

Resumption of collective acts of worship

Tuesday 23rd June 2020

We welcome the news that we can once again start to gather for public worship. I know that this will be news received with great joy by my fellow brothers and parishioners.

We await the guidelines from the Bishops Conference to see what this will mean practically for us. There will still be a need to continue with some restrictions and our worship may feel a little different. It may also be that not all our churches can open and that there is a reduction in the number of services.

We will issue more information to parishes as we receive it and will provide support to assist parishes as we approach the 4th July.

These are unprecedented times and we must recognise that this is the next step in the journey we are on together back to normality, however that may look.

+John

Cardinal Vincent Nichols, president of the Bishops' Conference of England & Wales said:

I welcome the statement by the Prime Minister earlier today, that places of worship are now able to resume collective acts of worship from 4 July. This is welcome news for members of all religions in England. I thank all who have worked hard to bring this about, not least my fellow religious leaders.

As Catholics we now look forward to being able to celebrate Mass together again from 4 July. We have waited with patience and longing for this moment, understanding the importance of protecting the health of people in our society. Now we are full of anticipation that we will be able again to take part together in the Eucharist, which lies at the centre of our faith.

It is important that we continue to abide by the guidance, given by the Government, on appropriate social distancing and the other measures to avoid all unnecessary risk. Our own detailed guidance will be distributed around dioceses and parishes so everyone can be confident that they may come to Mass securely and understand the part they are to play in protecting each other from any remaining risk of infection.

The past few months have been a time of fashioning new patterns of prayer, new ways of exploring and enriching our faith and vigorous ways of reaching out to those in need. We can build on these, forgetting nothing of the graces we have been given.

Yet now, with the experience of opening our churches for individual prayer already gained, this return to the more normal patterns of worship will be of great importance to all Catholics.

This time of our 'Eucharistic fast' has made our hearts grow in longing for that moment when we can come together and receive again the Body and Blood of Christ in the Eucharist. That moment is now very near and for that we thank God.