

From: Archbishop John Wilson <archbishop@rcaos.org.uk>

Sent: Sunday, November 1, 2020 12:14:07 AM

Subject: Response to the Prime Minister's Statement

Dear Father, Dear Deacon

A short while ago, the President of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, Cardinal Nichols, and the Vice-President, Archbishop McMahon, [released a Statement](#) responding to the Prime Minister's announcement earlier this evening of further widespread restrictions in England beginning on Thursday 5 November. In that televised statement, there had been no formal announcement concerning *Places of Worship*; however, the guidance later published on the [government's own website](#) stated that places of worship will be required to end all acts of collective worship from that date, with the exception of funerals.

As has been made clear in the bishops' statement, Faith communities have played, and continue to play, a vital role in offering support in diverse and essential ways to hundreds of thousands of people in all sections of the community, especially the most vulnerable and marginalised; and that this "critical service towards the common good of all is created and sustained by communal worship and prayer".

For Catholics, loving our neighbour and loving God are realised perfectly in our celebration of the Eucharist, through which the Lord Jesus shares himself in his risen life. This is the loving mystery which we, as disciples of the Lord Jesus, take out in service to the world.

In order that we might do as the Lord has commanded, Catholics have acted with great care and responsibility in the way churches have reopened, thus enabling the essential worship of God to be celebrated in a safe and organised way.

As the President and Vice-President make clear in their statement, the Government has a profound responsibility to show why it has taken this particular decision to prohibit the public celebration of the Liturgy; to do otherwise, would risk losing the good-will and unity needed at this difficult time.

The draft legislation is due to be brought before Parliament on Monday 2 November. In this short timeframe I would urge all priests and deacons to encourage the faithful to raise this matter with their constituency MPs, asking that questions be raised in the House regarding the publication of the data which has driven this regrettable decision to cease public common worship.

With every blessing

Yours sincerely in Christ

+ John

Most Rev John Wilson
Archbishop of Southwark

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