



THE PARISH OF ST PETER & THE WINCHESTER MARTYRS

Re-Entering Our Churches Safely

(Version 5th August)

Introduction from Fr Mark

I am so delighted that we are now able to celebrate collective worship - masses, weddings and funerals - in church with a congregation, as well as, for example, the sacrament of reconciliation. At the same time, we need to ensure that this happens safely.

If we have a clear understanding of what the Eucharist is, then it is normal that we will have a longing in our hearts to receive Holy Communion again as soon as possible as part of a gathered community.

Nonetheless, we will also, out of love, be aware of our responsibility, to ourselves and others, to ensure that we will only come when we have sufficient confidence that it is safe for us and those around to do so.

Whilst we have experienced this enforced fast from the Eucharist, I hope and pray that we have also found many other ways of allowing Jesus to bring us closer to Himself and to each other, through the power of his Holy Spirit.

I wish to thank all of you for your patience and support during this time. Thank you also to those who filled in our recent survey, which has informed our planning. I'm hoping that most, if not all, of the issues raised there are addressed in this document.

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, has said recently:

- (i) that we are not going straight back to 'normal'. There will be a limited number of places at each mass [about 65 in the case of St. Peter's]. He reminded us that there is currently no obligation to go to mass on Sunday and so he invited us to please think of going to a weekday mass if we can, to leave space for others;
- (ii) that in these new circumstances, we will need volunteers - stewards, people to help cleaning, etc. We will need to depend on each other.

These volunteers, he said, are not be drawn from the “Vulnerable Group” (those shielding or over-70, for example);

- (iii) that indoors is a higher risk for the virus, so mass will be reduced to the essentials to ensure that we’re not spending an excessive amount of time indoors together.

Let’s continue to pray for our priests, especially those in the “Vulnerable Group”, that they may remain safe and well, and, by extension, keep others safe and well (I say more about our priests below).

We have a plan for a phased and progressive opening up of churches for public use, in order to test the procedures – private prayer and adoration first, then weekday masses, then Sunday masses; St. Peter’s first and then other churches as soon as they can be opened safely. We’ve conducted a thorough risk assessment (there is a link to it [on our homepage](#)) for St. Peter’s and will be updating this frequently and doing similar exercises for the other church buildings.

Let’s pray that the Lord will continue to bless us, whether in the church building, at home or elsewhere and that we may share in his work of bringing people closer to Jesus Christ in hope and joy.

When can I go to church on weekdays?

St. Peter’s, Winchester is open for a couple of hours each day, including public mass and time for private prayer and adoration. These are the times:

Monday Adoration and prayer 11-2, with Mass at 12.15pm

Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday Mass at 10, prayer and adoration till 12.

Friday Adoration and prayer 11-2, with Mass at 12.15pm

Saturday 9am Mass, prayer till 12, with confessions from 11-12 and 4.30 - 5.(vigil Mass also at 5.30pm)

And Sunday Masses?

The public Masses, which will require booking (see below), are as follows:

Saturday 5.30 pm

Sunday 12 noon (church open till 2pm afterwards for prayer)

Sunday 5.30 pm

There may need to be changes, for instance, in order to accommodate funerals, and we will update the timetable as time goes by and the needs become clearer or change. Please keep an eye out for future updates of this document, as well as on the newsletter each week. We will always have the latest information on our [Facebook page](#) and [website](#), and will try to respond quickly to any requests for information via Facebook.

What about the Livestreamed Masses & prayers?

These will continue as before, completely separate from the public Masses, and obviously do not require booking. Our YouTube channel is here <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbGgrcbDyLY75pmCAopfLlg/live> .

So, livestreamed Mass at 7pm every evening, Sun-Sat, plus 10am Mass on Sunday.

Morning prayer at 8am every day except Saturday; **Evening prayer** at 9pm every day

Will I need to book to come to mass?

At the moment we do not need a booking system for weekday masses.

We do need a booking system for Sunday masses. This is the link:

www.ticketsource.co.uk/st-peter-and-the-winchester-martyrs

You can also do it from the homepage of the website, where the link is clear and easy. <https://www.catholicwinchester.org.uk/>

You will be asked for name and phone number and how many tickets you are booking. The information is for our 'track and trace' obligation, but will be used only for that purpose (unless you want to be on our mailing list). Your name will be added to the list, and when you turn up at church the volunteer stewards will check you off. You do not need to print off the ticket. There is, obviously, no charge! If you cannot make a booking, and have no-one else to do it for you, then phone the office 01962 852804 and ask for help. If you find you cannot come after all, please let us know (even late on), as your place can be offered to someone else.

This is very new to us too, so please bear with us if we have teething problems. Let us know if you have any issues.

IF THE CHURCH IS FULL TO A SAFE CAPACITY, AND YOU TURN UP WITHOUT HAVING BOOKED, THE VOLUNTEERS WILL WITH THE GREATEST REGRET HAVE TO TURN YOU AWAY.

This is not what any of us want, but we have a legal and moral obligation to stick to the rules.

And please show your patience, generosity and co-operation with the volunteer stewards – they are doing their very best, and are trying to help you, and all of us, stay safe.

It should also be said that we need a lot of volunteers to make this work – and those in vulnerable categories should not be offering. So please think if you could come and help even for an hour. If you are going to come to a Mass, consider whether you

could volunteer before or after, while still attending. Contact Deacon Gerard if you can help gdaily@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

How will we use “Test and Trace”?

We will be keeping a register of the people attending each mass, along with the contact details for each person. We will keep this for 21 days to aid with NHS Test and Trace. Your cooperation with this will be appreciated.

When will the other church buildings (St. Gregory’s, Alresford; St. Thomas More, Stockbridge; St. Stephen’s, Oliver’s Battery) be open for prayer and public worship?

Currently, no other church building in the parish is open. However, we will be reviewing these arrangements frequently.

The main reason for choosing St. Peter's is that the capacity is much larger and various arrangements are in place to ensure hygiene and social distancing can be maintained.

It is our hope to open up the other churches in due course, probably beginning with St. Gregory’s, Alresford, and starting with private prayer before beginning public liturgy. We are reviewing the situation at least weekly and we will open up these buildings as soon as we are confident we can do so safely.

One of the main difficulties regarding public worship is that these churches really are *much* smaller and so only a very small number of people could attend.

What is the capacity of St. Peter’s Church during this time?

The advice we’ve received is that we should measure the safe capacity of the Church. We’ve painstakingly measured out (and marked) seats with a 2m space between each seat and have carried out a risk assessment. It is, however, difficult to give a precise answer to this question because it will depend on how many people come as couples/families/etc. from the same household, as these are considered “one unit” and can sit together.

However, assuming that each person in the congregation comes on their own and maintains a 2m distance from their nearest neighbour, **the capacity at St. Peter’s is 65 people.**

What has been put in place to help ensure people are safe when they come to St. Peter’s?

We have completed a thorough risk assessment, following advice from the diocese and from our health and safety advisers. This risk assessment is available to view [on our parish website](#).

We have signs displayed to remind visitors about social distancing. We have cordoned off two out of every three rows and we have marked those seats where people may sit.

Alcohol hand gel is provided at the doors and there are notices asking people to sanitise their hands as they enter and leave the church.

Windows will be kept open during masses.

Chairs will be sanitized between services and the church will receive a thorough cleaning each day.

The entrance to St. Peter's will be through the main door only; exit will be through the north door only.

Which mass should I come to?

If you are able to do so, please come to a weekday mass, leaving space at the weekend for those who are not able to participate in a weekday mass. We cannot celebrate Sunday mass on any other day (except Saturday evening) but since there is currently no Sunday obligation this is less of an issue.

Will mass be exactly the same as before?

Whilst weekday masses will be pretty much the same, there will be a few more marked differences at the weekend. These include the following:

- ✘ Welcomers will greet you and guide you to a seat, so that we can ensure safe social distancing and that we can get as many people in as possible, within the constraints of our capacity.
- ✘ Holy water stoups will remain empty.
- ✘ There will be no congregational singing due to the increased risk of the aerosol travelling further (this will remain until government advice on this issue is revised).
- ✘ There will be no printed material available (so the newsletter, Crosskeys, etc. will all be available, as currently, online and via email)
- ✘ There will be no altar servers for the time being.
- ✘ There will be no offertory procession.
- ✘ The collection(s) will take place at the end of mass in baskets.
- ✘ There will be no physical sign of peace. People may still turn to one another and, for example, bow and say "'Peace be with you.'
- ✘ At the end of the Mass the priest (and deacon or other ministers) will not go to the church exit to greet the people.

- ✘ Homilies will be short and the mass will generally be of a reduced length in order to minimize the amount of time spent inside the church building and, again, to minimize risk.

Will I have to wear a mask to come to mass?

As of Saturday 8th August, it is compulsory to wear a face covering whilst in the church. The priest (and other sacred ministers on the sanctuary) will not wear a mask except when they are distributing communion – see below.

Can I bring my children?

Yes, children are very welcome. While children are unlikely to become very ill, they are however capable of both being infected by the virus and of spreading it. If you are bringing children into a church it will be important to manage your children appropriately, particularly ensuring they touch as few surfaces as possible for their own safety.

What will happen for Holy Communion?

There will be only one Holy Communion station with one minister (ordinarily the priest or a deacon).

The Eucharist will be distributed under one kind only; distribution of the Precious Blood from the Chalice is suspended. It is helpful to remember that “Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts (Cf. Catechism of the Catholic Church n. 1377).

Those distributing Communion will sanitise their hands before and after distribution and will wear a mask during the distribution.

When giving Holy Communion in the hand, the minister will seek to ensure that the host is placed in the hand of the recipient in such a way that there is no touching of hands and that the maximum possible social distance is maintained. Should there be accidental physical contact, the minister will sanitise his or her hands again before re-commencing the distribution of communion.

Social distancing must be maintained in the communion lines (stewards will invite you forwards and floors will be marked with 2m intervals to assist in this).

A clear system will be in place for the orderly exit of the congregation (so as to maintain social distancing). This will be done by row, one side of the church at a time, with clear direction from stewards.

May I receive communion on the tongue?

Bishop Philip and Fr Mark strongly urge you, out of charity for the health of the minister distributing communion, to receive communion in the hand during this period. If this is not possible for you, then the minister will not refuse you communion on the tongue, providing you come at the end of the communion

line. The minister will cleanse his or her hands after each person receiving on the tongue.

Am I obliged to attend Sunday Mass again now?

The first of the five “precepts of the Catholic Church” (set out in the Catechism, n.2042) is that the faithful are ordinarily required to gather and participate in Sunday mass each week and holy days of obligation. This obligation was removed for the pandemic and is still not in force. In other words, **please be reassured that that you are currently not obliged to attend Sunday Mass or holy days of obligation.**

Furthermore, **out of concern for others, you ought not to attend if** the following apply:

- **You are sick** (for example, if you are experiencing cold or flu like symptoms)
- **You are experiencing symptoms of a serious illness, or if you are in the “vulnerable” category** (the elderly, people with weakened immune systems, people with long term conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart conditions etc.)

It is envisaged that the Sunday obligation will not be imposed until the latter phases of the lifting of restrictions.

May I receive communion at home?

Communion inside the home is still not possible, except in danger of death. In some circumstances, it might be possible for you to receive communion outside (for example, in a garden). Please let Fr Mark know if you would like more details.

Will we need people on the welcome rota to turn up as usual?

Deacon Gerard is currently organizing rotas.

As the times of mass are different, our previous rotas won't apply. However, we will need welcomers and stewards to keep people safe. Deacon Gerard will be developing a rota for this too. Sadly, those who are at higher risk won't be able to volunteer during this period, although this does open the door for new people to put themselves forward. **If you would like to help, please contact Deacon Gerard gdaily@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk.**

Will we need Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at mass?

For now, Holy Communion will only be distributed under one kind and ordinarily only by the priest or a deacon. There may be occasions where we will need one Extraordinary Minister to distribute the Sacred Host.

Will we need readers at masses?

We will probably begin by having just one reader per mass and not having a rota as such.

Will we need musicians at mass?

Some Sunday masses will have sung antiphons at the beginning of mass, during the preparation of the gifts and during communion. We are restricted in what we can do but are hopeful that this will provide something beautiful and prayerful. We will be reviewing periodically. For safety, there will be no congregational singing.

What about our priests?

In accordance with the present Government directives, clergy over 70 - and clergy with underlying health conditions – are advised to continue to minimise contact with those outside their own household and when outside should take extra care maintaining social distancing. The clergy in our parish to whom this applies will make a personal decision about their ability to engage in pastoral and liturgical ministry, its extent and nature. I am confident that all of us will surely respect and support those who decide that for the time being they can only resume a limited ministry until the risks and demands can be better managed and further government advice is forthcoming.

Are there any plans to have a Sign Language interpreter available for mass?

There aren't currently but this is something which Fr Mark has experienced in a previous parish and he is very happy to look into this. Any ideas, suggestions, etc. welcome.

Will I be able to use the St. Peter's pastoral centre and toilet facilities?

In the short term, at least, the pastoral centre will remain closed and there will be no access to the toilet facilities.

The nearest toilets will either be next to the Discovery Centre, across the road in Jewry Street, or Abbey Gardens or St Maurice's Covert (i.e. next to Debenhams).

Could we introduce contactless giving?

This is something we have been looking into. The diocese have also been trying to learn from other dioceses who are further ahead on the curve.

Could we introduce screens in church if we're not allowed shared hymn books and missals?

For now, there is no congregational singing allowed but there could be benefits to introducing temporary screens in our churches.

Plans are already in place to introduce screens in St. Stephen's.

Could we have mass outside?

This is certainly an option we are actively considering and we have been in discussion with our parish primary school about the possibility of celebrating mass on the playing field. Although it is safer to gather outside with regards the virus, there are still risks involved (e.g. ensuring people maintain social distance; adverse weather) and we need to think through the practicalities further before committing.

Will livestreamed mass and other liturgies continue to be available?

Yes.

We have installed a permanent livestream system in St. Peter's. This is for several reasons: (i) it will be a long time before many of our parishioners are in a position to return to mass in church; (ii) it will always be the case that some of our parishioners, whether for a season or permanently, are unable to join us physically at some or any of our masses and other liturgies in church, including funerals, weddings and baptisms; (iii) livestream allows people who aren't yet part of our worshipping community to take a look at us from a safe space before they need to step over the physical threshold.

Sunday Mass at 10 am & 7pm, and Vigil Mass at 7pm Saturday

Morning Prayer, Adoration and Benediction:	Mon – Fri, 8am-9am
Mass:	daily 7pm (incl Sat and Sun)
Night Prayer:	every day, 9pm

NB don't forget that you can always "catch up" on services you may have missed by visiting our YouTube channel for recordings [here](#).

Can I celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation ("go to confession")?

It is now possible to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation at the following times in the sacristy at St. Peter's Church:

Saturday 11am – 12noon

Saturday 4:30pm – 5pm

Social distancing will be in force, both in the sacristy and for those waiting to celebrate the sacrament.

The priest will wear a face mask and it is recommended that masks should be worn by penitent.

There will be no need to “book a place”.

At a later stage it may be possible to offer the sacrament in the period before each mass.

Can funerals take place in church?

A public Funeral Mass or liturgy outside of mass may now be celebrated, provided that all governmental/health directives and general guidelines are followed. The maximum number of attendees is the same as that for other public masses.

The same principles apply as for other masses (e.g. no congregational singing; no offertory procession; etc.)

Can I have my baby/child baptised?

Given health and governmental directives (especially social distancing, hygiene/sanitising, etc.) and the need to protect the most vulnerable medically, the baptism of infants in our current situation presents some particular factors and difficulties:

On the one hand, the Church requires that the sacrament should be celebrated within the first few weeks of an infant being born (cf. CIC, can. 867). However, in practice, we know that there is often a much longer period than this before a baptism takes place.

The baptism preparation team will discuss the situation with the family and assure them that, if the need should arise, anyone may baptise in the case of necessity. (To discuss, please contact Rosanne Walker via baptism@stpeterswinchester.org.uk)

You are reminded that, in the case of an emergency, anyone may baptise as long as the pouring of water and the valid Trinitarian formula: "N. I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is used (CIC, can. 861, section 2, and *Order for the Baptism of Children*).

During this exceptional time, if there is a pastoral need for the baptism of an infant to take place, only the necessary rites for a valid Baptism should be celebrated, (CIC, can. 850). Only the minister, infant, parents, and godparents should be present until such time as more public services are allowed (again, social distance, hygiene etc. should be followed as far as possible within the liturgy).

In the long-term, we are working towards being able to celebrate baptisms with limited number of guests at some point, probably not before the autumn.

Can I get married in church?

It is now possible again for us to celebrate weddings in church, although certain restrictions still apply. Please contact Fr Mark for more details.

Where can I find diocesan guidelines for the clergy and people of the diocese during this period?

All the relevant documents are on the diocesan website, [here](#).

Where can I find the complete government guidance for the safe use of places of worship from 4th July.

You can find that document online [here](#).

If you have any questions, or you wish to offer help of any kind, including volunteering for welcoming and stewarding, please contact Deacon Gerard Dailly gdailly@portsmouthdiocese.org.uk

We expect to be updating this document on a regular basis, so please look out for new versions of it. The latest information should always be [on the website](#) and on the [Parish Facebook page](#).