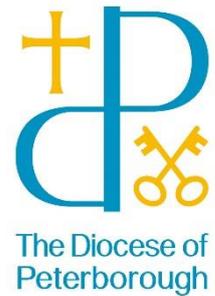


## **BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 16**

### **To the Licensed Clergy of Peterborough Diocese**

**15 June 2020**



Dear friends

A lot happens in a week! Monday turned to Saturday for private prayer in church buildings, and small-scale funerals were included.

The indicative dates we have heard from the government for various aspects of life to be opened up keep changing: sometimes one date or set of conditions from the relevant government department, and another from Downing Street. Policies change, the rate of unlocking, the perceived priorities ... It can be hard to keep up.

However, don't worry! As I've said before, and I might well say again, these are just permissions. True, it can be unhelpful when a government minister says "Your parish church will be open again from Monday", but we just have to put up with that. Sadly, even in this crisis, it appears that some politicians (on all sides of the political divides) are more interested in the spin, how they appear, their popularity, than they are in doing the right thing. The fact is, it is up to you, with advice from your churchwardens, and your PCC, as to when and how the church building is opened up. I and the senior staff are happy to advise, or to talk issues through with you; but it is up to you, and I will support you, whatever you decide.

### **Basic Principles**

The pendulum has swung for some, from health and safety as the highest priority, to economic health. Back to work! Spend, spend, spend! Even though, just before lockdown, we were hearing arguments about not buying cheap one-season fashions, but more expensive long-lasting classical clothing; and to reduce our flying; all for the sake of the environment: that has been forgotten now, as the cheap "fashion" shops re-open, and "air-corridors" are created so we can chase the sun while keeping the airlines in business and the skies polluted.

One particular bit of nonsense is the government's idea of "suspending" Sunday trading restrictions for a year to kick-start the economy. (Hands up anyone who thinks those restrictions would be re-imposed after such a suspension.) Surely this virus has reminded us that we need our rhythms of life. We, our land, our livestock, and our shop workers, all need a Sabbath – a weekly day when we can rest and re-create without having to be productive economic beings.

In fact, we need a better place for that pendulum to settle than either “health and safety at all costs” or “maximum productivity and wealth creation”. We ought to be discussing “the common good” or “the well-being of the most vulnerable” or “the caring and just society.” We could, even, be using this horrid crisis to be dreaming and planning a better future, rather than either hiding in our caves and refusing to come out, or rushing headlong back to the madcap destructive past from which we have come. I and others are trying to say these things (by Zoom) to the House of Lords, but I am not yet aware of any senior politicians brave or imaginative enough to re-think our society in these ways.

## **Ordinations**

I shall be writing before long to all clergy and lay ministers about the arrangements for ordinations, and the licensing of lay ministers, this year; but I thought a brief heads-up at this stage might help.

We normally license all the new lay ministers in a big service in the Cathedral in late September. That simply cannot happen this year. However, it is perfectly possible for lay ministers to be licensed online in a Zoom meeting, so that is what we shall be doing. More details to follow.

Ordinations were going to take place in the Cathedral this coming Sunday, priests in the morning and deacons in the afternoon. As that requires both laying on of hands, and Holy Communion (at the very least, the ordaining bishop giving communion to the newly ordained), there is no way we can do that yet.

We are putting the deacons-to-be on the payroll as if they were newly ordained curates, allowing them to live in the curacy houses, and permitting them to engage with their incumbents in “the cure of souls”. We hope to be able to ordain the priests in early September, and the deacons in late September, in the Cathedral. This depends on the return of Holy Communion, and the ability to lay hands, and we are seeking government clarification on that. At best, each candidate would be allowed a very few family members and supporters, so we could not issue the normal invitations to the parishes.

We are still holding an (online) ordination retreat from Thursday to Sunday, for our eleven would-be deacons and eight would-be priests. Please keep them in your prayers.

With love in Christ

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