

## SOME GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATING MASS

### NUMBERS AT MASS

It is my understanding that the numbers have been limited to 30 for weddings and funerals because otherwise would not only bring together many people for the service but would also mean a gathering of those people after the celebration in the church is over, (possibly with alcohol etc.), without there being any possibility of someone to make sure that the social distancing rules are being observed. The law pertaining to this can be found on the Government website.

Having said that, I also understand that there is no upper limit on the numbers coming to a particular Mass – we have to make a local parish decision how many people may come into the church in accordance with the social distancing rules of 1 metre plus.

Will there be uniform plan for ensuring that people can actually get into the Mass they come to?

No. Parishes are asked to sort out some sort of plan between them i.e. advertising each other's Masses on line or whatever, or have a ticketing system in place. I am sure that at first the number of people coming to Mass will be smaller than we are used to (many of the more elderly parishioners will not be ready to join groups of people at Mass until they are confident that the pandemic is really over). I do not believe that we will be overwhelmed by vast numbers. I may be wrong, of course!

ARE WE REQUIRED TO KEEP A RECORD OF NAMES AND ADDRESSES FOR "TRACK AND TRACE"?

No. This will be mandatory for restaurants and pubs and places of entertainment but not places of worship as far as I understand the guidance.

HOW ARE SEATS ALLOCATED IN OUR CHURCHES. This must be a local decision for each parish. A family from the same house can sit with each other. A couple from the same house can sit together. Other people must keep the 1 metre rule.

IS THE SUNDAY OBLIGATION STILL LIFTED Yes. And it will be for the foreseeable future which will make it easier for people to come to Mass any day of the week.

Obviously there will be some anxiety about opening our churches for public worship on the weekend of July 4/5 but I would ask as many of you as possible to do so and to encourage our people to return to the public celebration of Mass. Those Parish Priests who are over seventy and have been shielding must take note of the special information for you at the end of the notes for guidance.

We have all been in lockdown for three months. It has been a very strange time for us all. And slowly coming out of lockdown with confidence, slowly but surely, will need a lot of courage. But trust in the Lord – the One who says to us, Do not be afraid. I am with you.