

## **BISHOP'S BULLETIN No 5**

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

**2 April 2020**



Dear friends

I have been so impressed, over the last week or so, by the creativity and care with which many parishes are continuing their ministry and mission. As we head towards Holy Week we will all be missing much of our normal pattern of private devotions and public worship. The next ten days will still be the high point of our Christian Year, but we will have to express it, and help our people to live it, in new ways.

We will also have to express it in the context of large numbers of deaths, in London and Birmingham especially, over that period. The current predictions are that we here will be hardest hit a little while later, probably in late April or early May.

But our exile will continue to some degree for months beyond that. Once Easter has been celebrated, we will need to settle down into being church in these new ways for some time. We will need to find new patterns of ministry, worship, pastoral care, and mission – patterns to sustain us, patterns to hold and grow our worshipping communities, patterns to serve our communities, patterns that are sustainable for the long term.

#### **Worship at Home**

Sarah Brown, our Canon Missioner, has written a good paper to help lay people establish their homes as places of worship. This is very timely, though what she suggests will be equally applicable once the current emergency is over. Sarah's piece is attached to this Bulletin; I warmly commend it to you, and encourage you to circulate it, or make its contents known, to your lay people.

#### **Renewal of Vows**

Like most dioceses, we have traditionally re-affirmed our ordination vows on Maundy Thursday morning in the Cathedral. I propose that we do the same this year, but based in our own homes. We will have two services, one for each archdeaconry, each lasting just 20 minutes, hosted on the Zoom platform. Bishop John will give a brief homily, and I will link the service together.

All licensed clergy will receive an invitation. If you have zoom on your computer, you can just click the link at the appropriate time to join us. (If you don't have zoom yet, you can [download the free version](#) and get it working before Thursday: you will then be able to see the service.) We will also offer a phone number and a code to enter, so that those without zoom can join in on an audio-only basis.

You should receive the zoom invitation by Tuesday lunchtime. There is no need to RSVP or to connect until the set time on Thursday, but if anything is unclear or you need help with the system, you will have time to ask anyone you know who is familiar with zoom. If the invitation does not reach you on Tuesday, please contact my PA, Joanne Gibson [joanne.gibson@peterborough-diocese.org.uk](mailto:joanne.gibson@peterborough-diocese.org.uk)

Which reminds me: my thanks to Joanne, and to Tim, my chaplain, who are both doing a huge amount, working from home, to support all of us.

## **Funerals**

A couple of sensitive matters on funerals. First, most of our crematoria are working under capacity at present, but it is very likely that the opposite will be the case soon. The authorities are asking if we can encourage families to go for an early date rather than delaying until a family member comes out of self-isolation. A number of services are booked for some time ahead, and the likelihood is that by then funerals will be reduced to ten minutes and no mourners allowed, as is already happening in some parts of the country. If you are aware of families which are waiting, please, as sensitively as you can, encourage them to bring the funeral forward.

Second, we have not yet brought in the funeral fee waiver: at present we are still able to offer a full-length crematorium or graveside service. Fees should be charged normally for now. I will let you know when that changes, which will probably coincide with the requirement for very short services and no mourners.

## **Church Buildings**

Some of you have been concerned about the Ecclesiastical Insurance advice that we should check our church buildings internally every week (daily for cathedrals). I am delighted to say that, following lobbying from Lambeth Palace, EIG has now agreed that external inspection is enough. If you, or a parishioner, can arrange, as part of your normal exercise, to walk round each church building once a week, keeping an eye open for problems, your side of the insurance contract will be fulfilled.

With love in Christ

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