

Faith leaders to meet with UK Communities Secretary about reopening of places of worship



Faith leaders will be liaising with the UK government to come up with a game plan on how and when to re-open churches.

In a tweet on Wednesday, Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government Robert Jenrick said he will be meeting with religious leaders to plan the reopening of places of worship, whether for public worship or individual prayer.

On behalf of [@BorisJohnson](#) I will be convening leaders of all the faiths to plan the reopening of places of worship, whether for public worship or individual prayer.

We will work together to agree how and when to do so, whilst protecting the public and controlling the virus.

— Robert Jenrick (@RobertJenrick) [May 13, 2020](#)

He told the Downing Street daily briefing that private prayer could be allowed in places of worship before they are opened up to the public.

Under the Government's plans places of worship in England are not expected to open before 4th July at the earliest.

Mr Jenrick said he was leading the ministerial task force looking at "when and how places of worship can open safely for some of the practices where social distancing can take place".

Meanwhile, senior Catholic bishops in Scotland say church is not expected to return to normal until 2021.

The Bishops' Conference of Scotland has formed a Covid-19 working group to look at how best to meet long-term pastoral needs during the pandemic.

It will aim to ensure the church is prepared for extended measures on the operation of parishes and dioceses.

Activities within parishes are expected to have some form of restriction until next year, the conference said.

Bishop Brian McGee, chairman of the group, said: "After our public masses stopped and our churches closed with almost no warning, the immediate response from our priests and parishioners across Scotland was both impressive and uplifting.

"With great ingenuity and creativity, online masses and devotions were made available throughout the country every day.

"Through this and other action, many vulnerable and lonely people continue to be supported in safe ways.

"While it will be wonderful when our parishes can reopen, we recognise that parish life cannot quickly return to normal until a vaccine or a treatment is available.

"We do not expect this to happen until at least 2021.

“This means that even when churches reopen, parish activities will still be greatly restricted, our pastoral working group hopes to identify and publicise advice or resources to help dioceses and parishes face fresh challenges in a safe manner.”

Early figures indicate high numbers of viewers are watching and downloading masses and devotions online, according to the conference.

[Source](#)