

Diocese of
Shrewsbury
Ad Clerum

2022/03 January





Dear Fathers and Deacons,

UPDATED GUIDANCE FOR THE CHURCHES

I am forwarding to you, as promised earlier in the week, the updated guidance for our churches received earlier today following the lifting of Plan B measures tomorrow 27th January. The guidance has been drawn up by the Secretariat of the Bishops Conference of England and Wales in consultation with Public Health England. This guidance notes that the scientific consensus is that we are now moving towards the stage where the virus is transitioning from the pandemic to the endemic phase. However, we must move forward with caution especially mindful of the risks involved in gathering for sustained periods in enclosed spaces.

In the guidance provided for us we will note for our parishes:

- People displaying symptoms of Covid-19 are advised to stay at home and not participate in acts of worship.
- All parishioners **may** continue to wear a face covering whilst in the church building, however, this is no longer required. During congregational singing there is a "general encouragement" for face coverings to continue to be used, though it is recognised not everyone will feel able to do this.
- Formal social distancing is no longer required in church buildings however, we are urged to be sensitive to the needs and concerns of others. Good ventilation should continue to be provided though the balance is acknowledged with the

needs of church heating at this time of year.

- The use of hymn books and congregational missals can be resumed; and **Holy Water stoops may be refilled** though there is advice on regularly changing the water.
- All ministers of Holy Communion (ordinary and extraordinary) should still sanitise their hands for the distribution of Holy Communion. Holy Communion **must continue to be given under one kind** (the Sacred Host) and at concelebrations clergy must continue to receive Holy Communion by intinction.
- The Sign of Peace **may** be offered again if it is felt appropriate. I would, however, advise you to be cautious in any re-introduction of the practice of hand-shaking as it is very difficult for a person to refuse and I fear this might become a barrier for parishioners who are vulnerable or anxious. I would suggest that the Sign of Peace may be something for us to consider later in the year.
- The use of cotton buds for anointing and the distribution of the ashes is **no longer mandated**.
- Parish social activities revert to Plan A and a review of the normal Health and Safety Risk Assessment is recommended.
- Home visits can continue though we are asked to manage the number of visits to different homes in a single session; and to be mindful of ventilation and cleanliness as good practice.

Please read the more detailed advice attached. I hope it will be helpful in moving



us forwards to a greater degree of normality in the life and worship of all our parishes.

CLERGY

CHAPTER AND CLERGY JUBILARIANS MASS

Following a two year break due to the pandemic, there will be a Chapter and Clergy Jubilarians Mass at 12 noon on 24th May, The Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians. Our Jubilarians will receive their invitation from my office in the near future.

DIOCESE GENERAL

PASTORAL STATISTICS

The deadline for returning the 2021 parish pastoral statistic form is 31st January. I am grateful to those parishes who have already completed statistics form and sent them to my office. If you have yet to do so, please ensure that they are returned as soon as possible. If you have any questions, please contact Theresa who will be happy to assist you. theresa.stones@dioceseofshrewsbury.org

RACIAL JUSTICE SUNDAY 2022

Please see a letter from Bishop McAleenan regarding the celebration of Racial Justice Sunday on 13th February this year. Links to the materials are available in the letter.

HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL DAY

27th January 2022

The materials for the use in churches for Holocaust Memorial Day are attached. These have been produced by the Council for

Christians and Jews and can be adapted as you see fit. Please circulate these to those involved in Jewish-Christian dialogue in the dioceses.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPEAN BISHOPS' CONFERENCES - LETTER REGARDING THE UKRAINE

I attach a letter from Archbishop Gintaras Grušas, President of CCEE, regarding the situation of concern on the Russian-Ukraine Border. I ask you to keep in your prayer, both public and private, peace in the Ukraine amid all the growing tensions and threats of war in the region.

FINANCIAL

COLUMBAN FATHERS MISSION APPEAL 2021

Last week I met with two of the Columban Fathers who asked me to pass on their gratitude to the parishes who supported their 2021 appeal despite the pandemic. The total monies raised in the Diocese of Shrewsbury was £13,296.

GENERAL, COURSES, EVENTS

PRIESTS' CONFERENCE 2022

Thornycroft Hall 21st ~ 23rd March

The title of this year's Priests' Conference is *'The Priest as Father'*. The speakers will be *The Most Reverend Leo Cushley, Archbishop of St Andrews and Edinburgh; Rev Dr Paul O'Callaghan; Dr Adrian Treloar and Rev Dr Domenico Zanrè.*

The cost of the conference is £295 for the three days including meals and accommodation. The day rate is £75 which includes lunch.



To register, please email Father Joe Evans on frjoe153@gmail.com, giving your full name, parish or chaplaincy, and a contact phone number. You only need to pay from 1st March onwards but we would ask that if you do book a place, you commit yourself to it as far as you possibly can.

For more information, please see the attached flyer.

INTERCESSION FOR PRIESTS RETREAT

15th ~19th August 2022

The *Intercession for Priests Retreat* will be held at Hinsley Hall from Monday 15TH August to Friday 19th August 2022 (arrivals from evening of Sunday 14th August). The retreat provides an opportunity for priests and deacons. As accommodation is limited, early booking is strongly recommended. To book, please contact Hinsley Hall by email: info@hinsley-hall.co.uk or by phone: 0113 261 8000.

PACT MASS

01/22 Monsignor Canon James Fealey
Died 16/01/22 (Wrexham)

FINALLY ...

I am very happy to share with you the official guidance in this Ad Clerum. We are no longer placing further constraints on the life of our parishes but now gradually seeing a prudent relaxation of these restrictions. We are moving forward step by step, please God, towards a final return to normality.

Entrusting this hope to the prayers of Saint Joseph whom we called upon as an intercessor and guardian of our Diocesan recovery,

+ Mark

Bishop of Shrewsbury

Enc:

- *Guidance for Churches January 2022*
- *Priests' Conference Flyer*
- *Racial Justice Sunday Letter*
- *Holocaust Memorial Day Information*
- *Letter From CCEE Presidency*