



St. Wulstan's & St. Edmund's Fleetwood

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30th December 2021

I wanted to write to you as it has been such a long time, nearly two years, since we've had any real contact, both to see how you are, how you've coped, and whether things are slowly getting back to a semblance of the life you enjoyed before Covid brought such a profound change into all our lives.

Here in the parish, we have gone through quite a range of changes. In the early days, as well as total lockdown, the biggest trial was the closing of churches completely, even though, with all the precautions we had in place, you were probably a lot safer in church than you were in the supermarket! It was such a weird experience saying Mass on my own for those four months or so, and then recording on Saturday nights for broadcasting Sunday mornings on YouTube. Huge thanks to Maria for facilitating that. It was hard work for her, but it's a lot easier now with live streaming.

Then, when we were allowed back into church, there was the need for social distancing, which meant roping off every second row, wearing face masks and hand sanitising, especially by me before distributing holy Communion. For all that, though, it was great to be able to be back together again as a parish family, even though socialising after Mass was still barred.

Numbers of parishioners coming back to Mass started slowly, with only about 40, but has now built up to about 120 on Sundays and about 90-100 spread out through the five weekday Masses. Incidentally, Saturday morning Mass has proved popular with families who do sport on Sundays.

Things are a lot better now, even though the Omicron strain still demands the prudence and caution of wearing masks and hand sanitising. Readers, Eucharistic Ministers and Altar Servers are all back in action, and the Green Hut is open for coffee and a bit of socialising after Mass

So, this little letter is just to re-assure those of you who are thinking of coming back to Mass that it is perfectly safe to do so, and that it would be wonderful to have you back with us. I know some parents are ultra-cautious, with good reason, because of their experience of the huge disruption Covid caused in our schools, but we have had none of that at all from church.

If you are still not quite ready to come back yet, I perfectly understand, and you can keep in touch via live streaming of the 1000 Sunday Mass. But, for those who feel the time is right, be assured of a big welcome. We have really missed you, especially the children who bring such life and vitality. Without them, we have no future. We hope to begin children's liturgy again when enough are back.

With my prayers for all those of you who lost family or friends during the pandemic, I wish you and your families a happy and blessed New Year.

*God Bless,
Father* 