

Important announcements during period of Covid-19
(Last updated 8.00pm 30 May 2020)

Pentecost Sunday – Rosary Rally

As part of the Pope's plea for the rosary to be prayed daily during the month of May, there is a Rosary Rally initiative across the UK for the rosary to be prayed from 9.00am to 9.00pm across the various Dioceses and parishes on Pentecost Sunday, 31st May. The Archdiocese of Glasgow is programmed for 6.00pm to 7.00pm. If possible, you might consider praying the rosary at that time and joining with the Archdiocese at large. Many parishes will be live streaming the Rosary service so watch out for that on the live streams you visit regularly.

The intention of the rosary is to seek the intercession of Our Lady so that we may overcome the Covid-19 pandemic and so that we may present our own petitions to Mary for her intercession and help.

Good News! Churches can plan to re-open

The Scottish Government's Plans to ease the current lockdown have now been published. This is a 4 stage process which started on 28 May and will be reviewed at least every three weeks. Assuming all the health and other conditions are met the lockdown will be eased in incremental steps.

The initial opening of churches for private prayer is currently scheduled for phase 2. Opening for extended groups is not scheduled until phase 3, with a full return occurring in phase 4. No dates are specifically set for each phase, and if there is an increase in the spread of the virus, easing will be delayed or cancelled.

All of these relaxations will only be permissible provided safe social distancing can be maintained and with suitable hygiene safeguards in place.

The phase 2 relaxation also allows marriages and other ceremonies to take place with a minimal number of attendees while phase 3 will allow the extension of attendees beyond close family for these services and funerals. How, precisely, Catholic churches will be able to accommodate these interim changes is something that the Bishops' Conference Working Group tasked with the creation of an Infection Control Protocol to govern the phased reopening of churches will advise on and we'll hear more from the Archbishop in due course. Updates will be posted here.

The Plan for Our Lady and St. Helen's requires your help

Like parish priests everywhere, Fr. John is now considering what we can do to safely re-open and will be in discussion with the Archdiocese as to what is practical and feasible. Whatever plan is adopted will though require your assistance. As you will be generally aware, social distancing, hygiene and other requirements are key to the prevention of spread of the virus. It is a sad fact, however, that the majority of church 'helpers' are of an age and sometimes with health conditions where they should still be 'shielding' and thus will be unable to assist nor would we think to ask them. We will therefore need a large number of new volunteers to assist with controlling social distancing and especially cleaning before and after all uses of the church be that for private prayer or later when services resume.

If you have the time, are fit and healthy and can offer your services in any way, please contact Fr. John urgently. If we cannot recruit sufficient volunteers this may hinder the plans to re-open the church. Fr. John can be contacted by telephone on 01236 731258 or by email:
olsthelen@rcag.org.uk

Parish Hall

The hall remains closed until further notice.

Live Streaming – Spiritual Communion

A number of you may be following live streaming Mass from either the Cathedral or some other church. Those who are will not be able to receive Christ sacramentally in Holy Communion. However, I am glad to tell you that you can receive the Lord spiritually in an act of Spiritual Communion through your desire to receive the Sacrament, through your prayer and your faith. Here is an Act of Spiritual Communion written by St Alphonsus Liguori, that people who for any reason cannot receive Holy Communion sacramentally are encouraged to say:

My Jesus, I believe that you are present in the most Blessed Sacrament. I love You above all things and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot now receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there, and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.

Practical Matters

As with everyone else the crisis is going to have a serious effect on parish finances. The loss of income from our weekly Offertory Collection will be substantial and may have a lasting effect. I appeal to your continued generosity and support for our parish. It would very helpful if you could continue to contribute weekly or monthly. I recognise that many of you are facing your own financial worries and will have to make hard choices, so I am most grateful for anything you can still contribute to our Parish.

Gift Aid

Envelope sets for the new tax year will be available for collection from the sacristy once the church re-opens. If you are in the scheme please collect your book. For the moment, perhaps you could make your offering by standing order. You may either download the banker's order form from the website, complete and send to your own bank or, if you use online banking, you can set up an instruction using the account details on the form. Please use your envelope number as the payment reference.

Non-gift aided offerings

Offerings may be made using online banking. The parish bank account details which you will need are set out on the banker's order form accessible from the Gift Aid area of the website. If you wish, you can also use those details to set up a standing order online. If you would like to join the Gift Aid Scheme as well, please download and complete the joining form and return to
kmcmanus@ourladyandsthelen.org

With my prayers and best wishes to you all,

John Mulholland, Parish Priest