

Peace be with you.

Following the government changes to Level II announced on Monday, our bishops have agreed to allow public Masses to be celebrated in our churches.

We received an email yesterday, clarifying the restrictions we still face. As you know, the government has agreed to increase the number of people able to attend public gatherings to 100. The actual number allowed is however, limited by the size of the space, so as to allow for appropriate physical distancing. Given this restriction, we can accommodate approximately 70 people here in St Joseph's church. This number will vary slightly depending on how many families are present.

This evening, I met with the Parish leadership team including members of the Parish Council, to discuss how we proceed. It was agreed that we would make a gradual transition back to normal, rather than rush things. In order to give ourselves enough time to prepare, including meeting the prescribed health and safety requirements, we have decided to celebrate our first Sunday Mass, back in the church, on the Feast of the Holy Trinity - Sunday 7th June. This gives us 10 days to work through all the logistical issues and prepare. As you will see in the enclosed letter, our bishops are concerned that we make safety our priority.

Given that some people will choose not to come back to church straight away, we have decided to continue Live Streaming Mass (inside the church) This in itself will take a bit of sorting.

To simplify cleaning we will only be using the front door of the church and the seat cushions will be removed, during this time. We will need to clean the church after each Mass. If you are in a position to help clean the pews (straight after Mass), please register with Patrea in the office during usual office hours. (We are aware that most of our cleaners are not young and so, we need more people to be generous, to make this work. Also, this does not include vacuuming)

At each Mass, parishioners:

1. *are not to come to church if they are unwell*
2. *will need to use sanitiser on entering the church*
3. *will need to register for Contact Tracing at each Mass*
4. *will need to arrive early, as we can only accommodate 70 people (Mass will be live streamed for those who cannot make it)*
5. *are asked to ensure safe distancing is practised between each other and sit at least a metre apart (this will not apply to those from the same family or living in the same bubble)*

Also, the original Mass restrictions made before the March lockdown remain in place

1. *At the Sign of Peace, people should avoid shaking hands or other contact with one another, and instead smile, nod or bow to one another.*
2. *Communion will only be made available under one kind - the Body of Christ. This will only be distributed in the hand, not on the tongue.*
3. *Holy water is to be removed from vessels at the church door*
4. *The collection baskets will be placed at the entrance of the church and not passed around during Mass*

This Sunday, the 31 May will be Live streamed only