PHASED REOPENING OF CHURCH AND VOLUNTEERING

The Bishops' Conference have still not made an announcement regarding the reopening of churches for private prayer, however, the Archbishops' Council and Trustees (Archdiocese of Liverpool) have been meeting to prepare what will be needed.

From these meetings a clear procedure has been introduced. Each Pastoral area will forward their requests to the Episcopal Vicar who will present them to the Archbishop. The Archbishop will tell us which churches can be opened, issuing a 'Document of Permission' indicating which churches can be open and when. This is not a matter for the parish alone to decide.

Social distancing and high standards of hygiene will be needed. PPE will be needed for all volunteers and recommended for all attending church.

The phased return to church will NOT be a straightforward matter, as social distancing and other safeguarding rules will apply very stringently.

Volunteers may be offered some training to a familiarise themselves with what is required.

The Archdiocese's main concern will always be the safety of our priests and people. For some people there is a real desire to come and pray in church, there will be others who will continue to pray at home and observe the restrictions that will still apply to them. When they know more they will advise further information including items such as a risk assessment which will need to be completed prior to opening and detailed guidance notes.

We need a team of volunteers who must be prepared to act as stewards and cleaners. Some examples of the possible tasks are:-

- opening and locking of doors at the required times including sanitisation of door handles etc
- stewards will be at an entrance and exit (presumably there will not be entry and exit via the same door), helping people to maintain social distancing when approaching the building and at the door. Supervision of people in church to maintain social distancing and stop conversations.
- after each person has visited there will be cleaning and sanitising of benches and kneelers, including the backs of the benches in front and any areas and surfaces people may have touched during their visit. This is to be done after people vacate their place and before anyone else sits or kneels there.

Volunteers must be under 70 years of age and must not fall into the Government shielded category regardless of age.
(Information and exemptions can be found at www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

If you are willing to volunteer, please email Christine with your details or send a private message on the Parish Facebook page 'Parish of St Robert Bellarmine, Bootle' as soon as possible

MANY THANKS