

Latest Guidelines Re. Covid Restrictions:

Dear Parishioner,

Sadly, we all had hoped for easing of the present restrictions but due to the numbers, increasing it cannot happen at this time. The statement below I received from Bishop Paul Dempsey today (22nd October) regarding the Government's announcement last Tuesday.

Further to the Government announcement on Tuesday regarding Covid -19 restrictions the current venue capacity of 50% for Places of Worship will change today, Friday 22nd October when:

“Religious services and weddings can proceed without capacity limits but with all other protective measures remaining in place”

This is a very positive measure; however, it is imperative that all other Covid-19 protective measures remain in place in order to protect all members of our communities/congregations.

Premises should be well ventilated, hand sanitiser should be provided, Places of Worship should continue to use separate entry and exit routes and face masks should be worn. Congregations should be encouraged to spread out as much as possible when attending Places of Worship and those experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms should be discouraged from attending.

As the capacity of Places of Worship and numbers attending varies greatly, the onus will be on each Place of Worship and community to consider what they are comfortable with and what best suits their congregation. This will be particularly relevant for funerals/special ceremonies, with large congregations in attendance. Attendees on these occasions should not be permitted to stand in the aisles or doorways and hand-shaking and the use of condolence books/sharing of Booklets etc should continue to be avoided. It would be best practice at this time not to provide holy water in the fountains of churches.

Choirs or soloists performing in Places of Worship should be limited in line with the size/capacity of the venue and should adhere to 2 metre social distance from other singers, the choir master, the congregation and any other individuals in the setting (as they will not be wearing face masks during performances).

Covid will be with us for some time to come. As we go forward people will need to exercise strong personal responsibility with regard to safety measures at all church gatherings.

Practically what does it mean for Us in the Parish of Attymass

- **Face masks should be worn.**
- **Maintaining adequate social distancing**
- **Hand sanitising continues.**
- **Premises should be well ventilated.**
- **It would be best practice at this time not to provide holy water in the fountains of churches.**
- **The capacity of Places of Worship will vary due to the size of the Church.**

- **Congregations are encouraged to spread out as much as possible.**
- **No standing in the aisles or doorways.**
- **At funerals hand-shaking and the use of condolence books is still not allowed.**
- **Sharing of Booklets and Newsletters should continue to be avoided.**
- **It would be best practice at this time not to provide holy water in the fonts of churches.**
- **The Collection box will remain at the back of the Church.**
- **Church car park can only be used by those who are wheelchair bound.**
- **Stewarding will have to remain to allow us open our church for Masses**
- **Those experiencing any Covid-19 symptoms and cold/flu like symptoms should be discouraged from attending.**
- **Our Parish Mass Rota may have to be reintroduced depending on the advice of the Government/H.S.E.**
- **We have to remember that Covid will be with us for some time to come.**

It has been a very hard journey on Us all since March 2020, I want to express my sincere heartfelt thanks on behalf of our Parish Community to the stewards and cleaners, Sr. Helena for the work that has been going on every week to keep us all safe.

Unfortunately, the reality is that without their assistance our Parish church would not and cannot be open. More help is always welcome and appreciated.

We can only support each other and like you all, I hope these restrictions will soon be eased.

God bless

Fr. John