



Our Lady of Lourdes Church

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Dear Parishioners

It was wonderful to hear earlier this week that we can begin to celebrate Masses again, with a congregation, from July 4th. Good news that this is, it is not as straightforward as it sounds. Because of the social distancing requirement, we are very limited as to how many we can accommodate in our church. That figure is a little hard to calculate. If it were just to be those who live alone, we could accommodate 40 individuals. But when those who live in the same house are added in, couples or families, then the number increases, but not enough to accommodate everyone, as it is necessary to 'rope' of every other pew.

That means there will have to be a limit on the number attending Mass. How to do this is not very easy. So, if you wish to attend Mass, please send an email to the parish office, or telephone, and indicate the numbers that will be attending Mass. You will then receive a message indicating if there will be space for you in church. **To be admitted to Mass you must have an email message confirming there is a seat for you. If you haven't got such a message you will, most regrettably, not be admitted.**

We will need stewards to ensure that the guidelines are followed, and others to assist with cleaning the church after each Mass. That means, that in addition to the volunteers that we already have, and for whom we are very grateful, we will need more, if we are to, eventually, resume celebrating all four Sunday Masses. It would be good to say that we will return to our usual Sunday, and weekday, Mass schedule, but I can't do that until I know that we have sufficient volunteers, for the different tasks.

At this point, as I don't know how many volunteers there will be, there will be just one Mass next Sunday at 10.30am. According to how many volunteers come forward, then a decision can be made about increasing the number of Masses. So, I would ask those that can, to think about volunteering to assist with making it possible to restart the celebration of Masses. **How many Masses are celebrated is really dependent on you**, please don't leave it for someone else. If you can help please send your details to the parish office. While this unusual situation continues, we hope to continue to live-stream one Mass each Sunday and, when possible, during the week.

Some Masses will be celebrated during the week. While the obligation to attend Mass continues to be suspended, I would ask those that can, to attend Mass on a weekday, and so allow those who can only attend on a Sunday, the possibility of doing so.

It is very good that Mass can be celebrated with a congregation, but this is not going back to normal. This is still a most unusual situation, and we continue to follow the guidelines from the Government and the Diocese, and which are in the interests of everyone. Together, though, we all look forward to that day, when we can all gather together and be nourished from the table of the Lord.

With prayer and good wishes.

Canon Anthony Dwyer