**Open churches vital for resilience during lockdown, says Cardinal**

With the announcement of a new lockdown for England to curb the rapid spread of COVID-19, Cardinal Vincent Nichols, President of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales, said:

“The regular practice of our faith in God is a well-established source of both personal resilience and dedicated service to those in need. Such resilience and enduring service are vital in these difficult circumstances.

“I am glad that no measures have been introduced that would obstruct or curtail this essential source of energy for the common good. Catholic parishes will continue to serve the needs of their local community.

“In one parish, for example, the provision of food for the needy has increased by 400% since March last year.”

The latest lockdown restrictions come into force on **5 January 2021**.

 **Government Advice**

The government has published its lockdown guidance for England.

[Lockdown Guidance](https://www.birminghamdiocese.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=cac75f2e-769a-4f4a-88a2-2a39228595a1)

In terms of Communal Worship and Life Events, the following guidance is provided:

You can leave home to attend or visit a place of worship for communal worship, a funeral or event related to a death, a burial ground or a remembrance garden, or to attend a wedding ceremony.

You should follow the guidance on the safe use of places of worship and must not mingle with anyone outside of your household or support bubble when attending a place of worship.

Weddings, funerals and religious, belief-based or commemorative events linked to someone’s death are all subject to limits on the numbers that can attend, and weddings and civil ceremonies may only take place in exceptional circumstances.