

A talk that Francine Brooks will give after the Masses this weekend at Holy Cross.

Thank you, Father Cyriacus, for this opportunity to speak on behalf of the Parish Pastoral Council. For those of you who do not know me, I am Francine Brooks, Chair of the PPC.

Throughout the past couple of years, we have been grateful for the huge support and help that has enabled us to continue services at Holy Cross whilst adhering to safety guidelines and legal protocols placed upon us because of Covid-19.

Now that all the restrictions have been lifted, we are looking forward to a return to our pre-pandemic environment in Church whilst maintaining some of the more positive changes we made.

- As you will have noticed we have rearranged some of the pews, re-ordered the back of church and returned the Lady altar to a more prayerful space.
- We have maintained the wider aisles and created a more open space at the back which we believe enhances the environment.
- We can now use the kneelers and the seat cushions which are housed in the boxes at the back of church. Holy water will once again be available in the font in the porch.
- There is no longer a requirement to wear masks however this remains optional for those who wish to continue to wear one.
- We will still receive the blessed sacrament in the form of the Sacred Host only, however if you wish to receive on the tongue, you may now do so.
- We no longer have to observe distancing rules however please be mindful of those parishioners who would prefer the protection of their personal space.
- Procession to receive Holy Communion will continue as it, with the side benches first and then procession from the back.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who enabled us to make the necessary changes at the start of the lockdown so we could return to worship in safety; to those who helped us to adapt to ever-changing instructions and rules throughout the restrictions; and, to those who have worked so hard to help to draw together the recent changes.

We also want to thank those who ensured that all our services were maintained in the most respectful way, in particular on those special occasions such as Christmas and Easter, Weddings, Baptisms and Funerals, despite the often very challenging limitations.

There is a long list of those to thank!

Thank you to Father Martin our previous Parish Priest, all the stewards and welcomers, the sacristans, altar servers, catechists and liturgists: the flower arrangers, musicians and cleaners; those who visit the sick and take Holy Communion to our housebound fellow parishioners; those who offer lifts, serve coffee and those who offer many other unsung kindnesses; to our parish groups, committees and our administration team and all those parishioners who work behind the scenes offering their time to keep our church beautiful and our services operating smoothly and with great reverence. And to Father Cyriacus for all your support, spiritual guidance and the inspiration to be One Family in Christ.

But most of all we want to thank all of you, our fellow Parishioners, for your patience, understanding and prayers throughout all the changes.

