

ST MARY'S PARISH

NEWSLETTER INSERT FOR THE WEEKEND OF THE 24TH AND 25TH JULY 2021

The Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Diocese have now provided guidance to parishes on the approach which is to be taken as the country moves into Step 4, from 19th July 2021, of the Government Covid-19 Response Roadmap, which was published earlier in the year.

The guidance makes it clear that although many of the legal restrictions have been removed, the general principles of continuing to maintain a safe environment in places of worship and their ancillary buildings cannot be abandoned. Recognition of the presence of the virus in the population means that certain preventative measures will still be required; moreover, it is important to ensure that the Diocesan trustees are seen to be discharging their general Health and Safety responsibilities in relation to the pandemic.

Accordingly, a summary of the measures that will be maintained at St Mary's Parish is shown below.

- Specialist cleaning of the Church will continue to take place on one occasion each day;
- There will continue to be involvement by some stewards during the course of public Masses;
- Pre-booking to attend weekend and Holy Day of Obligation Masses will continue;
- Hand sanitising will continue to be available and encouraged;
- Although the legal requirement to wear a facemask has been withdrawn, it is strongly recommended that facemasks continue to be worn whilst in the Church;
- The pews will continue to be arranged so as to facilitate continued social distancing;
- The Church will open 15 minutes before the times of Masses but will not be left open on other occasions for the time being;
- The one way systems for movement in the Church will be retained for the time being. However, there may be less supervision by the stewards on occasions;
- The current system for dispensing and receiving Holy Communion will be retained for the time being;
- The suspension of the physical Sign of Peace will remain in place;
- The current system of placing an offertory box by the main exits will continue for the time being;
- The arrangements for baptisms, weddings and funerals should be discussed directly with Fr. Paul;
- Social activities in the Hall after Masses will continue to be suspended, but will be reviewed in the hope that these can be resumed in some form as soon as possible.

These measures will be subject to ongoing review to determine how they can be adapted to the evolving situation. I apologise for the fact that it has been necessary to maintain some of the restrictions for a while, but this is on the instructions and advice of the Catholic Bishops' Conference and the Diocese.

If there are any uncertainties, please do not hesitate to seek assistance from Fr Paul, Emily or Elvira.

Fr Paul Gillham, IC