

Preparation in Exile: Higher Education Edition Second Session

On Wednesday 8th July 2020, 29 Higher Education Professionals joined together on Zoom.

We started by stating what we as individuals know now that didn't know a month ago, (these are not universally true but true to at least one of the participants) these included:

- Knowing students will be on campus in September.
- Universities are making cutbacks.
 - Chaplaincies will be working to lower budgets.
- University structures are changing.
- There are definite plans in place for gradual reopening of University buildings.
 - but we can only use certain spaces ... as long as...
- Mixed mode, blended, or hybrid learning will be a thing.
- Chaplaincy can be streamed to multiple campuses.
- Some chaplaincy buildings will not be accessible.
- Welcome week will be online.
 - and it will be the most unusual welcome week ever.
- We might be able to do some things on-site .
- Zoom is here to stay – numbers went up.
- Chapels are open for private prayer and Mass, or will be opening in September.
- Hair Salons are open!
- Some of us learnt how to grow potatoes in pots and make fresh croissants.

Most of the session was used to explore the following key questions in small groups:

- How can you rest and refresh over the summer?
- What are your ideas about freshers and beyond?
- What can we do as a group to help your chaplaincy?

How can you rest and refresh over the summer?

Many groups discussed the importance of taking time out and unplugging. One group gave examples of retreats at home from St Martin in the Fields and St Hilda and St Aiden.

What are your ideas about freshers and beyond?

Welcome week won't be like anything we have known previously – there will certainly be no food! There is still a lot of uncertainty especially with buildings and what will be virtual and what can be done in person. A couple of groups shared ideas about making videos for departmental packs, instead of paper packs. There was also discussion of using this time to get around to the good ideas chaplaincies have every year but never get round to. One group talked about being the calm in the uncertainty, and other how this has enriched their relationships with university staff.

What can we do as a group to help your chaplaincy?

Sharing ideas was the main answer to this, one group talked about having a template or toolkit of ideas ready so that as the situation changes the suitable activity could be brought out ready to go. Ideas like Zoom Beer and Hymns were shared.

It was decided SCM would host another session like this on welcoming new people to campus in September. **This will be 2pm on Wednesday 2nd September.**