

Dear Parishioners of St Joseph's & St Charles,

As I write, the necessary equipment and permission to reopen the church have not yet come. In order to have some clarity therefore, I can confirm having spoken with our bishop, that I shall celebrate holy Mass outside at St Joseph's at the following times this weekend:

Saturday, 4 July, **5.00pm** (*note the change in time*)
Sunday, 5 July, **8.30am & 10.00am** (*both at St Joseph's*)

It is important to note the following:

- HM Government has granted us the privilege of gathering together in a number greater than 30 in order that we might undertake **Public Worship**. We must respect this and not, especially after Mass, treat it as an occasion to meet up with people. We have come to speak with and of God – not to each other. You are asked to disperse quickly and return to your home.
- Social distancing rules still apply. Please stay two metres from anyone who is outside your household or social bubble.
- The cardinal and our archbishops have said, '*We ask every Catholic to think carefully about how and when they will return to Mass.*'¹ Remember, in the interests of the common good and public health, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended and Live-streamed Masses will continue.
- HM Government strongly advise that those who are aged 70 or older and those who are vulnerable or shielding should not return to places of worship until after 1 August.
- The gates will be half-closed so that cars will not be able to park inside the church grounds.
- No seating will be provided for Mass outdoors. You are welcome to bring a chair or a blanket. I estimate, should you wish to remain standing throughout, that Mass will take about 25 minutes. I am afraid that our tradition of fine music, singing and altar serving will be but a memory for now.
- You should be prepared for either wet or sunny weather. No toilets will be available.
- Taking into account lines of sight, I shall erect a small altar at the door to the presbytery – covered from the elements – and, when Mass has concluded, I shall distribute Holy Communion from the porch of the church (undercover).
- Siting the altar at the house should mean your hearing is focused away from the road. As you know, I am fond of following the example of the Duke of Wellington in *Blackadder*, and I shall endeavour to 'Shout, shout and shout again!'
- Holy Communion should be received in the hand. Please stretch your arms out and form a shallow cup with your hands to receive the Sacred Host.
- Please follow any instructions from the stewards.

- Those closest to the church porch should come forward first for Holy Communion and then leave the grounds, gradually followed by those who are next nearest and so on. You can make your Act of Thanksgiving as you are leaving. This will allow our exit from the premises to be somewhat orderly and staggered.
- There will be a collection box by the presbytery where you may deposit any offering you may wish to make.
- Please be considerate of our neighbours. Some may be a little anxious at the sight of people returning to church. Leicester is an example that should remind us of the importance of continuing vigilance and appropriate behaviour, especially with regard to social distancing.

I know this seems a lot (it's just the start – wait until we return to church!) but the health and safety of all is of utmost importance. For now, let us look to what we can do rather than what we cannot. Could you please pass on the basics to anyone you know who does not have access to the internet or e-mail. Thank you.

Our Lady of Walsingham, *pray for us*

St Joseph, *pray for us*

St Charles Borromeo, *pray for us*

With my prayers,

Rev. Mark McManus

Parish Priest

2 July 2020

1. Archbishops' Letter on Resumption of Collective Worship, 25 June, 2020