
COVID-19 Coronavirus: Mgr. O'Toole (Plymouth), UK Government should "give us permission to open some churches for personal prayer"

Bishop Mark O'Toole of Plymouth wrote a long message explaining how relevant St. Boniface - who lived in the 7th century and whose memorial is celebrated today in the British diocese where he is venerated as patron saint - is to the faithful in these coronavirus times. As he retraced the life of the saint, Mgr. O'Toole insisted, among others, on his spirit of unity with the "Successor of Peter", saying: "Now, more than ever, we must hold true to the centrality of our esteem and love for the Holy Father as successor of St Peter. How vital we have seen his ministry is during this time of pandemic, as he has led us all in prayerful intercession to God, and in practical service of our neighbour". The Bishop of Plymouth then referred to St Boniface's ability to support and reach out to as many people as possible, saying: "In this time of pandemic, we have all seen how important the new forms of communications are. Engagement with the different platforms has been vital as a means of communicating with one another, and of praying and worshipping, too, using these different tools". Drawing inspiration from one of St Boniface's letters on the Church, the Bishop said: "We, Catholics, continue to experience the closure of our churches. We hope and pray that the Government will see sense soon, and give us permission to open at least some of them for personal prayer".

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