

The Assumption of Our Lady – Old Harlow

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 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.

CONFESSIONS

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