

4 July 2020

Dear Parishioners of St Hilda's,

It was excellent earlier today and last Wednesday to open the doors of St Hilda's for the first time since churches were closed in March. It was also good to see members of our congregation and some of the general public making use of the Church for Private Prayer and Reflection. This will continue to happen on Wednesdays between 9.30am and 11.00am and on Saturdays between 12.30pm and 2.00pm.

Since I last wrote, the government has issued advice that we can now return to public worship in our churches. In order to do this safely while the health crisis continues, the same principles of physical distancing, hygiene and safety will prevail.

At St Hilda's it will be important to maintain the two-metre social distance rule and to use hand sanitizer as we come into church and as we leave. Once in church, people from the same household or 'bubble' can sit together, otherwise social distancing must be observed at all times. The wearing of face-coverings will remain voluntary, though it may well give yourself and others a degree of reassurance. Those at risk and the 'clinically extremely vulnerable' should think carefully about the risks involved in attending public worship at this time.

When we do meet for worship there must be no singing or chanting. Holy Communion can be administered but only in one kind; for now, the suspension of the Chalice will continue. Our services for the foreseeable future will be shorter than usual, particularly because of the absence of hymn singing. It is also recommended that people leave the church through the north door while maintaining social distance. For the time being, there will not be refreshments following services.

It is essential that anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 should not attend a place of worship due to the risk that they pose to others. If anyone contracts symptoms having attended church, please let me or one of the churchwardens know, so we can play our part in the process of track and trace.

We will resume our Sunday Mass on **Sunday 12 July at 9.30am**, this will be a said celebration. Those who wish may receive Holy Communion observing strict social distancing as you approach the priest. The words of administration will be said before anyone communicates, and Holy Communion will then be given without any further words.

Please be assured of my prayers for you all, as we begin to get back to some form of normality.

Fr Mark

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