be able to book by phone 07415000566 from Wed 12pm – Sat 12pm. Leave your name, phone number, number of seats requested, and the time and day of the Mass you wish to book. You will receive verbal or text confirmation of your booking.
- You may book **only one Mass per week**, to allow as many people as possible to receive the Eucharist.
- If you come to Mass without booking a seat, we will ask you to go home, and book into another Mass. The only time we would be able to allow you entry without a prior booking is if we have seats that have not been booked. We will not know this until just before each Mass.
- Chairs are arranged in the church individually at 1m+ from each other. There are some directly next to each other for those in the same household. The three front rows are suitable for families with children under five years old.
- Facemasks/coverings will be compulsory for everyone, including children so please bring you own face mask or face covering. We will be unable to allow you entry to the church without a mask or face covering

“I have booked my seat. What do I need to do when I get the church?”

- Please do not park in front of the church. We will be using the emergency door as an exit.
- Doors will open 15mins before each Mass, & you may have to queue up outside 1m from the person in front & behind. Please bring an umbrella/coat/sunhat and your own missal
- If you have any symptoms of COVID-19, please do not enter the church even if you have booked a seat. Go home immediately.
- Entry is through the front door, unless you are unable to manage stairs. If so, you may come in & out through the sacristy.
- In the porch, you will be greeted by a steward who will check that you have booked a seat. They will also ask you to put on your facemask.
- At the doors of the draught lobby, you will be greeted by a steward who will ask you to sanitise your hands & then read the safety signs on the blue boards. Please can coeliacs make themselves known to the steward.
- In the main body of the church, a steward will help you a seat.
- Sit down, pray & wait for Mass to begin. However tempting it is, please do not wander to talk to friends or go into the sacristy to book a Mass intention. Votive candles have been removed from the church.

“Will Mass be different?”

There are some changes to the pattern of the Mass to maintain our safety & 1m+ social distancing

- Mass will be a lot shorter than usual.
- **What’s missing?** We will not have any singing, musicians, altar servers, bidding prayers, offertory procession, kneelers nor holy water in the stoups. We will not share the sign of peace, nor receive the Blood of Christ from the chalice. There will be no Children’s Liturgy of the Word during 10.30am Mass nor Coffee after Mass. We are not permitted to use the Parish Centre yet. The toilets will continue to be out of bounds. Please make sure young children & vulnerable adults are aware of this.
- **Readers:** Our reader will sit on one of the chairs amongst the congregation. They will use a lectern on the steps on the altar, to avoid sharing the main lectern with Fr Jeremy. They will be supplied with single use gloves.
- **Collections:** There will be no collection baskets bar a donations box beside the exit. Parishioners are encouraged to make donations online via our website or by standing order.
- **The Communion Rite:** After the prayer & its response “Behold the Lamb of God...Lord I am not worthy”, Fr Jeremy will hold up the host & say loudly “The Body of Christ” to which we will all respond “Amen”. In the same way, Fr Jeremy will then elevate the chalice & say, loudly “The Blood of Christ” & we will again respond “Amen”. Therefore, when we go up to receive communion, we will do so in silence & there will be no dialogue between ourselves & Fr Jeremy.
- **Eucharistic Ministers:** We will need only one Eucharistic Minister to assist Fr Jeremy at each Mass, and only if our Sacristan Mark is not present.
- **Receiving Communion:** Communion will be given silently in the hand only, with the communicant standing & avoiding all physical contact. Please stand behind the marker. Put out your arms at full stretch with one hand on top of the other & as flat as possible, so that there is a good distance between yourself & Fr Jeremy/Mark/the Eucharistic Minister.
- **Blessings for those unable to receive Communion:** please remain seated. All are included in the blessing which ends the Mass.
- **Movement during Communion:** Our stewards will ask each row of people to go up and back again, before asking the next row of people to move. Fr Jeremy will distribute communion to all those on the chairs underneath the frescos first, whilst Mark/ the Eucharistic Minister gives communion to all those in the chairs next to the stained glass windows. Once this is finished, those in the middle area will be directed to come forward by the stewards.
- **Leaving the Church:** Once Mass has finished & Fr Jeremy has left the altar, the stewards will ask those in the chairs underneath the stained glass windows to leave the church first through the emergency exit in the Lady Chapel. Those in the middle area will go next, followed by those sitting underneath the frescos. You may not leave through the main entrance. Those who cannot manage stairs may leave through the sacristy accompanied by a steward. Hand sanitizer will be available at both exits.

“What else do I need to know?”

- **Cleaning the church:** Our cleaner will clean the church & all the chairs after 5.00pm Mass on Sundays & after the weekday Masses. This means we will be asking for parishioners to wipe down all the chairs & door handles after both the 9.00am & 10.30am Sunday Masses.
- **Stewards:** Without the fantastic work of our marvellous stewards, we could not have opened the church for individual prayer. We will now need four stewards at each of our Masses. Could you be a steward? If we are unable to maintain 20 stewards per week, we will not be able to have five Masses. We need people who are not in any of the vulnerable categories, are smiley & welcoming, & are happy to explain all the guidelines to parishioners. Please email the Parish Office bath.stmary@clifftondiocese.com asap if you are able to help.

“When will Mass go back to normal?”

- Your guess is as good as ours. Please pray for an end to the pandemic, & for all those who have lost loved ones due to COVID-19. Please thank God for all those who have worked tirelessly to care for the sick, clean our buildings, maintain our food supply chains, teach our children, collect our rubbish, complete risk assessments and create guidelines to allow us to move back into St Mary’s. **Our Lady, Help of Christians: Pray for us.**