

INSIDE THE HALF-OPENED CHURCH



A number of churches have opened by now, but a considerable number are still struggling with the idea of opening. For those that have opened the new way of doing things is clearly strange. The presence of stewards coupled with so much signage and the one-way system our familiar church space has been stolen away from us. Masks can be an intrusive feature in the half-opened churches. Uncomfortable as they are, they also make for less clarity in the exchanges. Perhaps this is an opportunity for everyone with good hearing to experience something of the hardship the deaf cope with on daily basis. It is worth giving it a thought as they are given little opportunity for lip-reading. There are those who can make it to church and have been delighted to be back. But there are others who have thoroughly enjoyed being barred from Church and these will be slow to entertain the thought of coming to a half-opened church. We are all ministers to them to come and experience the different church space. So far at St Joseph's, we did not find ourselves in a situation where stewards turned out anybody from Mass attendance. Numbers therefore dictate that restrictions are adhered to. This must be respected. Meetings have not been a problem. The lockdown has put some of us in a situation where we have become comfortable to be part of the virtual meetings. We have reason to thank God for that. We have to keep the distance but let us take care not to be distanced from the community since everything in us craves for contact and proximity. Let no one be allowed to be put in a situation where they are deprived of proximity. We have to become very creative in how we now do things. We are called to be different and imaginative in how we minister to each other.