



Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle, Brinkburn Partnership
ST AIDAN'S CATHOLIC CHURCH
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Father Shaun Purdy (*Parish Priest*)



18th March 2020

Dear parent/carer.

Today, the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (CBCEW) have released a letter from the President and Vice-President. In this letter it states:

In response to the Coronavirus pandemic, so many aspects of our lives must change. This includes the ways in which we publicly express our faith. It is very clear that, following official advice and in order to keep each other safe, save lives and support the NHS, at this time we must not gather for public acts of worship in our churches. This will begin from Friday evening, 20th March 2020, until further notice.

Further advice has also been released in regard to liturgy and in particular to the celebration of First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. In the letter from the General Secretary to the Bishops' Conference he says:

These celebrations should be postponed until a time that allows for families and friends to gather safely within our churches.

This will come as a great sadness to each one of you and your child who is due to receive our Lord in Holy Communion for the first time in May. It is also a great sadness to myself, Mrs Leslie, Mr Moran and the parish and school community.

Having had a conversation with Mrs Leslie today, we have paved the way forward for the First Holy Communion Mass to take place later in the year. Obviously this may seem a little strange not being in the May, but we really want your child to receive this most special gift as soon as would be possible.

Therefore it has been agreed that we will resume the First Holy Communion sessions (*of which there are two left*) on:

Saturday 3rd October at 11.00am (*Special liturgy on Sunday 4th October at 10.30am*)
Saturday 7th November at 11.00am

The First Holy Communion day will be on Saturday 14th November at 12noon. The Sending Forth Mass will be celebrated on Sunday 15th November at 10.30am.

Beginning again in October should mean that the virus has had time to subside and that we can gather safely in our church to celebrate your child's First Holy Communion.

Whilst there will be much disappointment, the safety of our children and families are important. Please keep safe and let us pray for one another in these very challenging times.

With prayers and good wishes.
Fr Shaun Purdy
Parish Priest.