

St Mary's – Covid-19 Update – 29 June 2020

Following the recent announcement by the Metropolitan Bishops that places of worship will be able to reopen for prayer and services, the Bishop of Lancaster has now announced that churches in this Diocese will soon be allowed to reopen for Mass.

We have to work to strict protocols to ensure that our churches put in place all the measures needed to ensure the risks of virus transmission are minimised.

At St Mary's, Fr Michael has established a small working group to examine all the issues involved with reopening.

Initially we have to meet all the requirements of a Health & Safety questionnaire, ensuring we can provide a safe environment. This is not just a case of supplying hand cleanser and keeping people at a safe distance. Maintaining an orderly flow into Church. Deciding which benches will be safe to use for individuals and or family groups. After Mass, guiding people outside so they can meet up with friends again.

This cannot be achieved without a team of stewards who will act as guides for the parishioners, ensuring social distancing is maintained and inviting those present to receive Holy Communion in an orderly queue, then allowing safely to return to their seats.

It is a requirement that all the benches, kneelers and book-rests are cleaned after every Mass which of course will require more people to volunteer as cleaners.

Most important, we have to create a safe environment for Fr Michael to distribute Holy Communion.

You will appreciate all these preparations are ongoing, consequently it will be some time before we can re-introduce Sunday Mass. Remember, we can still enjoy and participate the streamed Mass each Sunday morning, and this will continue even after the Church fully reopens for the benefit of those unable to attend in person, or perhaps wishing to avoid close contact in these difficult times.

We ask for your support and patience. There will be a list of rules which we must all abide by when we reopen, but this will come later.