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Dear Brothers and Sisters,

You will have heard over the weekend that the Government has agreed plans to open places of worship for private prayer only on Monday 15th June. We welcome this news as the first step towards opening our churches for the celebration of Mass and the other Sacraments. However, not every Catholic Church will open on the 15th June and your church may not be amongst the first group to do so. You have shown extraordinary patience in recent weeks and I ask you to exercise your patience a little longer if you are disappointed that your church is not included in the first group. Hopefully it will follow quickly.

The preparations of re-opening the churches in the Diocese for private prayer are well underway. This includes obtaining cleaning materials, and necessary equipment and plans for some basic training for volunteers so that we can be confident of providing a safe place when our churches re-open from the 15th June, with Government guidelines being fully observed.

I remind you that with the lifting of restrictions to enable our churches to open for private prayer is the first step towards fuller use of our churches for the celebration of Mass and other Sacraments and "We await that time with deep longing but with patient understanding that the protection of the health of our society, especially the vulnerable in our society is a proper cause for caution and care." (Cardinal Nichols, 7th June 2020).

Yours in Christ the Redeemer,

+ Ralph Heskett CSsR