



St Theresa's Presbytery
High Lane
Stansted Mountfitchet
CM24 8LQ

26th November 2020

Dear Friends

We have finally received confirmation that the Church can open again for public worship from next Wednesday 2nd December – Thanks be to God! So, our regular pattern of worship will return from that day with Confessions at 12:00 noon and Mass at 12:30 p.m. Deacon Des will continue with the Rosary, Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, and Benediction at 7:00 p.m. this time we will be able to attend in person. We will continue to Livestream our Masses and Services for those who cannot attend in person. Do please look closely at Mass times on this week's newsletter.

In the newsletter we have set out our plans for Christmas. Some people had asked if we should just not do Christmas for this year in the hope we could have a better celebration next year. Well the answer to that is no! What we celebrate as Christians is the birth of our Saviour Jesus Christ, we might not keep Christmas as a season of excess this year as many seem to do each year, but the quiet reverence of Christmas will still be celebrated in our Church and homes. We here at St Theresa's will celebrate four Masses of Christmas over the 24th and 25th of December at 4:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. on the 24th December, and 8:30 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on the 25th December. As we highlighted in the newsletter a place will need to be booked at these Masses for you and members of your family, if we are to maintain social distancing and keep s all safe and well. Some of these Masses usually attract crowds of well over a hundred people, clearly under the restrictions we still find ourselves under this will not be possible. In order to make it as fair as possible we are making these four Christmas Masses a ticket only affair. These tickets will be available to be booked from 10:00 a.m. on 1st December 2020. These can be booked online through our parish website or via telephone on that day. They will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Full instructions are available on the newsletter. Do please follow these instructions carefully to avoid disappointment.

Clearly these Masses will not be like the Masses we have celebrated in previous years. The current restrictions against singing in Church are still in place and look to be in place for the foreseeable future. This means no Christmas carols at our Christmas Masses, and no Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols. I find it sad that this should be so and will make our Christmas Masses less that they should be. As St Augustine reminds us, the one who sings prays twice. I know many

of us have missed the music sung at our Masses, there will be great rejoicing when this ban is lifted.

This is the last time I shall speak about the season of Christmas, as this weekend we start the wonderful season of Advent. This season makes no sense whatsoever to anyone outside of the Church, many of whom already have a Christmas tree up in their homes and Christmas music on full blast! In previous years I would have said Bah! Humbug, but with the darkness and difficulties we have all undergone this year, I am inclined not pass comment on anyone who wants to experience some of the light and joy of Christmas before the event. All I ask is that you keep a full Christmas season right the way through to Epiphany. We in the Church, and in the presbytery, will keep Advent, with its slow transition from darkness to light. This Sunday, Deacon Des will light the first Advent candle in Church, that will signal the start of our Advent journey, this will be in an empty Church, empty of people, but not of the presence of Christ, all the heavenly hosts and saints who attend every act of worship. This truth does not mean that your presence in Church will not be welcomed come 2nd December by Deacon Des, and me. We cannot wait to have you back with us when this dreadful lockdown is ended.

When we come out of lockdown on 2nd December, we have been told we will go back into a tiered system, I have found out this morning we are in tier 2, this should have no effect on our regular public worship, but as I write this week's letter we are still awaiting instructions from the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales. I suspect it will be subject to the same restrictions we were under in the period between

As ever, do please be assured of mine and Deacon Des' continued prayer and support for you, and do please keep us in your prayers too.

God bless you all

Fr Lee