



Dear parishioners,

I would like to begin this week's update with some good news...

Holy Ghost to re-open for private prayer

I am pleased to announce that Holy Ghost Church will open for private prayer next week. We will open for one hour, from 11.00 – 12.00, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays, beginning next Tuesday, 16th June. On Thursdays (the day when the Holy Eucharist was instituted at the Last Supper), the Blessed Sacrament will be Exposed for Adoration during the hour of opening.

In order to obtain permission to open, we had to complete a lengthy risk assessment, and the approval of the local Bishop. I am also very grateful indeed to the parishioners who have generously volunteered their time as stewards and cleaners – without their help, we would have been unable to open.

A few practical points for those intending to visit for prayer.

1. There will be two stewards on hand at all times to greet you. Some of the benches have been taped off to ensure social distancing, and there is an abundance of signage to ensure best practice too. This is rather unsightly, but it is the price we must pay for getting our churches open once again!
2. On arrival at church, please clean your hands using the sanitiser provided. Do the same when leaving. Obviously, anyone with Covid-like symptoms (cough, fever, loss of taste or smell) ought not to be out of doors at all, still less visiting church...
3. To enter, use the doors on the right-hand side of the porch (the ones we normally use) – to exit, use the doors on the left-hand side (those more normally kept locked)
4. Please be aware that the toilets are OUT OF USE at this time. The sacristy door will remain locked and the sacristy and crypt are strictly out of bounds.
5. The church will be thoroughly cleaned after each opening, to help reduce any risk of infection.

If you have any questions, the stewards will be there to help you.

If all goes well, I would like to open the church for another hour, on Sunday afternoons from 4.00 – 5.00pm. Please watch this space for further announcements.

As yet, we have no information when public worship (such as Mass, baptisms, weddings etc) will be permitted to resume. Some of these services – Sunday Mass in particular – would be quite difficult given the current restrictions. However, the re-opening of our churches for private prayer is an important step and a sign of hope. Let us pray that it is the first of many.

Warning: spam emails

During the past week, several parishioners have reported receiving emails purporting to come from either me or Fr Tom (but from an email address not used by either of us). The emails contain an urgent request for help. **These are spam emails, please do not respond to them.** Sadly, a large number of priests (and even the Archbishop!) have had their names used in this way.

Requiem for Jean Flynn

A reminder that the Requiem Mass for Jean Flynn – for many years housekeeper to Father Bennett, and one of our most long-standing parishioners – will take place at Holy Ghost on Wednesday 17th June at 9.30 am. Since we are still not allowed to admit the public for Mass, the service will be live streamed. Please pray for Jean and for her family.

Final thoughts

This Sunday we celebrate the Solemnity of Corpus Christi, honouring the most holy Eucharist. It is providential that our church should be able to re-open just after this great feast, enabling us all to come and visit Our Lord in the tabernacle once again. Let us continue to pray for each other – for an end to the pandemic – and for a return to more normal and better times.

With every blessing,

Fr Richard and Fr Tom