

Fr Andy has asked me to post this letter from the Bishop

Dear Father,

Now that government restrictions are being lifted, we are all looking forward to the opening of our churches as soon as possible. However, it is already clear that the re-opening of our churches in the Diocese will bring its challenges. One of the key challenges once the restrictions are lifted will be to ensure that we have everything in place to guarantee your safety and that of your parishioners.

Clearly you cannot re-open the church on your own. With this in mind I am asking you, as part of our preparation for the re-opening, to begin to identify volunteers willing to act as stewards during the hours the church is open and cleaners to clean benches etc when the church is closed ready for the next time the church is open. It is more than likely that not every church will be open initially. It may be this will happen on a deanery basis, so it would be helpful if in your deanery you could begin to identify the churches that would open should this be the case.

However, no church will open without it being sanctioned explicitly by me. This will happen only when I am satisfied that all the necessary procedures and protocols are in place and can be sustained to provide a safe environment for you and your parishioners.

Meanwhile as part of our preparation for the lifting of restrictions and the re-opening of our churches we are looking to buy centrally all that is required to ensure the safety of our parishioners such as hand sanitizer, aprons, gloves etc. Each parish however will be asked to bear the cost of their own materials. Hopefully the above will ensure a necessary common policy across the Diocese and show that we continue to work together to bring the Sacraments to the people and nourish their spiritual lives.

Yours in Christ the Redeemer
Bishop Ralph