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Saint Mary's Roman Catholic Church
Catlow Hall Street, Oswaldtwistle
Lancashire
BB5 3EZ

DIOCESE OF  SALFORD

Parish Priest: Rev. Fr. S D O'Brien
Tel: 01254-232433

Saturday 25th July 2020
Saint James the Apostle

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

We have all heard the proverbial saying, 'Famine or Feast'. Over the last month my email account has been bombarded daily with diocesan updates, health and safety requirements, instructional attached documents to be read, Bishops Conference Covid-19 procedures and temporary legal directives. This week there has been a mailbox famine (thank goodness!) and only two items have been sent through from the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. They are as follows:

Social Distancing - IMPORTANT

Worshippers should limit their interactions with anyone they are not attending church with, i.e. if they are attending corporate worship with one other household, wherever possible they should maintain social distancing with anyone outside of this group.

Face Coverings

Face coverings are currently mandatory on public transport and will be mandatory in shops and in supermarkets from 24th July 2020.

People are also strongly encouraged to wear face coverings in enclosed public spaces where there are people they do not normally meet, such as a church.

Mgr. John Daly has also emailed the clergy to say: '**Please further note that the Salford Diocese is still maintaining a 2-metre rule re social distancing.**'

Thanks to our volunteer stewards I am able to celebrate Mass publicly on these further dates.

Tuesday 4th August 6pm – Saint John Vianney (Memoria)

Wednesday 5th August 10am – Votive Mass of Saint Joseph

Thursday 6th August 10am – Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord

Friday 7th August 6pm – Votive Mass of the Sacred Heart

Again, following government directives, Bishops Conference conditions and diocesan requirements people are asked, for the time being, to book a place for Mass. See below for more details.

Preparation

- We are all still dispensed by the Bishop from the Sunday obligation.
- The government and the Bishop have limited the number of people attending the Holy Mass at our church to 30 people.
- In order that we comply with this requirement and maintain social distancing, a temporary phone booking system will be in place. This is not ideal but we do not live in ideal times at the moment. I would like to thank Ursula Heyes who has kindly volunteered to undertake this temporary work.
- To book please ring Ursula on Wednesday 29th July from 5pm - 6pm or on Friday 31st July from 5pm – 6pm on 232 433. For those parishioners that you know, who do not have access to the parish website, could you kindly pass this information on.
- People can also book online via the parish website under the title 'Bookings'. These further new Mass dates will be added in the coming week. Again, you can only book for you or your household.
- When you book you will be asked for personal contact details in regards to the government's NHS Test & Trace system. In line with GDPR those details will be held securely for one month and then destroyed.

- When you book, it will be for one particular Mass at a specific date and time, you are not booking a Mass for perpetuity.
- Families may sit together. Please state this when booking as all household members contact details will be required.
- You cannot book on behalf of another person. One household, one booking.
- The stewards can only allow entry to those who have booked.
- There will be no public toilet facilities for the time being in church.
- The frequency of Masses and liturgies available is entirely dependent of the generosity of time that volunteer stewards are able to give. The more stewards the more Masses. If you would like to volunteer please contact Jennifer Pickles at jennifer.pickles@virginmedia.com

Mass

This next section deals with the requirements and conditions for celebrating the Holy Mass by both the diocesan authorities and the Bishops Conference of England and Wales. I am grateful to our Dean, Fr. Stamp at St. Anne's, for writing this down in a clear and concise way and allowing me to copy it.

- People are asked to come to church in plenty of time before Mass begins in order to make life easier for the volunteer stewards.
- As you enter church please wait at the back, social distancing, and a steward will greet you and direct you to your allocated seats. Mgr. Daly has reminded us to say: 'Advise all that their 'usual seats' will not be available.'
- There will be no Sacristans, Altar Servers, Readers, Choirs, musicians or Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. The Bishops have made clear that for the celebration of Mass, no-one except the Priest is permitted inside the Sacristy, only the Priest should touch the chalice, vestments and sacred vessels, and no-one should approach the Priest while he is on the Sanctuary.
- There will be no Prayers of the Faithful (Bidding prayers).
- There will be no Sign of Peace.
- Holy Communion will be distributed by the Priest at the end of Mass instead of at the usual time. Stewards will direct parishioners, row by row, to come forward for Holy Communion, after which they will direct parishioners to leave the church via the one-way system. This is in order to avoid the danger of people gathering together in the church after Mass, to relieve pressure on Stewards to police this (remember they are already kindly giving their time) and to ensure the church can be cleaned and disinfected straight after. This is the method for receiving Holy Communion recommended by the Bishop's Conference at this time.
- There will be no singing or music during Mass.
- Priests have been asked not to sign any Mass cards to discourage anyone coming into the Sacristy before or after Mass. If you would like a Mass offered, please write the priests name on the card and post the donation with the intention through the presbytery letter box.
- We have also been asked not to display any notices at the back of church except the poster with details of the Parish Safeguarding Representatives in case this causes people to 'bunch up' whilst reading or looking at notices.
- Social distancing of 2 metres will be observed by all who are not living in the same household or sharing the same social bubble. This removes the requirement for the congregation to wear masks, but anyone who wishes to wear a mask and would feel safer doing so is welcome to wear their own mask during Mass.
- There will be no access to toilets or sinks. If you require water during Mass, please bring your own bottle of water with you.

God Bless and keep praying
Fr. O'Brien