

01 June, 2020

Dear Parishioners of St Brigid's,



I am writing this message to you all to assure you of the daily prayers for you and your families over these weeks of COVID and Lockdown. Like you, we in the Passionist community in the St Brigid's monastery have also been in lockdown. We have to be especially vigilant since we have four brothers with seriously compromised immune systems. All but four of we 18 religious are in the vulnerable category. Our parish team, Frs Erick, Dominic, Srs Elenita, Elena, Mr Pongia, Ms Terrey and Fr Thanh have been very careful whenever they come back not the monastery to assure they do not bring the virus with them.

In the same way, they have been extremely vigilant in their care to ensure you the parishioners and your families are kept safe. The Government and the Church are now allowing some gatherings, smaller and carefully controlled to begin. So, the Parish Team has sought proper medical advice also from doctors, and from our Monastery Health Officer. They have also involved the Parish Pastoral Council and Parish Liturgy team - and myself as Provincial and Fr Ron as Superior of the Monastery.

Our parish of St Brigid's is one of the large parishes in the Archdiocese. A thousand people attend mass each weekend. We would dearly love to be able to throw open the Church doors for masses and prayer. However, the risk assessments we have made for the safety of parishioners, the Parish team and the monastery community make this impossible. These risk assessments include, of course, the enforcing of numbers, maintenance of social distancing, taking of names and contacts, sanitising of the church after any gathering. All the assessments and medical advice for our parish mean we have to move gradually and carefully, in small steps and stages. We need to review and evaluate after each change.

We know other parishes with smaller numbers are able to open more easily. I realise this is frustrating for you and causing much heartache and sadness. The Parish will move as quickly as it can, but as safely as it has to. In fact, all our Passionist Parishes in Australia are also moving in a slower and more deliberate manner.

It is very difficult for the Parish Team to have to say "No, it's not possible" at times to you. It hurts them and causes them sadness. Please be understanding yourselves. We will be opening the Church as quickly as possible but will only do it when we are assured at each step that everything is as safe as possible.

Let us continue to pray for each other as we continue this COVID journey.

Kind Regards
Fr Tom McDonough CP
Provincial Superior