

## **Reopening of the Parish Churches, St. Benedict's and St. Monica's**

As part of the programme for reopening various aspects of life in the country, places of worship are preparing to open up on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June.

Parishes all around the country have been preparing and planning to welcome their congregations back to their churches for the celebration of the Eucharist.

In the past few months people have 'tuned in' to the celebration of Mass by way of WebCam and this has been of great comfort to many people, especially for funerals.

It, however, is no substitute for the 'real' thing, that is, personally attending the celebration of the Mass as a community, along with fellow parishioners in the parish church. That is how Christ intended the Eucharist to be celebrated.

The numbers attending each of the churches will be severely restricted. At any one time only 50 people will be allowed attend each Mass. That number includes the priest, the sacristan, ministers of the Word and of the Eucharist.

In response to this severe restriction it is important to remember that anyone who can attend Mass during the week, Monday to Friday, is urged to make one of those days their 'Sunday' and so free up a place for someone who is working Monday to Friday. So, for example, Tuesday could become your new 'Sunday.' That recommendation comes from Archbishop Martin.

The coronavirus has forced us to adopt appropriate safe practices while we are in church. When you enter the church these will be evident to you immediately. Many of them are already in use in shops and other places of business. They include:

- **Hand Sanitising** – dispensers are readily available at the entrance.
- **Follow the floor signage** - a One-Way system is in place.
- **'Sit Here'** - sit only where marked.
- **Fill available places in order**, from the front to the back of the church.
- **Leaflets** will not be available at Mass.
- **Holy Communion** will be distributed row by row. For the first few weeks Deacon Gerard and the Priests will distribute the Eucharist. Holy Communion will be distributed on the hand only. Follow the signage as you return to your seats.
- **Antibacterial wipes** will be provided for you to wipe your seat before you leave. Wipes can be deposited in the bins provided.

- **Collection boxes** will be placed at the exits of the church. We would ask you to use the envelopes provided for the first and second collections. Please put your name and contact details on the back of the envelopes.
- **Leave church** one row at a time.

All of the above is based on advice given to us by the HSE, the Government, the Conference of Bishops and the Archbishop.

They are the main measures we will have in place when we start back on the 29<sup>th</sup> of June, which is the Feast of St. Peter and St. Paul. As we move along we may have to fine-tune certain aspects of the measures.

This is new and uncharted territory for us all and we pray that together we will do what we were always meant to do: ***to love God with all our minds, our hearts and our strength, and to serve our neighbour as ourselves.***

We might say the following prayer during the week:

**Soul of Christ, sanctify me,**  
Body of Christ, save me,  
Blood of Christ, inebriate me,  
Water from the side of Christ, wash me,  
Passion of Christ, strengthen me,  
O good Jesus, hear me,  
Within thy wounds hide me,  
Suffer me not to be separated from Thee,  
From all that is evil defend me,  
At the hour of my death call me,  
And close to you, bid me,  
That with Thy saints I may be praising Thee,  
Forever and ever,  
Amen.