

Parish of Blessed Carlo Acutis

Guidelines for Attendance at Mass 23. 7.21

As we move forward over the next few weeks, the guiding principle from the bishops, is to begin opening up as the government suggests, whilst at the same time ensuring that churches continue to be places where people feel safe to worship.

The survey at all the Masses last weekend revealed that the majority of parishioners would like to have a social distancing area available in each of the churches. From next Sunday, therefore, at the 5.30pm, 9.00am, 10.15am and 11.30am Masses, most of the church will be designated as an area of social distancing. There will be one sector left for non social distancing. The 6.00pm Mass will not have a social distancing area provided. As the architecture of each church is different, there will be an information sheet for each church available this weekend. Please be aware that the areas chosen for social distancing and non social distancing have been chosen carefully to ensure that the social distancing area is not compromised. This may mean that you may not be able to sit in an area of the church which you might have preferred. Please bear with us in this complicated time as we address these issues. Hopefully, it will not be too long now, before we can return to normal.

Here are the guidelines that we will be operating across all three churches from next weekend, 30th July/1st August.

- **YOU WILL NO LONGER BOOK TO COME TO MASS.** Each church has lists of names of those who have been attending and you will be ticked off the list when you arrive.
- If you are coming back to church for the first time, when you arrive, you will be asked to either register with the QR code or write your name and phone number on a slip of paper and place it in the box provided.
- When you arrive, you will be asked to wear a face mask in church (unless you are exempt), and you will be asked to sanitize your hands on entry.
- A steward will ask you if you wish to be socially distanced or not, and they will take you to the relevant area. In the socially distanced area, please fill from the front so that there are no gaps left in the pews that would mean someone would have to climb past you in the row.
- Members of the congregation are now permitted to sing if they are wearing a face mask.
- Readers no longer have to sanitise before they read but they can continue to do so if they wish.
- Stewards, Eucharistic Ministers and Servers will continue to wear face masks.
- Holy Communion is distributed differently in each church so please check the information sheet for your church. People in the non socially distanced areas will be able to process up to Holy communion in the normal way but please wait for a steward to call out your row so that there is no bunching together in the communion procession.
- Sanitiser will still be offered as you go up to Holy Communion, but this is totally voluntary, and is provided in case you sense that your hands may need cleaning after touching benches and handrails. Please ensure you have

rubbed your hands together well, so that they are dry before you receive the Blessed Sacrament. Please also ensure that you stretch out your hand as flat as possible.

- At the end of Mass you may stay behind to pray but please be conscious of others in your row who may want to leave. (Particularly if there is no other way out of the pew.)
- As you are leaving, please also ensure that you do not congregate within the church but go straight outside.

Specific Guidelines for attendance at St Bernadette's

- Hymn books are in the bookcase at the back of pew B4; please pick one up on the way in and return it when exiting.
- Three pews – Rows A3, A4 and the pew in-between will be non-socially distanced. The rest of the pews will remain as they are i.e. alternate pews only being used and parishioners choosing to sit there will need to socially distance. The five chairs on the right of the Sanctuary can be used for either, depending on demand.
- “Please leave a space” cards (to remain at church so that they can be reused), will be available in the porch on entry so that those that feel they’d be comfortable without an unused pew in front and behind, but would want to have space either side (a sort of “half-way house”), could put this beside them. This would help avoid any awkwardness of asking someone to move further away, because they have sat too close to you.
- Parishioners will not be allocated a seat, but will be able to seat themselves. A steward will be on hand to assist as necessary. When choosing where to sit, if you are socially distancing, could you please try and fully utilise one pew, before starting to fill another. If an individual sits in each pew, there wouldn’t be space for larger family groups who might need the whole pew in order to be able to distance from others.
- The offertory collection basket will remain as present on the stewards’ table in the porch and if there is a second collection a steward will hold a basket for when parishioners exit at the end of Mass.
- Tea light candles will be lit as at present by a steward, with requests/donations being given when entering church, but at the end of Mass parishioners may pray at the shrines. Please indicate at which shrine you wish the candle to be placed – Sacred Heart or Our Lady.
- There will not be any change to the way Holy Communion is distributed: servers and those parishioners sitting on the Sanctuary will continue to receive Holy Communion first, followed by those in the main body of the church, alternate rows from the front, led by a steward so that sanitiser can be offered to those who wish to use it.
- If you have any concerns about these new guidelines, please do not hesitate to speak to a steward or one of the priests.

Let us keep on praying for one another and for those who are sick and those who care for them during this pandemic.