

## **Guidance for Attendees of Mass at Our Lady Immaculate from 16/05/2021**

### **Background**

Our Lady Immaculate re-opened for public Mass on Sunday 28th March and following further discussions and meetings to review existing and any new procedures, updated documentation, procedures, and posters were put in place from Sunday 16th May. The need for these or any other restrictions will be reviewed on a regular basis and in particular towards the end of June when restrictions are planned to be fully removed.

Numbers will continue to be very restricted - 14 attendees (plus some family members - see below) but the two Volunteer Stewards are not included in this number and will have their own chairs at the back of the church should the church be at full capacity.

No-one under 18 will be admitted to the building unless accompanied by an adult member of their own household.

Only alternate pews within the church will be in use with the others unavailable and so marked, and the pews in use will be staggered left to right to enhance distancing and to simplify seat allocation.

A pew can contain up to two individuals not from the same household, a couple from the same household or a family group from the same household that includes at least one adult member.

The toilet at the back of the church will not be in use and will be locked. In any emergency the house toilet will have to be used but given the issues of cleaning etc. will only be used where absolutely necessary. Families with young children should consider if this will be suitable for them.

There continues to be no Obligation to attend Mass on a Sunday.

### **Before attending church**

Ours is a small church with a diverse congregation and our ability to meet the strict criteria for re-opening is borderline. We have therefore had to apply additional restrictions and apply some restrictions more strictly. None of this is intended to discriminate against anyone but is intended to ensure the safety of those of our parishioners who wish to attend Mass at our church as soon as they feel comfortable to do so. It is therefore possible that attending Mass at Our Lady Immaculate is not possible for everyone but it needs to be borne in mind that the lifting of the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday remains in force.

While Masses will be shorter than normal and there will continue to be no singing and some other changes, bidding prayers, the Creed and other responses can once again **be said in a normal voice**, further instructions will be conveyed by Fr. Maurice or the Stewards where appropriate.

## **Before attending church (continued)**

There may be background entrance and exit music but you must not sing along with this music.

Registration is mandatory in order to attend any given Mass and there will be no exceptions at the door even if there is space in the church at the time. We will employ a hybrid online booking and telephone based registration system. Names and contact details of all those who visit our churches will be required and will be retained for 21 days.

We will use the Diocesan arranged Eventbrite Online Booking System, with 10 places available to book per Mass. The full name and email address of the person making the booking will have to be supplied in order to use the online booking system, 1 ticket is required for each attendee and the full name and a telephone number will be required for each attendee. The link to the Online Booking System can be found in the Lockdown page of the Parish website - <https://www.ourladyspateleybridge.org.uk/lockdown/>

Telephone booking will also be possible by calling Fr. Maurice on **01423 711277** on **Tuesday and Thursday** from **2:00 pm to 5:00 pm**. Father will be able to allocate up to 4 places by telephone. A name and telephone number will be required for the booking.

The cut-off times, after which booking of a place for Mass will not be possible, are as follows:

- For Masses on a Sunday      5 pm on the prior Thursday for telephone bookings
- 5 pm on the prior Saturday for online bookings
- For Masses on a Wednesday    5 pm on the prior Tuesday for telephone bookings
- 3:30 pm on the prior Tuesday for online bookings

Please note that changes may be made to some bookings – moving family groups to 2 tickets or converting online tickets to telephone tickets – in order to manage capacity at our small church. In any case both bookings made and attendance as requested is assured.

Stewards on duty at the church will wear face masks and follow strict Covid-19 hand and face hygiene regulations.

Fr. Maurice will not wear a mask during Mass but will put on a mask prior to moving to the back of the church to give out Holy Communion and Blessings at the end of the Mass.

Face coverings are obligatory for those 11 years old and over - no exceptions - and children under 11 should be encouraged to wear a face covering if possible. Please ensure you bring your own face covering as you will not be admitted without one.

There will be no movement of attendees within the church during Mass, except in any emergency. Families with young children should consider if this will be suitable for them.

## **Before attending church (continued)**

The usual restrictions apply on who can attend, including those showing symptoms of infection with the virus. A notice of this will be prominent on approach to the church.

There will be no access to the sacristy or any other parts of the church or house before or after Mass (other than for Fr. Maurice) and so please do not come to church at Mass times for any purpose other than to attend Mass.

## **Attending Mass**

Please come in good time to allow for controlled entry to the church. You may still have to wait and queue outside the church and if so please ensure that **2m** Social Distancing is observed. Please also ensure that you observe **2m** Social Distancing at all times as our church is too small to allow us to relax this constraint.

Entry to the church will be via the driveway gate straight towards the church, in order that signage placed on the Commemorative Bench can be clearly seen and read. The top garden gate entry to the church will not be in use and this gate will be locked.

There will be at least two Stewards on duty at each Mass, one outside the church -

- checking names and registrations
- ensuring face coverings are worn
- providing guidance on the procedures inside the church
- dispensing hand sanitising fluid to attendees before entering church and after leaving
- providing assistance and dealing with any emergencies

and one inside the church

- directing attendees to their allocated seating
- ensuring **2m** Social Distancing is observed at all times
- ensuring that attendees stay in their allocated seat
- controlling the orderly and safe exit of attendees from the church
- providing assistance and dealing with any emergencies

A table will be placed outside the door of the church, where may be displayed additional signage and where will be found hand sanitiser dispensers for your use prior to entering the church. **Only in the case of very inclement weather will this table be placed and hand sanitiser dispensed inside the porch.**

## **Attending Mass (continued)**

Please wait outside church until called forward by a Steward, do not enter the church without being called forward. Where appropriate, collect together as a couple or family group before approaching the Outside Steward so that you can be allocated as a family group to a pew.

On entering and leaving the church, Stewards will dispense the hand sanitising fluid to attendees before they enter church and after leaving.

Only one individual or household group (couple or adults with children) will be allowed to move through the church at any given time.

A **Please help keep us all safe and well – Reminder** notice will be found near your seat with guidance on how to help keep us all safe; please read and follow the instructions on this and leave the **Reminder** in place when you exit the church at the end of Mass.

A **WELCOME TO...** bullet point notice – a smaller version of the A3 poster placed outside the church - will also be found near your seat with brief bullet point guidance on how to help keep us all safe; please read and follow the instructions on this and leave the notice in place when you exit the church at the end of Mass.

The Holy Water stoups will not be in use and will be empty, there will be no offertory candles available and no Hymn Books, paper Missalettes or Bulletins will be in the church. Attendees are welcome to bring their own personal Missals if they wish but please ensure that these are taken with you as you leave the church.

You will not be able to choose your own seat, attendees will be directed and seated by the Stewards, starting from the front of the church to the back of the church in strict order of arrival. The only exception to this will be in the case of individual Attendees who may be directed to an empty single seat further forward in the church.

Please do not embarrass our Stewards by asking to be seated elsewhere or near friends.

You must not move around or get up from your seat during Mass.

There will be no congregational singing at Mass and there will be no children's liturgy of the Word.

There will be no procession of the offertory gifts and no collection of offerings will be taken during the Mass.

The Sign of Peace will not be exchanged at Mass.

Holy Communion will not be given during Mass but instead will be given on leaving the church after the Blessing and Dismissal at the end of Mass; special instructions will be in place and will be conveyed by Fr. Maurice.

Please do not leave any rubbish or other items in the church when you leave.

## **Leaving the church**

After Mass the church will be vacated in a strict back of the church to front of the church order that will be strictly controlled by the Stewards.

Please do not get up from your seat or make a move to leave the church until told to do so by a Steward.

Please ensure that you check and take all personal belongings and rubbish with you when you get up to leave the church as you will not be able to collect these again until the church has been fully cleared.

The Outside Steward will take Holy Communion first and will then exit the church to take up station at the table outside to dispense hand sanitising fluid and provide guidance to Attendees on swift dispersal.

Holy Communion will be distributed in the hand only. When receiving Holy Communion, you should do so standing, with arms at 'full stretch' so that there is a good distance between Father and yourself. Your hands, palms upwards, one of top of the other, should be extended as flatly as possible. Holy Communion will be given to you silently. As Father will be facing you directly at this point, he will **NOT** say "The Body of Christ" and you should consume the Host immediately and **NOT** say "Amen" at this point.

You will need to momentarily lower or remove your mask or face covering in order to consume the Host and then immediately replace it to leave the church.

If you or a member of your family normally come for a blessing at the time of Holy Communion rather than receiving Communion, you/they should still fold your arms diagonally across your chest. Father will make the sign of the cross over you but without saying any words of blessing.

Please leave the church immediately, accept hand sanitiser when offered and disperse as soon as possible. While a relaxation of the guidance on gathering limits is gradually taking place, we will continue with a cautious approach at Our Lady Immaculate

There will be no tea/coffee offered after the Mass.

**Please keep safe and well**