



AD CLERUM Update 14

5th June 2020

Dear Colleagues,

Having just sent out my last *Ad clerum* barely 48 hours ago, I had not anticipated writing to you again so soon. However, things are moving. Today on the Church of England website are published a series of updated documents to assist clergy and parishes in their planning for when the Government lifts restrictions and permits the phased re-opening of our buildings. The documents provide Guidance for:

- Baptism
- Small weddings
- Funerals
- Individual private prayer

I should emphasise that no date for the re-opening of our church buildings has been issued. The documents have been written or updated in line with recent Government thinking to assist our preparation. I attach them with this letter, but you can also download them from the national website by following this link:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/media-centre/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-churches>

St Boniface

It is providential that I should be writing to you, given that today is the Feast of St Boniface, the patron saint of Germany – and, of course, of Devon. Having launched last year the Company of St Boniface as a way of honouring the outstanding service and discipleship of lay people in the Diocese, it is disappointing that we have been unable to hold a service and award ceremony this year because of the lockdown. However, Bishop Jackie has written a reflection about Boniface on the Diocesan website which you may care to read:

<https://exeter.anglican.org/better-together-the-message-of-st-boniface-for-2020/>

In 747 Boniface wrote to the Archbishop of Canterbury from Germany, reflecting on the opportunities and challenges confronting him in his struggle to evangelise the population. I find his words moving and they are pertinent to our own situation:

“My dear brother, I fear we have undertaken to steer a ship through the waves of an angry sea, and we can neither succeed in our task, nor without sin abandon it. I am reminded of

the statement of a certain wise man that, 'If it is dangerous to be negligent when steering a ship on the open sea, how much more dangerous to let go of the rudder in a storm when the waves are running high. In her voyage across the ocean of this world, the Church is like such a great ship, pounded by the waves of temptation, and it is our duty not to abandon ship, but to control the rudder.' ”

May God give us grace and wisdom to steer the Church through these turbulent waters, and the courage to hang on to the rudder!

With my thanks for our partnership in the Gospel,

+ Robert Exon