

Our Ref: IK/MC/Misc-2021

23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021

**Open Correspondence**

The Lord Bishop of Sodor & Mann  
The Right Reverend Peter Eagles  
Thie Yn Aspick  
4, The Falls  
Douglas  
Isle of Man  
IM4 4PZ

By Post & By Email: [bishop@sodorandman.im](mailto:bishop@sodorandman.im)

Dear Lord Bishop

**RE: Current Closure of Churches**

We have been contacted by a several persons who are disappointed that a number of Church of England churches are apparently closed and shut at the current time.

Obviously, we are aware of the present Government lockdown restrictions and that religious ceremonies (other than funerals) and collective worship are not permitted under regulations on gatherings.

We are also aware that the church has moved limited content online and some gatherings are taking place on Zoom/virtually.

It is also noted that, unlike the first lockdown on the Island in March-May 2020, outdoor churchyards appear to have remained open.

However, the concerns raised with us relate to why apparently most churches are closed and locked shut. In contrast, persons are permitted to enter supermarkets, subject to wearing masks and social distancing.

Please may we respectfully ask you to consider the following:-

- i) It is appears from the coronavirus legislation that churches are not specifically mentioned under closure of premises regulations. We understand that it remains in your gift to permit churches to open and that in fact some vicars have been given discretion to open buildings. In such circumstances, could all or most churches not be opened/left unlocked during the day, even if only for a few hours

and perhaps restricted to certain areas within a church and subject to cleaning arrangements etc?

- ii) Do you agree that during these challenging periods of lockdown caused by the Coronavirus pandemic, there is a heightened community need to find peace and spiritual solace and seek God in church?
- iii) How does the decision to close churches on the Isle of Man compare with the current situation in England, where many churches are open for individual spiritual reflection?
- iv) Given that Holy Week is fast approaching, can special arrangements be put in place to allow controlled and supervised access to churches over the sacred Easter period?
- v) Would it be possible to publish a list of all those churches which will be open over Easter?

Those parishioners who have contacted us would be most grateful for your kind consideration of the above issues.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely

Ian Kermodé Advocate  
Email: [ian@ik.im](mailto:ian@ik.im)