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**Our Lady, Mother of the Church.**

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**1<sup>st</sup> Sunday of Advent (b)**

**Our Lady's**

**Sunday:** Mass at 9.30 a.m. & 11.30 a.m.

**Weekday:** Monday – Friday 9.15 a.m.

**St. Cuthbert's.**

**Sundays:** 6.00 p.m. Vigil Mass. (Saturday night)

10.00 a.m. & 5.00 p.m. (Sunday)

**Weekdays:** 9.00 a.m. (Monday – Friday)

10.00 a.m. (Saturday)

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**Please remember the following parishioners, relatives and friends in your prayers:**

**Sick:** Anne Bardsley, Dominic McQue, Ara Grigor and all those who are suffering as a result of the virus whether physically, emotionally or spiritually.

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**Welcome to Advent.**

The Advent Wreath will be used at Masses to remind us of the new liturgical year now beginning.

Please note that the Weekend Readings now come from Year B and the Weekday Readings will be taken from Year 1 unless there is a Feast Day being observed.

Looking further ahead after much thought and prayer I have taken the reluctant decision that there will not be a 'live' Mass on Christmas Day in Our Lady's or St.Cuthbert's. I am concerned that more people would be turned away if they arrive without warning or do not comply with the booking requirements in place at the moment. It would mean I would be saying no to more people than those currently coming to Mass. That is not what I would like to be doing on Christmas Day. I do not think we would be able to manage safely given the restrictions that apply. Likewise the Churches would need to be cleaned before the normal weekend Masses which will take place as usual. I know this decision will be upsetting and disappointing to some of you as it is to me. But equally I hope you will understand why it is being done. It is for your safety and protection and also to avoid turning people away. A Christmas Mass will be recorded in advance and then streamed for as many people to join it as want to at a time that suits them and at home. As I said it a decision I have taken with a heavy heart and I hope you will accept it as such.

**Heating Replacement and Upgrade:** The Gas Board are due on Monday to complete their works. Then we need to wait for the checking and commissioning to take place and then hopefully the heating can be set. And finally I hope you will feel the benefit of the new heating.

**Thankfully there are still no changes** in restrictions for celebrating Mass. That does not mean we can afford to drop our guard and it is even more important however we maintain

the rules and restrictions laid down by both the Government and the Church authorities and not ease off our efforts. Some are definitely beginning to lower their guard. Please remember that due to the additional 'check in' time needed please do not leave it until the last minute before you arrive. Arriving those few minutes early also provides an opportunity for private personal prayer while waiting for Mass to begin. As we still live with the effects of Covid, there is a risk of physical and spiritual fatigue. Perhaps we have become weary of all sorts of guidelines and simply want to push them to the back of our mind or worse still and potentially more dangerous ignore them completely to suit ourselves. We may be struggling with how we pray and how we can live our Christian lives. Please comply with the restrictions as outlined.

**Physical Distancing:** This is an area where people are beginning to sit closer than they should. There must be a 2 meter distance minimum between parishioners to enable the maximum people to come and be safe. The 2 meter distancing is not an option. It is a legal requirement. The point of having designated places in the church is to help limit the risk of infection. Everyone should remain in their seat when they are shown to it. It is a temptation to go and talk to someone we haven't seen for a while, but that defeats the safety aim of set seating. There must be a 2 metre minimum distance unless you are there as a family group.

**Observing the One-Way-System:** In Our Lady's please enter and leave by the main door taking care to retain the social distance. You will be led to your seats. Please do not bring food or toys to Mass with you. I would also ask parents to stop their children from moving around during Mass.

**For your own safety and well being** please follow the directions of the Passkeepers especially when coming forward for Holy Communion. Please do not leave your seat until you are asked to do since this can compromise the 2 metre social distancing. You should also leave the Church immediately after receiving Communion following the one-way system.

**You should not return to your seat** again to maintain social distancing and make it possible for the area to be wiped down after each Mass. If you wish a blessing instead of Communion follow the same route as those receiving communion. Thank you very much to those who have been involved so far in cleaning the Church and also escorting parishioners to the allocated seats.

**Remaining after Mass:** As noted above, the seats are sanitised after each Mass so that means that we need to ask everyone to leave the church straight away after receiving Holy Communion and not return to their seats. This applies to weekday and weekend Masses

Please remember you must book each week if you intend coming and at the moment to allow a fair distribution for Mass, booking is restricted to one booking per Mass per household with a maximum of four people and you cannot sit where you wish.

The number of committed volunteers is dropping off a bit and it may be that we will not have will not be able to cope with the cleaning required. The same few dedicated volunteers are always there so some extra help would be good so that there could be a rota. This could mean that Masses will have to be cancelled. Please contact [sbran2656@gmail.com](mailto:sbran2656@gmail.com) if there is any way in which you think you may be able to help.

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**28<sup>th</sup> November** at 2.00 p.m. Are you involved in sacramental preparation of children in your parish (Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation)? You are invited to attend a Zoom event to launch the Archdiocese's new sacramental workbooks and materials. To register, please email Sr Mirjam Hugens FSO at [SrMirjam.Hugens@staned.org.uk](mailto:SrMirjam.Hugens@staned.org.uk).

**29<sup>th</sup> November** Save the date: Archbishop Leo will give an Advent talk titled 'Unwrapping Christmas' on Zoom at 29 November at 7.00 p.m. The event is open to all. Registration details will be shared soon.

**30<sup>th</sup> November:** Join us on the Monday 30<sup>th</sup> November (Feast of St Andrew) at 7.30pm on Zoom as we launch the Edinburgh Jesuit Centre with Professor Sir Tom Devine. Login using the link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/2365092814> or Meeting ID: 236 509 2814. We will also be livestreaming to our Facebook page!

*With every best wish and blessing to you and your families at this difficult time.  
Please remember Father Martins and myself in your prayers as you are  
remembered in ours.*

*Father Martins and Monsignor Tony*

