

Possible re-opening of our churches As you know, the government has given the go-ahead for the possible re-opening of some of our churches for private prayer from June 15. This is in response to lobbying by Cardinal Vincent Nichols, who has been trying to point out the crucial place of private visits to a church in our tradition. For this to happen, however, certain safeguards will need to be in place and we will have to send in a risk assessment to the diocese before being granted permission. We need to stress that this does not, as yet apply to public acts of worship, such as Masses, but presumably, as time goes on the resumption of Mass in church may become a possibility. For private prayer, therefore, we may be able to open our churches on some days for a particular period of time but there are a number of requirements without which we will not be able to do so. The presence of two 'stewards' at all times during the opening, to direct people to the designated areas for prayer within the church is essential. They will also be responsible for cleaning any areas necessary and keeping social distance between people coming in. This should not be a problem as we do not normally have large numbers of people coming into church during the day at once. Sanitizers will need to be provided so that they can be used as people come into and exit the church. Doors will need to be lodged open so that no one has to physically touch them and also that there is some form of flow of fresh air within the buildings. The benches or chairs that will be used will be at the front of the churches which normally do not have a kneeler, hence no one will need to touch them. Different regulations will apply to each of our churches depending on the layout and seating provision in them. Such measures are already taking place in public places such as supermarkets and shops (as of next week), so they will be familiar to all of us. What is necessary is sensitivity and courtesy to other people as we know this virus has not gone away, nor is it likely to do so until some form of vaccination can be found. Taking great care and acting responsibly has now meant that we might be able to resume some of our life within the beautiful places which are our churches, and this possibility fills us all with delight and encouragement. But, and it is a big 'but', we cannot do this without stewarding of some sort, and so we are asking you to offer your services for an hour or two once a week, so that we can present a case for opening to the diocese. If anyone is willing to make a white sash for the stewards to wear, that would also be appreciated. When we have sufficient volunteers, we may then be able to prepare some form of rota of days and times when the churches could be opened and obtain the necessary permission to do so. **If you are willing to act as a steward, therefore, please contact the following people immediately:**

For Hinckley – Marina Brooks – marinabrooks@gmail.com Tel.07791 957292

For Earl Shilton – Kevin Mullan - km444622@yahoo.co.uk Tel.01455 444622

For Market Bosworth – Pauline Reading – pmreading@btinternet.com Tel.01827 880741

Should this all happen, we will then advise the stewards of their times, location of keys and what they need to do in order to enable us to open our church with all the necessary precautions in place.