



'Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church'

Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth

CLERGY Guidance

19th March 2020

Coronavirus Pandemic Planning – Guidance for priests regarding their own self-isolation

Background Guidance from government has stated that from Saturday those with serious underlying medical conditions should be shielded from the general population for the next 12 weeks. The government has stopped short of the expected advice that all those over the age of 70 should self-isolate. This may or may not come later.

Those who experience any Covid19 symptoms also should self-isolate for 7 days and those who live or work with others should self-isolate for 14 days if someone in the house has symptoms.

The health advice is available on this link <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/self-isolation-advice/>

We are in unprecedented times and the Bishop wishes to ensure that there is a clear protocol in place should a priest have to self-isolate. This is to ensure that every priest has someone who can support them and offer care. Everyone needs to have provision in place to be able to get food, shopping and medicine. Each priest should know what to do and who to contact.

We are asking all Coordinating Pastors, if they have not already done so, to contact each priest in their area to:

- Check if they fall into a vulnerable group
- Ensure that have a support network who they can contact should they need to self-isolate and who would be able to get shopping etc. (this may be parish staff, parishioners, friends etc.). If not the Coordinating Pastor should help the priest to make provision.
- Make sure they inform the Coordinating Pastor if they are self-isolating and to arrange a time each day to make or receive a welfare call from a nominated person.
- Be sure that, if they are self-isolating in the presbytery, they understand that the presbytery and any linked buildings must be shut down until the isolation period is over.
- Coordinating Pastors should ask parish priests to ensure their parish deacons have similar support in place.

Each Coordinating Pastor should also have a nominated deputy in the area who will take over this welfare role should the Coordinating Pastor need to self-isolate and let all priests in the area know this.

A separate note has already been distributed regarding the care of our retired priests.

If you have serious health or welfare concerns regarding priests that you cannot manage yourself please contact Canon Paul Townsend Department for Clergy 01425 653131

Contact:

Canon Paul Townsend, Department for Clergy, Tel: 01425 653131