

# The Churches of St John & St Patrick

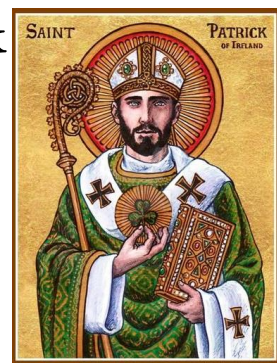
## *servicing the Parish of St William*

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Facebook pages: 'St Patrick's Catholic Church Wigan'  
'St John's RC Church, Standishgate, Wigan'



Friday 20th March 2020

Dear Parishioners

As no doubt you will have heard, this week the Bishops of England and Wales announced that because of the Covid 19 situation there will be no public Masses or other services in our churches from midnight tonight until the crisis passes. Here is a summary of the implications of their announcement:

### **Masses**

I'll still be offering the Holy Sacrifice privately each day to the glory of God, imploring His protection and for your intentions. Mass Intentions may be handed in, through the letter boxes of St Patrick's or St John's presbytery. Your weekly Collection Offerings can be dropped off in the same way.

Although you won't be able to attend Mass there are many daily Masses on line. The shrine at Walsingham has Mass each day at noon. Go to [www.walsingham.org.uk](http://www.walsingham.org.uk). Or you can watch the 1.00pm Mass on EWTN (Sky channel 588). From next Sunday (29th) we'll be live-streaming Sunday Mass ourselves at 12.00. You'll be able to access it via our Facebook pages (details above). You don't have to be a Facebook member yourself. If the page asks you if you'd like to sign in, just click on 'Not Now' and it will admit you all the same.

While watching Mass on line, or indeed at any time of day, you can make a 'Spiritual Communion'. You may use your own words or a traditional formula. Simply settle yourself down in quiet prayer and say something like: 'Lord, though I am not able to receive You now sacramentally, I invite You to come to my heart. I wish to receive You with the purity, humility and devotion with which Your Holy Mother received You, with the spirit and fervour of the Saints.' Then talk to our Lord in your heart as you always do.

### **Churches**

Starting this Sunday (22nd) our churches will remain open for prayer. St Patrick's will be open Monday – Saturday from 9.00am to 12.00noon. On Sunday St John's and St Patrick's will be open from 8.30am until 11.30am. St Mary's of course is open each day from 8.00am until 5.00pm. At these times please follow the Government's guidance regarding 'Social Distancing'.

### **Baptisms**

Any Baptisms which have been arranged will now have to be deferred until the current situation changes. This of course does not include cases of emergency. In such an event, please contact me.

### **Confessions**

Confession will be available on request. Again, please ring me to make arrangements.

### **First Holy Communions**

Unfortunately these are postponed until a later date. Apologies for the inconvenience caused.

### **Weddings**

We have just one Wedding booked for this year and I have been in touch with the couple to discuss things.

### **Anointing of the Sick and Holy Communion for the Sick**

Our normal routine of taking Holy Communion to the Sick is sadly suspended. In case of a sick person's deterioration please contact me immediately and I will come to administer the Anointing of the Sick and bring them Holy Communion.

### **Funerals**

Until further notice there will be no Requiem Masses or Funeral Services in church. Funerals will be conducted as a simple service at the graveside or in the Crematorium, in the presence only of immediate family. I'll offer Mass privately for the deceased and, when the Covid situation passes, we will have a Solemn Requiem for those have died. These directives impress on us how serious the situation is and the Bishops hope we will understand the need for them.

### **The Housebound**

I'm delighted that several parishioners have volunteered to help anyone who might have to self-isolate in the next few months. They're available for errands and even odd jobs. I hope to be able to give you their names and numbers soon.

I hope these details are helpful for you. We are all in uncharted territory and feeling our way forward. You can keep up to date with the latest developments in the parish via our Website, our Facebook pages and the newsletter which will be available for collection when the churches are open.

Be of good heart. This time will pass. Our communities have weathered many storms in the past and we will come through this one too. Christians are never victims. 'There is nothing I cannot master with the help of the One Who gives me strength.' says St Paul. When our Lord permits difficulties we offer them up as a Sacrifice and we seek to profit by them. This can be a time for prayer, to read the scriptures, to foster our hunger for the Holy Eucharist and look forward to the next time you receive the Lord in Holy Communion. It can also be a time for looking out for one another and deepening our sense of community. If you have any questions or concerns, I'll do my best to help.

God bless you,

Father O'Shea