

A Message from Fr George about the Re-Opening of our Church

Dear Parishioners,

It was with great excitement that I heard last week that we were being allowed to re-open our churches after three months of closure. While the permission to open is for private prayer only and does not cover any public services, it is a first step to being fully operational again and being able to worship together as a Community and Church family.

The permission to open has come with a lot of guidelines, which I regret, I need to pass on to you. It is difficult to put rules and restrictions on the use of our Sacred Space, but I am sure you will all acknowledge the need for these, both for your own protection and the protection of others. Please do not take offence at me listing these requirements here.

Providing we pass the Covid 19 the risk assessment that will be done on Friday morning we will be open:

Mondays to Saturdays from 9.30 to 10.30am.

Sundays from 9.30 to 11.30am

These opening times will be reviewed with our volunteer stewards after a week and if necessary, could be altered . We will keep you informed if there is any change

It as been made very clear to us by the government that private prayer must mean private prayer and that nobody is allowed to lead a prayer out loud or pray out loud in a group.

We will have a capacity for 40 people or households and if we reach capacity, we will need to ask you to keep your visit to 10 minutes so that others have the chance to enter the church. If we are not at capacity, we will not enforce this. Every place will be sanitized each time a person leaves so that you will know you are entering a clean space.

You will be asked to sanitize your hands on entering and leaving the church.

There will be a one-way system in place in the church and I ask you to keep to it. It will be clearly signposted. In support of this one-way system please enter the church through the front door on Deedmore Road and exit through the side door near the car park

Although we had said previously that it would be possible to light a candle, we have now been told that we cannot do it. Sorry about that!

Should you visit the church and later be diagnosed with Covid 19, please inform the parish by phone or email giving day and time of your visit. We will need to inform parishioners that somebody has tested positive, but your name will not be mentioned. This information should be sent either by phone or email to the contact details below:

Tel: 02476 612193, Email: stpatricks.covty@rcaob.org.uk.

We have been instructed to keep the toilets locked so please do not request to use them.

We must ask that you do not touch anything even in a devotional way and not to enter the cordoned off areas.

Please do not leave anything behind you when you leave the church as we are not allowed to keep lost property, and anything found after a visit will have to be disposed of. Take a good look round at your place before leaving especially if you have children with you.

The piety stall will not be available

I will not normally be in the church as I still have to shield but even if you do see me (or Fr Gareth from Sion who may be there) we are not allowed to perform any priestly duties for you such as confession, blessings or private chats and advice.

If you wish to wear a face covering please bring your own as we are unable to supply them.

Children are very welcome with adults but, for their safety and the safety of others, please do not allow them to run around. Anybody under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult and stay with that adult all the time they are in the church.

All this sounds daunting when you read it at one go, but don't worry as there will be three stewards on duty every time we are open, and they will guide you. Please respect them and follow their instructions. This keeps everybody as safe as possible.

I have asked Sr Frances to act in my absence. If she is unable to comply with any request you make, please respect her decision. She has studied the guidelines and understands what is allowed.

I hope to be able to look out from time to time and look forward to seeing some familiar faces. It is an exciting time and, if we keep these guidelines well, hopefully we will be able to return to Mass and the sacraments soon.

God bless you all

Fr George