



St Maximilian Kolbe House
63 Jeddo Road
London
W12 9EE

tel: 020 8749 1321
e-mail: info@catholicunion.org.uk
web: www.catholicunion.org.uk

Rt Hon Robert Jenrick MP
Secretary of State
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government
2 Marsham Street
London, SW1P 4DF

Sent by email only to: mhclgcorrespondence@communities.gov.uk

25 May 2020

Dear Robert

The time has come to open our churches.

The covid-19 pandemic has caused hardship to millions of people across the country.

For the 4.5 million Catholics in Britain, not being allowed to enter churches has made this difficult time even harder to endure.

We have all needed to make sacrifices to help stop the spread of this virus and save lives. Places of worship have played their part by following the Government's guidance and closing their doors, although the work of churches in our communities has continued throughout this time.

As we begin the difficult task of trying to resume some form of normal life, I urge you to consider all options for opening places of worship as soon as possible.

The creation of a Taskforce to consider how places of worship can be opened safely is encouraging, but there are concerns about the current timescale in England.

As you know, churches in Northern Ireland are already open for private prayer. The Scottish Government has plans to allow limited opening of places of worship next month. The position in England is beginning to look at odds with the rest of the UK and the rest of Europe.

The Catholic Bishops in England and Wales have produced proposals for how churches could be reopened safely; with social distancing and cleaning arrangements in place. This includes opening churches for private prayer ahead of public Masses resuming.

As we approach the next review date for the current restrictions – Thursday 28 May – I encourage you to consider the proposals from our Bishops and allow churches in England to open for private prayer.

Allowing churches to open again would bring hope and consolation to many people at this very difficult time.

Rt Hon Sir Edward Leigh MP
President, The Catholic Union of Great Britain

The Catholic Union of Great Britain: The Voice of Catholics in Public Life

President: Sir Edward Leigh, MP

Vice-Presidents: Mike Kane MP, Baroness Hooper, Baroness Morris of Bolton OBE, Lord Clarke of Hampstead CBE, KSG, Mr Robert Ffello, Professor John Haldane, Baroness Hollins, Dr Terence Morris, Mr John Deighan KSG, Dr Anthony Cole KCSG, Mr John Barrie KCSG, Mr Michael Henderson KCHS