



St Mary's Parish, Haddington Road

Return to Public Worship Newsletter

12 May 2021

Mass Arrangements

Following the recent Government announcements relating to the change in the Covid Measures and specifically the arrangements relating to the reopening of places of worship, a number of members of the Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) met on Tuesday May 11. At that meeting, we reviewed the arrangements for St Mary's that will allow us to hold our public Masses in safety and to accommodate as many parishioners as possible within the limits that are allowed.

St Mary's, like every other parish of the Archdiocese, will be adhering to the Government's COVID-19 Guidance for Religious Services. We are above all mindful of the safety and well-being of everybody attending Masses.

We would also draw your attention to the letter from Archbishop Dermot Farrell, which is on the Parish website (and in our Parish newsletter for last weekend). In that letter, Archbishop Dermot explains the general provisions, issued by the Government, that apply to this re-opening of Public Worship and in particular to the special arrangements for funerals and weddings.

In noting the arrangements for attendance at the Public Masses in St Mary's, it is very important that we all show flexibility, as the parish tries to do as much as we can within our given constraints. A year into the pandemic, we are well used to the required Covid protocols (as experienced in our shopping and other daily routines), and that our Mass attendees will be sensibly mindful of, and observant of, all necessary restrictions.

Numbers and attendance at Mass

The absolute maximum number that can be admitted to our church for any mass is **100 people**, in two "pods" of 50 (see below) and there are stringent guidelines for this.

The PPC asks parishioners to co-operate with the ushers on duty for our Sunday Masses, and support these efforts with understanding and in a spirit of solidarity and community. At all Masses, weekdays and weekends, the standard HSE Guidelines, notably the wearing of masks, should be followed.

Mass Times

As we resume Public worship, we are having daily Masses at 10 am on weekdays. For the weekend, we will start with just the two masses which have been web streamed during the lockdown. These Masses will, of course, continue to be streamed. Thus, we look forward to welcoming you to the 9:30 am and 11.00 am Sunday Masses. For the present, there will be no 6.00 pm Saturday Vigil Mass, nor a 5.00 pm Sunday Mass. Additional Masses will be celebrated as usual with the French and Croatian communities. The full PPC meets next Monday May 17th and we will then consider feedback on the initially reduced schedule of Masses – an issue which will be kept under continuing review.

Recommended Safety Measures

- Please use **sanitisers** available on entering *and* on leaving the church
- Please wear a **mask** at all times, except when reading.
- The church will be divided into two **PODS**, each with a maximum of 50 people; one will be at the front of the Church and the second in the rear of the church, the two separated by the passageway between the side door and the door to the corridor on the left-hand side.
- **Entering the church:** Those wishing to sit in **Pod A (at the front of the church)** should enter strictly through the side door **and** those aiming to sit in Pod B should enter only through the doors at the back of the church. Ushers will point out the available seats in each pod. There should be no mixing between the two pods.
- **Communion:** The priest will be assisted by the deacon or a Eucharistic minister, one at the altar (for Pod A communicants only) and the other half way down the church (for Pod B only). Please approach through the main aisle and return to your place by the side aisles, keeping the appropriate distance.
- **Leaving the church:** People in **Pod A** will leave the church only by either of the side doors, the one going through the side corridor and the one leading into the church yard, while people from **Pod B** will leave only through the two main rear doors,
- Please **leave the church immediately** and in an orderly fashion, respecting distancing, once the final hymn has concluded. We are asked to make our way promptly out of the church yard. We should strictly observe while on the church grounds.
- Please **refrain from singing**, even the well-known hymns, as this creates a genuine health risk and is not allowed for in the HSE guidelines. Our organist and cantor will take care of the music

Collections

We have received generous support from many parishioners but the reality is that we are functioning with less than one third of our usual income. The situation in the Archdiocese is also close to critical. This makes the need to maximise our collections all the more pressing. The Sunday Mass collections are what keeps the diocese going, including the salaries of our priests. These salaries were reduced by 25% last year and another reduction seems likely without additional income. The PPC, aware of the very difficult situation that exists for many people, asks parishioners to be as generous as possible.

Although Covid safety reasons there will be no traditional basket collections, people can donate through our two new "**Tap & Go machines**" by simply tapping your credit or debit card for a set amount. One machine is located just inside the side door (to be used by those in Pod A) and one is situated toward the rear of the church (for Pod B attendees). 60% of your "Tap & Go" donation will go towards the First Collection (to support the priests and retired priests of the Diocese) and 40% will be allocated to the Share Collection (which pays for diocesan services and the support of less well-off parishes). Alternatively we encourage you to give by using the **DONATE** button on our website.

We are delighted to welcome you back and look forward to the time when the restrictions will be further eased.