



## **ARCHDIOCESE OF CARDIFF**

### **OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP**

18<sup>th</sup> March 2020

The Bishops of England and Wales have issued the following advice for the Church in the face of the Coronavirus pandemic we are currently enduring:

The Public Celebration of Mass should cease from the evening of 20 March 2020. This includes Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. The obligation for the faithful to attend Mass on these days is removed until further notice owing to the extraordinary circumstances. Priests will continue to celebrate Mass privately, without a congregation.

A notice should be out on the church door to explain the church is open for private prayer, but there are no public services in accordance with Coronavirus guidelines against large groups of people gathering together.

A number of churches are going to 'live stream' the Mass on Sundays; a list will be made available through the Diocesan website as soon as it become available. Resources for people at home will be available on both the Bishops conference and Diocesan website.

Baptisms should be deferred until such time as public health advice that congregations may gather is received.

Individual Confessions may be heard on request as long as the necessary hygiene and distancing requirements are observed.

First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion celebrations are to be postponed until congregations can gather safely in accordance with Coronavirus guidelines.

Confirmation should be postponed until congregations can safely gather for reasons given above.

Marriages should be deferred if possible. If the most pressing circumstances demand, those present should be the celebrant, bride and groom, immediate family and registrar. No large gathering is permitted.

Care of the Sick. Pastoral visits should not be made to people who are self-isolating until the period is over. Telephone support would be helpful and the prayer of Pope Francis should be shared in these circumstances. Anointing of the Sick may be conducted applying the Holy Oil with a cotton bud which should be burned afterwards. The “laying on of hands” should be substituted with “the priest extends his hands”.

Funerals should be conducted by priests or ministers at the graveside or crematorium, subject to the conditions laid down by the authorities. Arrangements may be made for a Mass “In Memoriam” when congregations are allowed to gather.

These guidelines will be further reviewed by the Bishops on 25 March 2020 taking note on what further advice will be given by government and health agencies.

Mindful of the Lord’s call to “love our neighbour” we look to one another for support in these heart-breaking times. But we also remember his call to trust; to trust in his mercy for all people and we seek his protecting hand. My prayers, good wishes and blessings go to you all at this time. Let us pray together as we have never prayed before.

With every blessing,

*+George Slack*

Archbishop of Cardiff