

Services Return At The Cathedral

Catholics will be able to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation St Mary's Cathedral in Middlesbrough from Friday and attend Mass from Sunday as the lockdown rules ease.

This week, confession will be available on Friday and Saturday from noon to 2pm, during the time the church is open for private prayer.

It will take place in the cathedral's Blessed Sacrament Chapel, with a screen between the priest and person confessing.

The first Mass will be celebrated at noon this Sunday (July 5). Masses will then be celebrated at noon each Friday, Saturday, Sunday and Monday and 7pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

Only 100 places are available (with a family counting as one place) to allow the required one-metre-plus social distancing. This means that face coverings will be compulsory for members of the congregation.

After receiving Holy Communion himself, the priest will say "The Body of Christ" to the whole congregation, instead of to each individual communicant, and the people will respond "Amen" together.

He will then give the final blessing before standing near the exit and distributing the Blessed Sacrament in silence into the hand of each person as they leave the church, with no response required.

Stewards will be on hand and the church will be cleaned after every service.

Starting this Friday, a booking system will be in operation every Friday morning from 9am to noon.

Anyone wishing to book a place at Sunday Mass and also any weekday Masses is asked to telephone the cathedral on 01642 597750 leaving their name and contact details.

This enables us to cooperate with the Test and Trace system that has been introduced by the government.

Cathedral dean Monsignor Gerard Robinson stressed that the obligation for Catholics to attend Mass on Sundays has been suspended and is not being reinstated at this time, so people are being encouraged to come to Mass through the week or join us online.

"Those who are still shielding or feeling nervous, particularly the over-70s, might prefer to stay at home," he said.

“Many churches now live-stream services and we will continue our Mass at 10am each day on YouTube. Mass is also available by phone for those who don’t have access to the internet.”

St Thérèse of Lisieux Catholic Church at Ingleby Barwick is also planning to begin the public celebration of Mass.