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**9 March 2020**

My dear people,

Peace be with you.

I am sure many of us are filled with joy and anticipation after the recent announcement by Archbishop William Goh regarding the resumption of masses. Even as we rejoice, it is important to recognise that the threat of COVID-19 remains. Seating capacity is limited as our Main Church hall is still under renovation. Moreover, the flexibility of choosing mass service is also constrained. The Archbishop has stressed that these are not "normal times" and those who are not well or do not feel well, or are uncomfortable with attending mass during this period, may fulfil their Sunday obligation by following the mass online via [www.catholic.sg/mass](http://www.catholic.sg/mass).

Meanwhile, weekday masses, that are not exempted from the Screening Protocols will NOT resume until further notice.

My team and I have spent some time preparing for the resumption of masses and I am happy to say that we are sufficiently prepared, and I would like to update you on the current status and explain some of the decisions that have been made.

#### **(A) CHANGES TO MASS SCHEDULES**

Weekend masses will resume from 14/15 March,

- Saturday: Sunset - 5.30pm (No Novena)
- Sunday: 9am
- Sunday: 11.30am (note the move from 11am)

All masses will be held at **JP2 Hall** and **St Mary's** (across from the old canteen and where the old parish offices used to be) and in the **Columbarium**. **There will be no weekday Masses, 7am and 5.30pm Masses on Sundays until further notice.** Stations of the Cross and Novena have also been suspended for the time being. This is due to the shortage of volunteers/manpower needed for the mandatory measures as stipulated under MOH Guidelines for every mass.

#### **(B) PROCEDURES BEFORE MASS**

##### **i. Temperature Screening**

The Parish has procured a thermal scanner which all worshippers will need to walk through prior to entering the worship areas.

##### **ii. Registration and Contact Tracing**



Some personal details (name as in NRIC, contact number etc) will be required to facilitate contact tracing should the need arise. To ease this registration process, we have implemented an online seat booking system to capture the necessary contact tracing details and to assign a specific seating zone. These seats will be randomly assigned. You may register for your seats at [www.sfxchurch.sg/resumption-of-masses](http://www.sfxchurch.sg/resumption-of-masses). A QR code is also available for online registration.

Online Registration can be done ahead of coming for mass, or upon arrival. We strongly encourage you to opt for the former if you are able to. For those without online access, hard copies of the registration forms will be made available on the day itself.

Seating capacity is limited to a maximum of 390 worshippers per mass. Therefore, parishioners are requested to register/book for their preferred time slot. We seek your understanding and apologise in advance if we have to turn you away because we are unable to assign you a seat.

Wheelchair-bound parishioners will have a designated area but seats are limited.

If you have registered as a family unit, please enter the worship area together. Please make an effort to keep to the same mass timing every weekend and to avoid church hopping.

We reserve the right to turn you (and your family members) away should you be visibly unwell or should you indicate in the registration form that you have travelled to any of the countries specified by MOH.

Once registration is done, sanitise your hands and follow the ushers to your seat. Do not swap seats and do minimise movement during mass.

**IMPORTANT: REGISTRATION CLOSES 15 MINUTES BEFORE MASS BEGINS AS ALL ARE TO BE SEATED 10 MINUTES BEFORE MASS.** Please assist us by coming earlier for mass – registration begins 45 minutes before each mass.

[Confessions will also be available in the library before the 3 masses. Otherwise, please contact the Parish Office to make an appointment. Please note that confessions will stop 15 minutes before mass.]

### **(C) CHANGES TO THE LITURGY**

There will only be one celebrant at each mass, no singing or chanting. Avoid physical contact (just a nod during the 'Sign of peace' will suffice). No procession from the entrance to the altar and no altar servers. The homily will be kept short and succinct. There will be no



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collection during the offertory – again to minimise contact. As such, please drop your donations/love offerings before mass at the entrances. Holy Communion continues to be strictly received on the hand. Take the cue from the ushers during Holy Communion – it is important that you follow their lead as this is also to ‘contain’ movement and contact between blocks during mass.

#### **(D) PROCEDURES POST MASS**

Volunteers will be deployed after each mass to sanitise the halls and furniture, fittings/railings including those in the toilets, lift buttons etc. Please promptly leave the premises once mass is over – this helps minimise human interaction and contact and will expedite cleaning of the premises by the volunteers for the next mass.

The above proposals are unavoidable. The protocols as laid down by MOH and the Archdiocese have to be observed by everyone, with no exceptions. We seek your patience and charity as we continue to work hard towards restoring all weekend, and eventually, weekday masses. I accept that there will invariably be some inconvenience to parishioners, but your well-being remains a priority that we cannot compromise.

Please cooperate with us when you join us for the Eucharist.

Most importantly, I also ask for your continued prayers for our Archbishop and his advisors who are shepherding us through COVID19, for the parish team and volunteers who have generously come forward to help serve your pastoral needs. Let us not allow the current situation to become a source of discouragement, division or scandal to others. Perhaps we can intentionally use this season of Lent to reorder our priorities, to learn to live with less in yet another way, and so grow in personal holiness. Despite the challenges of this unprecedented development, I am confident that God’s graces will help us unite to work for the common good, that His name can be glorified. Thank you again for your support, understanding and cooperation. May our Lord’s blessings and protection be on you and your loved ones.

Yours in Christ,

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Fr Benedict Chng  
Parish Priest

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Fr Vinukumar  
Assistant Priest