



# **Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope**

## **a route map for parish pastoral ministry at the time of COVID-19**

The Lord asks us and, in the midst of our tempest, invites us to reawaken and put into practice that solidarity and hope capable of giving strength, support and meaning to these hours when everything seems to be floundering. The Lord awakens so as to reawaken and revive our Easter faith. We have an anchor: by his cross we have been saved. We have a rudder: by his cross we have been redeemed. We have a hope: by his cross we have been healed and embraced so that nothing and no one can separate us from his redeeming love. In the midst of isolation when we are suffering from a lack of tenderness and chances to meet up, and we experience the loss of so many things, let us once again listen to the proclamation that saves us: he is risen and is living by our side. The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is 42:3*) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.

Embracing his cross means finding the courage to embrace all the hardships of the present time, abandoning for a moment our eagerness for power and possessions in order to make room for the creativity that only the Spirit is capable of inspiring. It means finding the courage to create spaces where everyone can recognize that they are called, and to allow new forms of hospitality, fraternity and solidarity. By his cross we have been saved in order to embrace hope and let it strengthen and sustain all measures and all possible avenues for helping us protect ourselves and others. Embracing the Lord in order to embrace hope: that is the strength of faith, which frees us from fear and gives us hope.

Pope Francis, *Urbi et Orbi* Blessing,  
Friday 27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

This document takes account of the Scottish Government's phased easing of social restrictions and offers advice on how parishes can safely undertake a range of pastoral ministry actions at each phase of easing. It also advises on how parishes should prepare for the following phase.

It is planned that further support, advice and resources will be provided to assist parishes as they work to re-build their pastoral activity in the longer term

<p><b>LOCKDOWN Phase</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Government advice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No public gatherings of more than two people.</li> <li>• No mass gatherings.</li> <li>• Funerals can take place with limited number of attendees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PASTORAL MINISTRY ACTIVITY</b></p>	<p>Church buildings are closed                  Mass continues to be celebrated in private                  Mass and other services are shared digitally where possible                  Dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues                  Parish outreach activities continue in line with public health advice                  Hospital chaplaincy continues in line with public health advice                  Funerals are conducted at Crematoria or Cemeteries                  Parish finances being supported by online giving systems</p>
<p><b>PREPARATIONS for Phase I</b></p>	<p><b>Church Buildings:</b>                  Survey church building to establish restricted capacities to facilitate safe physical distancing and to consider safe entry/exit routes.                  Consider times when the church could safely be open for private prayer.                  Consider the numbers of volunteers required to maintain these hours.                  Recruit volunteers as stewards* to guide congregations, using safe entry/exit routes and to sanitise the church before and after use.</p> <p><b>Communication:</b>                  Use parish/diocesan bulletins, website and social media to inform parish about the need to prepare the church building for re-opening safely.                  Consider how to reach those without internet access.</p> <p><b>Children and families:</b>                  SCES is co-ordinating the preparation of RE lessons, prayers and assemblies to be used for home and school learning from August 2020.</p> <p><b>Safeguarding:</b>                  Consider need for appropriate safeguarding measures at all stages in this phased easing process.                  Ensure that there are no gaps in safeguarding provision required for any pastoral activities taking place.</p>
<p>* for health reasons, volunteers should be recruited from those who are not in any 'at risk' category.</p>	

<b>PHASE I</b>	<p><b>Scottish Government advice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No public gatherings permitted except for meetings of two households, outdoors and with physical distancing.</li> <li>• Funerals can take place with limited number of attendees.</li> </ul>
<b>PASTORAL MINISTRY ACTIVITY</b>	<p>Church buildings are closed                  Mass continues to be celebrated in private                  Mass and other services are shared digitally where possible                  Dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues</p> <p>Parish outreach activities continue in line with public health advice</p> <p>Hospital chaplaincy continues in line with public health advice</p> <p>Consider how Funeral Masses can take place with limited numbers attending and volunteers available to steward and sanitise</p> <p>Distribute news of Pastoral Letter re. re-opening of churches</p> <p>Use various forms of communication (social media, posted letters, telephone calls) to keep parishioners informed and connected</p> <p>Revisit Parish census and, if necessary, update parish records</p> <p>Utilise national/ diocesan/parish communications (bulletins, website and social media) to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• continue to share resources for family/individual prayer, faith renewal and catechesis</li> <li>• inform people during phase I of what to expect in Phase 2:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the need for restricted entry to church buildings</li> <li>○ the need for physically-distanced seating</li> <li>○ the need for face coverings to be worn</li> </ul> </li> <li>• show photographs / video of the ‘restricted’ church building</li> </ul> <p>Teachers return to school buildings and are supported by Diocesan R.E. Advisers on the planning of RE for next school session.</p> <p>Provide training for volunteers on how to sanitise the church</p> <p>Provide training for volunteers on how to guide congregation safely in and out of the church</p>
<b>PREPARATIONS for Phase 2</b>	<p><b>Church Buildings:</b>                  Agree restricted church capacity and safe entry/exit routes</p> <p>Obtain sanitising materials and basic PPE for volunteers (face masks, gloves, aprons for cleaners)</p> <p>Train volunteers (online or on paper) on safety measures required</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) to guide congregations to enter and exit the building</li> <li>b) to sanitise the church safely</li> </ol> <p>Once church opening times are known, arrange volunteer rotas for times of private prayer in Phase 2</p> <p>Consider how to facilitate private prayer so as to allow access to all who wish to visit (e.g. rota, ‘sign up’ to a specific time etc)</p>

**PREPARATIONS  
for Phase 2  
(contd.)**

**Communications:**

SCMO/ Diocesan Media offices prepare agreed and consistent communication to be released during phase 2 to emphasise key messages.

Contribute to development of an on-line hub to support the Catholic community in Scotland and host national information:

- Deaneries/Parishes issued with questionnaire to establish current and future Liturgical and Pastoral activities
- Review at deanery level to see all that is on offer, what is being duplicated and what could be learned from other deaneries.

**Children and families:**

Dioceses consider how to co-ordinate and give access to resources for children's liturgy, family prayer and sacramental preparation programmes.

**Mass, Sacraments and Liturgies:**

Parish clergy plan arrangements for 'safe' funerals and marriages  
Consider how best to reintroduce the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a safe manner

**Outreach and Pastoral Activity:**

Consider how to remember those who have died during the pandemic.  
Consider numbers, role and expectations of volunteers to re-establish outreach and pastoral activity  
Consider planning to co-ordinate outreach and pastoral activity as a deanery/cluster

**Parish Network and Connectivity:**

Identify parishioners requiring support, ensuring that appropriate safeguarding measure are in place

**Chaplaincy Support:**

Diocese consider need for chaplaincy support in schools, hospitals and nursing/care homes

Dioceses develop advice for chaplains in various contexts.

Deaneries consider development of extended chaplaincy teams (to assist appointed chaplain): requirements, training, role.

**Safeguarding:**

Ensure safeguarding processes are in place, following national advice  
Provide Safeguarding information leaflets to volunteers  
Direct volunteers to online Safeguarding training provided by SCSS

**Finances:**

Dioceses/parishes consider and trial use of on-line payment systems  
Consider possible fundraising activities.

<p><b>PHASE 2</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Government advice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Places of worship open for private prayer under physical distancing rules and hygiene safeguards.</li> <li>• Allow marriages and other types of ceremonies to take place with minimal number of attendees.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PASTORAL MINISTRY ACTIVITY</b></p>	<p>Churches are open for private prayer at certain times in line with public health advice          Mass continues to be celebrated in private          Mass and other services are shared digitally where possible          Dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues</p> <p>Funeral Masses and Marriages may take place in churches, with limited numbers attending and appropriate stewarding and sanitising procedures in place</p> <p>Possible provision for the Sacrament of Reconciliation where space allows for it to take place safely</p> <p>Parish outreach activities continue in line with public health advice</p> <p>Hospital chaplaincy continues in line with public health advice</p> <p>Parishioners able to leave 'Remembrance lists' (in safe manner) in Church</p> <p>Continue to utilise various forms of communication (social media platforms, posted letters, telephone calls) to keep parishioners connected:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Newsletters, texts of prayer services &amp; scripture and other useful leaflets delivered to family homes</li> <li>• Phone-calls to connect to and pray with the isolated</li> <li>• Recorded services made available (local radio, phone)</li> <li>• Lists of Masses &amp; services that you can join in with at home.</li> <li>• Drawing attention to parish on-line support (where available).</li> </ul> <p>Continue to utilise national/ diocesan/parish communications, bulletins, website and social media:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to share resources for family/individual prayer, faith renewal and catechesis</li> <li>• to inform parishioners of Church building opening times</li> <li>• to inform people of what to expect in Phase 3:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ the need for restricted entry to church buildings</li> <li>○ the need for physically-distanced seating</li> <li>○ the need for face coverings to be worn</li> <li>○ public Mass may be possible, in line with health restrictions</li> <li>○ outreach activities can be broadened</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Continue to follow necessary safeguarding procedures          Identify any new volunteer roles which will involve 'regulated activity' and require PVG checks          Keep records of activity and contact with vulnerable individuals</p>

**PREPARATIONS  
for Phase 3****Church Buildings:**

Consider how church can be safely opened to extended groups  
 Plan for the opportunity to celebrate Mass, considering practical implications regarding the building, flow of people, hygiene etc.  
 At deanery level consider timings of Masses in the area  
 Plan process for attendance at Mass (need for booking system?)

**Communication:**

SCMO & Diocesan Media offices prepare agreed and consistent communications to be released *during* phase 3 that highlights changes in restrictions and prepares for phase 4  
 Continue to support work to establish online hub of resources (target one-use returns from deanery/parish audit to share current activities)  
 Consider what additional resources and information can be added to the national hub to support Catholic life and formation

**Children and families:**

Consider activities that will be permissible in Phase 3, and how to organise these safely: Children's liturgy, sacramental preparation groups.  
 SCES and Diocesan RE offices finalise blended resources for RE lessons, prayers and assemblies to be used for home and school learning from Phase 3.

**Mass, Sacraments and Liturgies:**

Plan for the public celebration of Mass, following advice from Bishops' Conference

RCIA: plan to prepare RCIA candidates

**Outreach and Pastoral Activity:**

Plan for the impact of Phase 3 changes to visiting care homes, vulnerable families and extending outreach work

Consider pastoral activities that can be undertaken safely in Phase 3 (eg., small group meetings, Pastoral Council, RCIA, pre-nuptial enquiries)

Identify parish groups or individuals who can support individuals/families e.g. Bereavement Support, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Messenger Team (delivering items to the housebound and sick), SSVP, Legion of Mary, J&P group, etc.

Recruit volunteers needed to offer practical support eg., collecting shopping, driving people to appointments so as to avoid public transport, directing people to Foodbank provision in the area and providing other relevant sources of advice & support.

<b>PREPARATIONS for Phase 3 (contd.)</b>	<p><b>Parish Network and Connectivity:</b> Continue to identify and direct parishioners to appropriate prayer resources and link them to others using resources/praying at same time.</p>
	<p>Consider resources and activities that will support adult catechesis and faith renewal (blended approach, deanery groups etc)</p>
	<p><b>Chaplaincy Support:</b> At deanery level plan safe chaplaincy support for Phase 3 in schools, hospitals and care homes.</p>
	<p>IN SCHOOL:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chaplains and schools develop a plan for liturgical, spiritual and pastoral support of school community</li> <li>• Priest chaplain (and chaplaincy team) develop actions from school plan for school year.</li> </ul>
	<p>Identify Church agencies to assist school chaplaincy in next school session: UR Space, NET Scotland etc</p>
	<p><b>Safeguarding:</b> Continue to follow necessary safeguarding procedures at all times Identify any new volunteer roles which will involve 'regulated activity' and require PVG checks Be attentive to safe recruitment policies and training requirements for new volunteers Keep records of activity and contact with vulnerable individuals Raise awareness of clergy and volunteers that, as people return to church for Mass, some may disclose non-recent or current abuse and that mandatory reporting policy should be followed</p>
	<p><b>Finances:</b> Plan fundraising activities possible in Phase 4</p>



<p><b>PHASE 3</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Government advice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People can meet in extended groups subject to physical distancing.</li> <li>• Places of worship open to extended groups subject to physical distancing and hygiene safeguards.</li> <li>• Relaxation of restrictions to attendance at funerals, marriages and civil partnerships beyond “close family”.</li> <li>• Children return to school under a blended model of part-time in-school teaching and part-time in-home learning. Public health measures (including physical distancing) in place.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PASTORAL MINISTRY ACTIVITY</b></p>	<p>Churches continue to be open for private prayer          Public Mass can be celebrated in line with public health advice          Extended groups can gather in church buildings (including halls) in line with public health advice          Mass and other services are shared digitally where possible          Dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues</p> <p>Funeral Masses and marriages may take place in churches with larger groups (in line with public health advice)</p> <p>Extend Deanery/Parish outreach activities in line with public health advice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regular review of those in need and ways to support</li> <li>• Deanery overview of activities to ensure no unnecessary duplication</li> </ul> <p>Hospital chaplaincy can be re-established in line with public health advice</p>
<p><b>PREPARATIONS for Phase 4</b></p>	<p><b>Church Buildings:</b>          In line with advice from the Bishops, plan what physical measures can be eased during phase 4 for private prayer and Mass          Plan for phase 4 changes eg., external groups using parish hall</p> <p><b>Communication:</b>          SCMO/ Diocesan Media offices prepare consistent communications to be released <i>during</i> phase 4 to encourage confidence about returning          Make use of ‘Catholic Scotland’ hub website to access resources and information to support faith renewal, catechesis and pastoral ministry</p> <p><b>Children and families:</b>          Explore resources for children and families provided on SCES and Diocesan platforms.</p> <p>Parish Chaplaincy Teams: contact schools to see what pastoral support is possible in view of the blended learning occurring in schools &amp; homes</p> <p>Consider online sign-up events for prayer and adult faith formation or direct parishioners to opportunities available elsewhere</p> <p>Promote Prayer times, with schools and family homes participating at the same time (e.g. morning prayer at 9am, Angelus at midday)          Offer professional learning opportunities for teachers online or with social distancing provisions in place.</p>

<b>PREPARATIONS for Phase 4 (contd.)</b>	<b>Mass, Sacraments and Liturgies:</b> Using guidance from BCOS, consider adaptations and changes for phase 4
	<b>Outreach and Pastoral Activity:</b> Consider a survey of parishioners on what they want/need/ have to offer parish now
	<b>Parish Network and Connectivity:</b> Formalise your plans for a parish networking system
	<b>Chaplaincy Support:</b> Work with individuals in need of chaplaincy support in schools (with social distancing and health precautions in place) Link to parish outreach groups (eg., SVDP) to identify families and pupils in need of chaplaincy support (due to bereavement, redundancy, divorce, poverty etc)
	<b>Safeguarding:</b> Continue to follow necessary safeguarding procedures at all times Identify any new volunteer roles which will involve 'regulated activity' and require PVG checks Be attentive to safe recruitment policies and training requirements for new volunteers Keep records of activity and contact with vulnerable individuals Raise awareness of clergy and volunteers that, as people return to church for Mass, some may disclose non-recent or current abuse and that mandatory reporting policy should be followed
	<b>Finances:</b> Consolidate or introduce to parishioners plans to raise finances for the parish

<p><b>PHASE 4</b></p>	<p><b>Scottish Government advice:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mass gatherings resume in line with public health advice.</li> <li>• All ceremonies can take place, with improved hygiene and other precautions.</li> </ul>
<p><b>PASTORAL MINISTRY ACTIVITY</b></p>	<p>Public Mass continues to be celebrated in line with public health advice              Mass and other services are shared digitally where possible              Dispensation from attending Sunday Mass continues</p> <p>Funeral Masses and marriages may take place in churches</p> <p>Diocesan and parish gatherings can resume in line with public health advice.</p> <p>Communication is maintained at national/diocesan/parish level to ensure consistent messages, access to resources, connection to those who are still shielding or cannot attend Mass.</p> <p>Hospital chaplaincy continues in line with public health advice.              School chaplaincy resumes in line with public health advice</p>
<p><b>PREPARATIONS For the new on-going situation</b></p>	<p>Continue to review and maintain public health standards for the Celebration of Mass.</p> <p>At Deanery/cluster level, review and update the shared pastoral ministry plan for your area</p> <p>Plan for extending Parish outreach activities in line with public health standards</p> <p>Make use of ‘Catholic Scotland’ hub website as it is developed and updated to move from information hub to a resource for the New Evangelisation, faith renewal and catechesis</p> <p>Continue to monitor safeguarding requirements of any parish activities              Review the safeguarding implications of any changes of volunteer roles – eg., bereavement buddies</p> <p>Bishops consider updating guidance for celebrating Sacraments at parish and diocesan level (e.g. for those Sacraments previously postponed)</p> <p>Bishops consider appropriate ways to mark the Remembrance of the dead              Plan memorial Masses or services</p> <p>Continue to regularly review and evaluate health precautions in place to ensure that they remain safe and in line with public health advice</p> <p>Schools develop and re-introduce times of prayer, retreats, liturgies and Sacraments safely into school life.              Schools consider specific needs/help of Caritas and Faith Award pupils.</p> <p><b>Continue to play a part in building the Kingdom of God.              Celebrate and give thanks to God!</b></p>