

Bulletin 17 – 14th Sunday of the Year

My Dear Brothers and Sisters,

They say that absence makes the heart grow fonder, I don't know about you but I am certainly feeling that sentiment at present. It's been 16 weeks since we have been able to gather together for Mass and during that time so much has changed in our lives. Our Church community like every other institution and group has been affected. We have had to adjust to a "new normal"; sanitising, isolating, social distancing, face masks. These are words that are now parts of our common parlance. The longed for day when we can open the church doors and welcome you all back is almost here, this Sunday we shall celebrate Mass together again. My prayer is that this enforced absence will have increased our love for The Lord and for each other.

In order to be able to open for Mass we have had to show that we are compliant with the governments new regulations and that we will adhere to the guidance of our bishops. Those regulations as they affect us are set out below and I ask you all to read and familiarise yourselves with them. I am extremely grateful to Deacon Michael for his Stirling work on this, you would not believe the number of "guidance" documents that have come our way in the last few weeks, all of course written in the language of Sir Humphry!

I am very aware that not all our parishioners are on-line. If you know someone in this category, please can you print off a copy of the Bulletin and Rules and pass it on to them so they can join us for Mass if they wish.

As I will now be celebrating Mass during the week – see our website for days and times - I do not feel there is a need to continue with Private Prayer and this will now cease. We will continue to pray the Rosary on Tuesday at 10.30, Holy Hour on Thursday at 10.30 to 11.30 and pray Stations of the Cross on Friday at 10.30. I would like to invite all of you who can to join us in Church or live stream these important prayer opportunities from home. I hope to reform our Bible Study and a Rosary prayer group shortly.

Please note: Both Mass during the week and these Prayer opportunities will follow the same Covid-19 rules, however, as numbers will be less and greater social distancing space available you do not need to wear a face mask unless you feel it appropriate.

I very much look forward to seeing you all on Sunday, I know that some of you will have to continue to isolate but you can still join us via live stream, in any case please be assured of my prayers for you.

Fr. John.

Rules & Regulations for Attending Mass

With 1 metre distancing and Face Masks we have a maximum capacity of 61 people in our church.

In order to be Covid-19 secure and maintain 1 metre + distance; face coverings are compulsory for adults and children other than babies in arms except when receiving Holy Communion. No mask – No entry.

GENERAL:

- You should be aware that there will be no Mass sheets or Orders of Service; please download your own from our website and bring them with you – you **MUST** take them home after Mass. **DO NOT** leave them in the Church.
- There will be **NO** Singing, Hymn Books, Readers, and no Bidding Prayers until further notice. Simon will continue to play for us but please do not be tempted to sing along even if you know the words.
- The Hall together with its toilets has to remain closed at this time – sorry.
- All doors and windows must remain open during the service.

ARRIVING AND ENTERING CHURCH:

- **Make sure you allow plenty of time:** We would suggest 30 to 45 minutes before the start time as ***Once Mass starts entry will not be allowed as we cannot have people moving randomly around or congregating in the porch additionally it would disrupt worship and breach the distancing rules.***
- Enter by the Main Door Only - On arrival please form a 1-metre-apart queue outside the entrance and alongside the side of the church, not down the slope or entrance steps. This can be joined by crossing the grass if necessary, to keep your distance. **Enter the porch as directed by the Steward and please follow their instructions.**
- Use the Sanitisers provided.
 - **Tell the Steward your SURNAME and TELEPHONE NUMBER** this is for tracing infections and will be discarded after 21 days.
- No Offertory Collection is allowed, and a basket is provided for your donations please consider joining our Standing Order Scheme with allows Gift Aid to the Church and tax advantages for you – Thank you.
 - Whilst we do not know how many may come to Mass, once the church is full no one else can be admitted and the Steward will refuse access at the door. It might appear there are vacant seats, but once full to Covid capacity these would not meet social distancing requirements, and the Steward will stop further admission. Your co-operation in this respect is greatly appreciated.

The entire church has been analysed in detail and re-laid in anticipation of COvid-19-requirements

- Each pew can accommodate three single persons, one at either outer edge and one in the middle. If you are in a 'group bubble', then move towards the outer edge so a single person can use the remaining inside area if it has a 1-metre-wide gap.
- Wearing your mask walk up the centre aisle in Single file, and a second Steward will direct you to an available pew - move to the outside of the pew if it is unoccupied.
- If you have restricted movement, please only sit in the front pew and you will receive Communion in your place.
- There are two pews on the Sanctuary which are designated for families or bubbles who are suitable behaved.
- Sorry, but Votive candles are not allowed; as this would cause congestion and breach the distancing rules.
- The Sign of Peace is not proclaimed or to be shared.

COMMUNION:

This starts when we recite the 'Invitation prayer:' "***Behold the Lamb of God...Lord I am not worthy***". **Fr John will then hold up the Host to the Congregation and say audibly, "The Body of Christ", to which we should all respond, "Amen."** In the same way, he elevates the Chalice and says, "The Blood of Christ" and again we respond, "Amen."

This next section *in italics* is for your comfort and information only, as it explains the process, we will follow to ensure that you are safe to receive Communion.

Fr John will be the only person receiving Holy Communion under both kinds using his own Host and Chalice. He will then sanitise his hands with alcohol before opening the pre-prepared ciborium for the Communion of the people. Deacon Michael may also perform this task.

An Extra-Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion wearing a protective mask will approach the altar, sterilise their hands and receive Communion under one kind only from Fr John using the people's ciborium.

Father / Deacon will place the ciborium on the altar and move back to their seat.

The Minister will sterilise their hands a second time before taking the ciborium to distribute the sacrament.

- All those on the sanctuary will receive Communion first and should stand in their places fully extending their arms palms upwards – they do not move around – The Priest, Deacon or Minister will take Communion to each person individually.
- **A Steward will direct you to approach the altar for Communion. Please do not approach in any other way.** We will start from the front and one side only at a time. Please walk up the centre aisle – receive – and then turning towards the appropriate outer side of the church, walk along the outer aisle back to your pew.

- When the time to receive comes **everyone in the pew must approach the altar** and then follow one another other back into the pew. You must not cross over either when leaving or re-entering a pew. No one can therefore remain seated during Communion.

- **Approach the Priest / Deacon / Minister, stopping at the coloured line on the carpet and keeping a 1-metre gap from the person in front of you.**

- Your arms should be at **full stretch** so that there is a good distance between the Minister and the communicant. **Your hands must be palms upwards**, one of top of the other, and extended as flatly as possible. You must remain standing, genuflection before reception is not permitted.

- **You will be given Communion silently and in the hand only.** There is no need to speak. You will have already said the appropriate prayer when Fr John offered the Host and Chalice for worship earlier in the Rite.

- If you **do not wish to receive Communion**, you should not extend your hands and the dispenser will **raise a single Host for you to Adore** for a few moments, and then you move off following the prescribed outside aisle route to your place. During Communion Fr John will purify his paten and chalice and set them to one side ready to be taken to the sacristy and sterilisation.

- Communion will be taken to anyone with restricted movement in the front pew only again silently with outstretched hands.

- Once Communion is complete, the Priest / Deacon / Minister returns to the altar and places the ciborium on the corporal without touching the Host. The minister should then sterilise their hands again before returning to their seat.

DEPARTING CHURCH:

- At the end of Mass everyone must leave immediately.

- **When you come to leave you will be directed by the Stewards.** Please move towards the outer aisle in the order that you are in your pew. **DO NOT** cross over anyone. **DO NOT** use the centre aisle.

- Walk around the outer edge – across the foot of the sanctuary if necessary - and out of the side door keeping 1 metre apart at all times. Please **DO NOT** start a conversation until you are outside the church.

- Do not congregate immediately outside the door as others need to leave. (Vacating the church is essential as we will need to deep-clean and sanitise after Mass.)

By all means congregate in distanced groups on the lawn weather permitting, where Fr John hopes to join you – when anyone who wishes may join him for a chat – observing the 1-metre-distancing rule.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sun 5 – 14 of the Year	10.00 Mass	Nancy & Mark Oxenhan
	18.00 Mass	People of the Parish
Tue 7 – feria	10.30 Rosary	
Wed 8 – feria	10.00 Mass (ORD)	Tess Hogan (RIP)
Thu 9 – feria	10.00 Mass	Jo Gallagher (RIP)
	10.30 Adoration	
Fri 10 - feria	10.00 Mass	Norah Green (RIP)
	10.30 Stations	
Sun 12 – 15 of the Year	10.00 Mass	People of the Parish
	18.00 Mass	Fr. Adrian Lowe (INT)

CONFESSIONS

As usual Fr John is available for outside Confessions. Please ring 01279 429388 for an appointment.

GOSPEL REFLECTION

“Come to me, all you who labour and are overburdened.”

“Shoulder my yoke,” says Jesus, and perhaps few of us have ever seen a yoke unless we have been to an agricultural museum. They look like instruments of torture, and that is more or less what they are. There are different kinds. There is the heavy wooden bar used to “yoke” or couple two oxen together to pull a huge cart or plough, still used in some societies today. Oxen are not called “beasts of burden” for nothing. Even more terrible are the yokes used for shackling slaves. The word “yoke” has become a metaphor for something oppressive: the “yoke of slavery” and servitude.

But there is a better kind of yoke designed to make it easier to carry heavy loads. They are carrying-poles, not too heavy, used by explorers and adventurers on long expeditions, fitting across the shoulders around the back of the neck, allowing two bags to be hooked on and carried at each side. Wearing a yoke voluntarily, because it is helpful, is very different from forcing slaves to bear a yoke and carry terrible burdens.

Jesus uses the word “yoke” in both senses. He is concerned about people “who labour and are overburdened”. He had in mind some of the strict followers of the Jewish faith, whose religious life had become a burden. Scholars enumerated 613 laws which they enjoined people to keep. The idea was that by striving to keep all these laws you made yourself pleasing to God. Jesus spoke harsh words about those scribes and Pharisees who “tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men’s shoulders, but will they lift a finger to move them? Not they!”

The overburdened people awaited a saviour. And Jesus, who, in the words of the prophet Zechariah, would come “triumphant, humble and riding on a donkey” (a mystical way of describing the incarnation, his sharing of our human life), invited those overburdened people, who had no hope of observing all the laws, to “Come to me”.

Come to me and follow me, rather than all those rules and regulations devised by the religious leaders. "Shoulder my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls." Those beautiful words sum up the ultimate purpose of our Catholic life; it is to find rest for our souls. And to underline it, Jesus adds, "Yes, my yoke [with the emphasis on 'my'] is easy and my burden light." His yoke is not the heavy yoke of innumerable laws, but the easy yoke of joyfully following him to do his will.

Shouldering Christ's easy yoke, and learning from him, is what he tells us to do. And we can do this in all sorts of ways. First of all by experiencing his gentleness and humility so that we can love him and realise his love for us. He does not want life to be a burden. He may suggest we let go in some ways, changing our priorities; maybe like Jesus who, when he was burdened with the heavy cross, did not insist on carrying it alone but was glad to have someone to help him: Simon of Cyrene. Sometimes it may just mean talking to someone. "Trouble shared is trouble halved" is a proverb attributed to Dorothy Sayers. Going to confession relieves the burden of sins and guilt, and offers the opportunity to talk confidentially to a priest, who can offer words of encouragement.

Sadly there can be periods in life when little can be done to reprioritise, still less to put down or even share our burdens and responsibilities. Perhaps in saying "shoulder my yoke" Jesus is offering to help us with our burdens. Far from the Lord imposing burdens on us, he asks us to come to him. "The Lord is kind and full of compassion," as the psalmist says. "Come to me," Jesus says, "I am gentle and humble of heart." "Come to me," rather than seeking solace or relief in the ways of this world, for, as St Paul says in today's second reading, "your interests are not in the unspiritual, but in the spiritual". Jesus answers our prayers when we ask his help, and he gives us the strength to carry on with a peace that comes from the Spirit of Christ living in us.