



Diocese of Plymouth
From the Office of the Bishop

PRESS RELEASE

Bishop expresses “dismay” at Government’s proposed cancelling of public worship.

The Bishop of Plymouth, Bishop Mark O’Toole, has written to all MP’s in the counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, expressing the Catholic community’s “dismay at the Government’s decision requiring the cessation of acts of public communal worship”. He asks that “the Catholic community, and other faith groups, are treated fairly, and with a recognition of the legitimate rights to religious freedom and expression, so deeply held within our democracy.”

The Bishop highlights that, “Faith communities have played a vital role in sustaining personal, spiritual and mental health these past months, as well as encouraging vital charitable activities, which support millions of people in all sections of the community, and especially the most vulnerable. That critical service toward the common good of all, is created and sustained by communal worship and prayer. For Catholics, the Mass plays a central part in their lives. It is essential in sustaining personal, spiritual and mental health, as well as nurturing the energy and generosity needed to serve others.”

Bishop Mark stresses, that it is “incumbent on the Government to be transparent and produce the evidence that fully justifies its decision to ban communal worship.....if such evidence cannot be produced, then the decision to ban public worship in Catholic churches should be removed from the proposed legislation.”

ENDS

The Catholic Diocese of Plymouth includes the Counties of Cornwall, Devon and Dorset, for which Bishop Mark O'Toole has pastoral responsibility. The full text of the Bishop's Letter to Constituency MP's is attached.

Further enquiries to Bishop's House on (01752) 224414 or to the Bishop's PA at emma.neville@prcdtr.org.uk