



GEORGE STACK
ARCHBISHOP OF CARDIFF

The Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Dioceses of Menevia and Wrexham welcomes the announcement by the First Minister that churches may be opened for private prayer from Monday 22nd June 2020. In the interests of your continued safety, given the measures that will need to be put in place in the coming days, it seems that Saturday 28th June will be the likely date for those churches who fulfil the health and safety requirements to be opened for a specific time to be announced. With the re-opening of churches, certain responsibilities are laid on both the parish and the diocese to ensure the health and safety of those who come to pray. Amongst these are the following:

1. Each parish will need to decide the hours of opening and these times will be published on the diocesan website, once the Risk Assessment has been made and the Health and Safety certificate has been issued.
2. Everyone visiting the church will be required to follow the necessary guidelines and signage to ensure the safety of all.
3. Each parish will need to provide two or three volunteers to ensure the safe flow and placement of people – seating, distance, cleaning, signage, stewards etc.

PLEASE NOTE:

- a. That the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday remains dispensed.

- b. That social distancing (currently two metres) must be observed – except for household groups.
- c. Each person must sanitise their hands on entering and leaving the church.
- d. Should a person feel unwell, or has been to an infected place in the past 14 days, he or she should not enter the Church.
- e. That the numbers entering the church will be restricted – depending on the seating available. One-way entry and exit paths will need to be established.
- f. That churches must be cleaned every day prior to opening, and portions cleaned during the time it is opened. Special attention must be paid to pews and door handles. Where possible, windows should be open. Air circulation helps reduce infection.
- g. Hymn books, prayer books, pamphlets and leaflets and other items may not be left around for people to handle.
- i. That those who are “shielded” or self-isolating must remain at home and not come to the church for private prayer.
- j. Some of our churches will be unable to fulfil these requirements through being too small, or not being able to recruit the necessary volunteer stewards or cleaners. Hopefully, the main church in each deanery will be able to welcome visitors from elsewhere.
- k. Face coverings may be worn, but are not strictly necessary. Their use is voluntary and not disrespectful to prayer before the Blessed Sacrament or the sacred space which is the church.
- l. Parents and guardians bringing children to the church should be mindful to care for them particularly by ensuring they touch as few surfaces as possible for their own safety.

“I rejoiced when I heard them say “Let us go to God’s house, and now our feet are standing within your gates O Jerusalem”. (Psalm 121:1-2)

+ George Svack

22nd June 2020 - Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus