



25 June 2020

Dear Father,

You will find with this letter a document that guides us towards the cautious re-opening of our churches for Mass from Monday 6th July. It is important that we help people to realise this is not back to “normal”, we are re-opening with one metre + social distancing precautions and so things will look and feel quite different. But it is a step in the right direction. Also, I am very aware that local circumstances differ from parish to parish and you must make adaptations to suit your local situation within the attached guidelines for re-opening churches for public worship.

Any priest who feels anxious about these arrangements or feels that for whatever reason he does not wish to re-open either at weekends or for weekday Mass must not feel a sense of guilt or undue pressure. If this applies to you, please contact your Dean to let him know and other arrangements can be made.

One point I have not covered is the celebration of First Holy Communion. It is not possible to make general recommendations regarding the celebration of First Holy Communion; local arrangements will have to be made according to what is possible in your church and within the guidelines. I recommend that only small family groups are permitted to attend with the communicant.

The Diocese will be able to provide the resources and equipment that you will need, this includes the necessary risk assessment, cleaning materials and signage. I am asking the Deans to provide help in this.

The Sunday obligation has not been restored therefore in order to facilitate restricted numbers it would be good to encourage people to come to Mass on weekdays. If you have unanswered questions, please contact your Dean.

Once again, I want to thank you for the wonderful pastoral initiatives and care that you have shown your people throughout this trying period in the life of the church.

With all good wishes,

+ Malcolm