

What to expect when you arrive at church for mass

Things will necessarily be a bit different to what we are used to - the arrangements are intended to keep us all as safe as possible during the pandemic, whilst enabling people to attend mass in the church.

Please follow the signs and other notices, and instructions of the stewards.

Face coverings must be worn (as from 8 August).

If you want a Missal and/or prayer book you will need to bring your own.

Please arrive early, as it may take a bit of time to get everyone seated safely; admission after Mass has started may not be possible.

You will be told where to sit at the start, and when to leave at the end; this is to maintain social distancing.

You should observe 2m distancing of households throughout the church, the church grounds, and beyond, as you arrive and leave.

There will be a one-way system: entrance will be via the doors from the car park, and exit via the other doors (leading out to corner of Pickmere Rd and Fitzgerald Rd). Arrangements will be made for those with mobility issues such that walking back round to the car-park after mass would be a problem (let the steward know on arrival).

Hand sanitiser is available at the entrance, and in the narthex – please sanitise your hands before coming into church (even if you are wearing gloves).

In each block of pews, only every second row is being used; each row is numbered.

You may not be able to sit in your 'usual' seat.

We will seat people with 2m distancing between households. We will seek to minimise people walking past each other at less than 2m distance, but we cannot eliminate this completely.

Stewards will direct you to a seat according to the number of people in your group (1,2 or larger) – they will point out block and row number and ask you to go to the left or right hand side.

The priest will bring **Communion** to everyone in their seats (to minimise movement). There will be a communal dialogue - 'The Body of Christ', 'Amen' - beforehand. The priest will then proceed round the church. If you are able, stay standing until you have received. Communion (the host) will be distributed in the hand only, as instructed in the National Guidance. Please hold out your hands well in front of you. The priest will give Communion to individuals without either party speaking.

You will be directed when to leave once Mass is finished – please stay in your seat till then; everyone should leave the building promptly.

It is very important that you do not come to Church if you have a new, persistent cough, or a temperature, or have lost your sense of taste or smell.

If you come to Mass and subsequently test positive for Covid-19, let Fr Paddy know immediately.

The toilet will not be available: if that might be a problem you should not come at this stage.

Our understanding of the Government advice is that those classed as 'clinically extremely vulnerable' should not come to Church yet. ([Government Guidance for the clinically vulnerable](#))

The Government continues to say that those 70 and over should minimise contact outside their household and be careful to maintain distance from others. ([Government Guidance for those 70 and over: see '2.1'](#))

We hope that coming to Mass will be as safe as going to the supermarket, but you probably should not think of it as safer. If you wouldn't go to the supermarket it is probably unwise for you to come to Church at this stage.

Some weekday masses will probably be introduced in due course.

You can check for up-dates in the bulletin <https://www.stvincentschurch.com/bulletins.html> - we will try to provide details of key changes/developments via the usual channels (e-mail, WhatsApp, parish website, delivery of notes) but we cannot guarantee all those will always happen.

Note that all of this is the position as things currently stand. Some of the points above, and how we do things in church, may well change if there are revisions to the Government and Diocesan guidelines.

31 July 2020