

**Current Instruction for the Celebration of Sacraments and sacramentals of the Church. This will include Sunday and Weekday Masses.**

**There will be no Sunday or Weekday Public Masses**

**Following the guidelines of the Catholic Churches in England and Wales about Covid-19, the Parish Church closed on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March and will remain closed until further advised.**

The parish priest will continue to celebrate mass in the parish without the faithful (parishioners) deacons and altar servers. The continuing celebration of Mass ensures that the faithful can join in spiritual communion with the priests of the Church. *Catechism of the Catholic Church (1364)*

### **Baptisms**

Baptisms will be deferred until such time that the public health advice is that congregations can gather safely. In case of necessity, baptisms should be celebrated with all the hygiene precautions that have been laid down by the Church in its COVID-19 advice. The Parish Priest will be contacting all parishioners who have a baptism booked in due course.

### **First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion**

These celebrations are postponed until a time that allows for families and friends to gather safely within our church. The Parish Priest and school Headteacher will confirm new dates as soon as it is safe to do so.

### **Matrimony**

If possible, the celebration of the sacrament of Matrimony should be deferred until such time that people can gather in numbers safely. However, if this is not possible and only in the most pressing of circumstances, then those present for the marriage should be restricted to the celebrant, bride and groom and immediate family, and if necessary, the legal Registrar. The Parish Priest will be in contact with any couples preparing for marriage in due course.

### **Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil**

This will be dependent on the forthcoming decisions of the Bishops for the Holy Week ceremonies. The Parish Priest will be in touch with those preparing for the Sacraments of Initiation in due course.

### **Confirmation**

The celebration of Confirmation will be deferred until such time that the public health advice is that congregations can resume public worship.

### **Anointing of the Sick**

No pastoral visits will be made to people unless in an emergency. However, we will offer phone support. Anointing of the Sick will be carried out by the Priest who will avoid physical contact adhering to the hygiene procedures which have been set out. Visits to people in care homes or hospitals will follow advice from the staff on infection control.

## **Holy Communion and Pastoral Visits to the Sick and Housebound**

As our Eucharistic Ministers are mainly over the age of 70, we are suspending visits for the time being and will be offering phone support where we can. Should you have any difficulties please contact the Parish Office (0191 2622817) and we will endeavour to offer help and support where we can.

## **Funerals**

The funeral service will not take place in church but instead, at the graveside or at a crematorium, subject to the conditions laid down by the cemetery or crematorium authorities. Arrangements can be made for a memorial Mass to be celebrated later when congregations are allowed to gather. The parish priest and funeral directors will work together to support families who are experiencing bereavement.

## **Sacrament of Reconciliation**

Confession may be offered on request as long as hygiene and social distancing requirements are observed (e.g. a physical barrier between the penitent and the priest such as a grille and cloth). The use of Rite II and Rite III of the Rite of Penance is not permitted as this, by necessity requires the gathering of people in our churches.