

## **What to Expect at Mass**

The Welsh Government has now allowed our churches to be open for Public Worship. Initially, due to the necessary restrictions under which we can safely operate, we will only be able to offer this facility at St. Mary's Bridgend and here the numbers able to attend will be limited.

The Bishops' Conference of England and Wales has confirmed that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended. So please do not feel under any pressure to attend the Church when online or phone Mass are valid alternatives. Mass will continue to be celebrated each day via live stream from St Mary's whether the Church is open for public worship or not.

One of the biggest changes you will notice is that the available seating in the church is down from 24 benches to 10 benches to accommodate the 2m social distancing rules. This means at maximum capacity 50 people will be able to attend Mass.

With everyone keen to come back to Mass and the limitations that we face it will be necessary for you to register to attend Mass by booking a slot.

## **Booking to attend Mass**

- Spaces are limited and for weekend Mass a booking will need to be made by email or telephone on a first come, first served basis.
- You must book if you wish to attend Mass. We do not want to turn people away at the door, **so if you have not booked in advance – PLEASE DO NOT ATTEND.**

By registering to attend Mass, you confirm the following conditions are met:

- You currently show no symptoms for Coronavirus.
- Should you develop symptoms prior to the service, you will NOT attend
- You agree to use hand-sanitizer as a condition of entry.

***Your safety is our utmost concern. Whilst every precaution has been made to sanitise and maintain the sanitizing of each church as it reopens, we cannot guarantee that you will not come into contact with the virus and therefore we urge you to continue to follow the government guidelines. If you are 70+ years of age or have underlying health conditions we recommend you stay home and stay safe. The same goes if you live with anyone who is vulnerable to the virus.***

## What to expect at Mass

- Doors will open 15 minutes before to allow preparation and prayer.
- Masks although not compulsory are advised.
- There may be a queue outside the church as you wait to be seated. Please remember to stay at least 2 meters apart. We have placed some marks in the forecourt to help.
- You will enter the church through the main front doors at St. Mary's.
- You will be greeted and then seated by a steward.
- The church will be filled from the FRONT to the back. (Please be patient and courteous with the stewards as your usual seat may not be in use or out of sequence!)
- When you get to your pew as an individual please center yourself on the cross. Family groups may sit in between 2 crosses and then leave the marked space to the next X.
- Do not sit on the very ends of each bench – you will see a red marking. The space beyond this towards each aisle must be kept clear.
- Please do not tug on the kneelers they are not to be used.
- To maximize the safety of all concerned until further notice all liturgical ministries are currently suspended.
- No congregational singing is allowed at Mass and any responses should be made in a low tone, as singing and loud voices have been shown to spread the virus further.
- After the Gospel the priest will preach a very short homily and there will be no Prayer of the Faithful. There will be no Sign of Peace.
- Before the priest receives Holy Communion he will separately hold up the Host and the Chalice making the traditional exclamation "The Body of Christ", "The Blood of Christ" at which point we all say "Amen".
- To allow for social distancing stewards will then invite people forward to take Holy Communion. A barrier will be in place where you are to stop to receive the Sacred Host. Please do not touch the barrier.
- You are asked to receive the Lord in your hand only extend your hands and arms at full length with both hands palm up (one hand on top of the other).
- Once you have returned to your pew Fr will end Mass stewards will then ask you to exit the Church from the BACK to front via the side exits.
- Please follow the one-way directions.
- As you exit the Church there will be a basket for your collection offering, however you are encouraged to sign up for a standing order if at all possible.
- Please sanitize your hands
- Toilet facilities will only be made available in emergencies, to access them please speak to one of the stewards.
- You may be bringing your family to Mass. In the current climate it will be necessary for any children to stay in the pews. There cannot be free roaming around the church and the toilet facilities are not available except in cases of emergencies.

## **Thank you to our volunteers**

When you come to Mass please remember that our volunteers are giving of their time to enable you to come to Mass. They may ask you to do something you do not want to do, or ask you to sit in a place you do not normally sit. Remember they have received their instructions directly from the clergy to follow the Health and Safety requirements to remain Covid-safe.

## **Could you volunteer?**

We need teams of volunteers who can steward before, during and after Mass and then clean and sanitize the Church ready for the next Mass. If we don't have enough volunteers we will not be able to open for Mass.

- PPE is provided.
- Cleaning materials are provided.
- You MUST BE under 70 with no underlying health problems.

## **Volunteers needed for:**

- Saturday 6.00pm Mass
- Sunday 11.00am Mass
- Sunday 6.00pm Mass
- All weekday Masses

***As we restart public Masses, we will need to keep in mind that it will be a very different experience to our celebrations before the lockdown. There are many guidelines and rules in force that require us to adapt our worship practices.***

***Thank you for your understanding and we look forward to seeing you soon.***