

Dear parishioners and friends of St. Columba's,

peace be with you! I am writing to you to update you on the new DAILY worship arrangements that will be put in place at St. Columba's, 7 days a week, for the foreseeable future.

The church will be open every day for two hours, including Sunday, from 10.30am until 12.30pm, as follows:

10.30am:	Church opens
10.30am-11.00am:	Sacrament of Reconciliation available (Lady Chapel)
11.00am-12 noon:	Eucharistic Adoration for an hour, concluding with Benediction, the Divine Praises, and Angelus.
12.30pm:	Church closes

I have been in discussion with Bishop Hugh; in order to present a uniform policy throughout the Diocese, there will be NO MIDWEEK OR SUNDAY MASS in any parish for the present time. **This includes the coming Sunday (22 March). The Sunday Mass will be celebrated in private, behind closed doors, and the church will be opened, as usual, at 10.30am.**

Please do 'spread the word' to anyone you know who is not on e-mail, and may attempt to come along for a 9.30am Mass as usual.

I am sorry that we have to take these measures, but I am sure that you understand the reasoning behind this decision.

I have already sent out a sheet with the times of some of the many Live-Streamed Masses on the Internet. For the sake of convenience, I enclose it again, together with a Sunday 'thought for the day', as you and your families prepare for the Sabbath together.

Please continue to encourage one another in prayer, and in offering acts of kindness. We are united in spiritual solidarity with one another, as members of the Body of Christ, and we are also united with the earliest Christian communities, who huddled together in their homes, their 'domestic churches', to pray, to reflect on Sacred Scripture, and to break bread with their families.

Through this involuntary Eucharistic Fast, may we gain an ever deeper love for the Blessed Sacrament, and for Jesus, the Bread of Life, who nourishes us in Holy Communion. Let us never take Him for granted, and let us echo in our hearts the words of Simon Peter:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We have come to believe and to know that you are the Holy One of God.” (John 6:68-69).

Thank you most sincerely for the many ways in which you support me and you support the parish; I assure you that it is greatly appreciated. If it is any consolation, we parish priests find this time as bewildering and difficult as you do: the shepherd always misses his flock when they are not with him!

Rest assured that each and every one of you is in my thoughts and prayers.

Wishing you and your families every grace and blessing during this time of our ‘domestic retreat’.

Fr. Domenico.