



CATHOLIC BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES

Statement from the Bishops of Wales

Sunday – it is our Day¹

Saturday 7th August will complete the move to alert level 0 by Welsh Government of the current legislative powers which assist the mitigations against the Covid-19 virus transmission <https://gov.wales/coronavirus> :

- remove legal restrictions on the number of people who can meet indoors, including in private homes, public places or at events
- face coverings will remain a legal requirement indoors, with the exception of hospitality premises. This will be kept under review.

Nevertheless, there continues to be the encouragement to personal and corporate responsibility in this area; as the UK Prime Minister said recently “The pandemic is not over.” Even with this minimal legislation in place, the Church in England and Wales will be adopting a cautious approach to capacity and activity within our buildings, especially at corporate acts of worship.

We are mindful of the certain fact that the Covid-19 virus is still circulating in society. Vaccines provide genuine protection against the worst effects of the virus, yet we recognise the legitimate fear on the part of some who otherwise desire to gather for Holy Mass. As one with the Catholic Bishops of England our continuing judgement, therefore is that it is not possible at the present time for all of the faithful to attend Mass on a Sunday thus fulfilling their duty to God.

It is hoped that it will be possible for all Catholics in England and Wales to fulfil this most important Church precept, that of the Sunday Obligation, by the First Sunday in Advent 2021.

In the meantime, all Catholics are asked to do their best to participate in the celebration of the weekly Sunday Mass and to reflect deeply on the centrality of Sunday worship in the life of the Church.

In April, following our Plenary Assembly, we offered a reflection on the experience of the extraordinary long months of the pandemic. It was titled *The Day of the Lord*. We also began to look at the way forward. We spoke about the important invitation to restore the Sunday Mass to its rightful centrality in our lives. We asked for a rekindling in our hearts of a yearning for the Real Presence of the Lord in the Eucharist, as our response to the total, sacrificial love that Jesus has for us. We said: “The Eucharist should be the cause of our deepest joy, our highest manner of offering thanks to God and for seeking his mercy and love. We need to make it the foundation stone of our lives.”

May this continue to be our striving during these coming months as we journey back to the full celebration of our Sunday Mass and our renewed observance of *The Day of the Lord*.

Archbishop George Stack

Bishop Peter M. Brignall

¹ St Jerome, *In Die Dominica Paschae II*