
UK: Bishops' Plenary. Fighting abuse, COVID-19 impact, growing poverty and Brexit on the agenda

The plenary meeting of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales will take place from Monday 16 to Thursday 19 November. Many items are on the agenda, including issues related to abuse protection and the "safeguarding" structure, with the latest report by the independent inquiry into violence within the Catholic Church due for publication next Tuesday, 10 November; the impact of the pandemic on different dioceses, with a review of online Masses and the state of finances, damaged by the lack of collections. Another topic will be the growing poverty which makes the work of hundreds of front-line Catholic NGOs even more difficult. The plenary will take place via Zoom, with the exception of Wednesday, 18 November, when the Bishops hope to meet in person at a hotel in central London respecting anti-Covid measures. It will be the first time since the beginning of the pandemic last spring that the bishops will be able to meet again. A press conference is scheduled for Friday 20 November. Other issues on the agenda also include an assessment of the work carried out by the Santa Marta Group against trafficking in human beings. And an exchange of views on Brexit since the UK is due to leave the EU on 1 January.

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