

Antiochian Orthodox  
Christian Archdiocese  
of the British Isles and  
Ireland



الأبرشية الإنطاكية  
المسيحية الأرثوذكسية  
للجزر البريطانية و إيرلندا

Registered Charity Number: 1175538

Archbishop: His Eminence, Metropolitan Silouan Oner

5<sup>th</sup> January 2021

Dear Fathers of this God-protected Archdiocese,

The Prime Minister's announcement to the nation yesterday means that the whole of the UK is in a Tier 5 full national lockdown, much the same as applied from March to May last year.

As I am sure you know by now, the Prime Minister invited us to start immediately, but it will only become enforceable from Wednesday this week when Parliament approves it. The Prime Minister also said that he is trusting that it will be a measure needed only until the middle of February, when he hopes that vaccination will have taken effect. If that does not occur, the end date will be when that does happen and not before.

My previous instruction for anything above Tier 4 now applies to all parishes; there are absolutely no exceptions.

Allow me then to remind you of what I said before: **"anything above Tier 4, you must not open the church, but you may serve the Liturgy from your home and stream it online if possible."**

The government is saying that this time places of worship can open for services; but I, as your Archbishop, in taking care with love for everyone, must ask you to do more and close all the churches, streaming the services from your home if possible.

The simple straightforward message from the Prime Minister yesterday was: "stay at home". This is what we must do.

May the good Lord, through the prayers of the Theotokos and all the saints, deliver us from this time of trouble and strengthen the hands and hearts of those who heal the sick and comfort the bereaved.

With my blessings and love in Christ,

+ Silouan, Metropolitan of the British Isles and  
Ireland

Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East