

ST PHILIP NERI CATHOLIC CHURCH, SMETHWICK.

With gratitude to God we welcome all of you back this Sunday as we officially re-open for our usual communal worship in the church after some three months of lockdown because of the coronavirus pandemic. We keep praying for all those who have died in this pandemic that, God would graciously rest their souls in His heavenly kingdom. We pray God to grant His healing mercy to all who are still suffering the infection, and to protect all of us from the virus infection and as well heal our world of this deadly virus.

We are very much indebted to all our parish stewards, volunteers and cleaners for their gracious commitment and service to get our church prepared and ready to re-open this Sunday for our usual collective worship. Some of them did work from home. May God bless all of you abundantly with His enduring favours.

For the time being, the maximum safe operating capacity of our church, based on social distancing guidelines is 50.

CURRENT GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC MASS

Government advice is still that people over 70 or those with underlying health issues are more vulnerable than others and so they should limit social contact. However, advice has been relaxing over recent weeks. Bearing that in mind, volunteers and parishioners who are over 70 or have underlying health MAY volunteer or attend Mass.

Note: the Archdiocese dispensation from the Sunday obligation (CCC 2181) is still in force. Therefore, people are encouraged to come to Mass on days other than Sunday. [Our Weekday Mass remains; Tuesday to Saturday at 10 am.](#)

Please do not come to St. Philip's if you present any symptoms of the coronavirus or are living in a house with anybody who presents symptoms.

Please, do **sanitize** your hands on entering and exiting the church each time as indicated. And please, do follow the **signage** in the church as well as the **ONE WAY** direction. Obey the stewards, please.

For now, all the statues in the church remain **out of touch** and the devotional candles are to be lit from the lighted candle **ONLY**. No use of lighter/match. Holy Water stoups are empty. And church toilet is out of use for now.

Please, keep to the social distancing rule. Diocese recommends the "**1 metre plus**" approach. With the use of "one metre plus" **face coverings MUST be used by people in church**. This is a Diocesan policy. **However, those with severe breathing difficulties and the under 5's are not required to wear face coverings but must keep** the social distancing rule. And children must be with their families and so distant from others.

The presiding priest is not required to wear a face covering if he maintains a 2 metre distance from others.

Some pews in the church have been cordoned off to help us maintain the required social distancing rule. **Please do use only the designated available pews (2 or 3 persons in a pew, at**

most) or use the single arranged chairs. **However, members of the same household are free to sit together in a pew.**

During the Mass

There should be no congregational singing at Mass. All hymn books are removed from the church until further instruction is given.

NB: Please, the Mass bulletin should not be left behind in the church at the end of the Mass. Please, do take home the ones you used.

Readers should be supplied with single-use gloves and should avoid touching the microphones or the Lectionary during the Liturgy of the Word, apart from page turning. The homily should be brief and the Prayer of the Faithful should be omitted.

Offertory Collection: No passing of the collection plate or bag around. **Labelled baskets** for cash offerings are placed at the **Entrances and Exits** of churches, for people to put in their offertory.

However, people are encouraged to make their donation to the church **online or via standing order**. **You can set up a standing order if you contact the Parish Priest or the Parish Secretary** to provide our bank details to help you do this and help you set up Gift Aid if applicable.

Meanwhile, we seriously appeal for your financial help and donations for the church maintenance and utility bills during this period of lockdown and also to set off the costs of the cleaning Materials and Protective Equipment ordered for our church re-opening.

The Communion Rite: There is no sign of peace.

After the prayer and its response ***“Behold the Lamb of God...Lord I am not worthy,”*** the priest should hold up the sacred Host to the Congregation and say audibly **“The Body of Christ”** to which the people should respond **“Amen.”** In the same way, he elevates the chalice and says, **“The Blood of Christ”** and again the people respond **“Amen.”**

If there is a **Minister of Holy Communion**, they should cleanse their hands with sanitizer and then receive communion from the priest from the people’s ciborium, **and under one kind only**. They should then cleanse their hands again before receiving the ciborium to minister.

The Communion must be given in SILENCE and under one kind and in the hand only, with the communicant standing, with arms at “full stretch, avoiding any physical contact. **People should wait in their pews until instructed by the Stewards, to move forward for Communion if they wish to receive.**

Adults and children may present themselves for a blessing at this point, placing their hands across the chest. The priest then stretches his hand to bless without touching them.

After the Mass the church should be closed in order to clean the space. As the church ought to be cleaned after every Mass, before celebrating another Mass, we really request for more volunteers to join the cleaning group. Please, if you are interested in volunteering, email the parish office **Stphilipsmethwick@googlemail.com** or call **0121-5581065** as soon as possible.

Thanks immensely for your cooperation. You are heartily welcomed back.

Fr Damian Ozokwere, cssp.

(Parish Priest) 05/07/2020