

GENERAL DIRECTIVES CANCELLATION OF MASS IN THE DIOCESE OF CALGARY

MARCH 16 2020

In solidarity with the efforts of the government and the community to mitigate the further spread of COVID-19, the following new safety measures dealing with the celebration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Calgary will ensure that our practices are in full compliance with the required restrictions of Alberta Health Services in response to the global pandemic:

- Places of worship are no longer exempt from the recommended restrictions on mass gathering. Public health officials continue to recommend that all mass gatherings of 250 people or more be cancelled, and this now includes worship gatherings.
- Any event that has more than 50 attendees and expects to have international participants, or involves critical infrastructure staff, seniors, or other high-risk populations, should also be cancelled.
- Events that do not meet these criteria can proceed at this time, but risk mitigation must be in place, such as enforcing distancing of one or two metres between attendees and using sanitizer stations.

ALL MASSES WILL BE CANCELLED THROUGHOUT THE DIOCESE OF CALGARY FROM TUESDAY, MARCH 17 TO SUNDAY, APRIL 5, 2020

- Weekday Masses will be live-streamed from St. Peter's Church
- Sunday Mass will be live-streamed from St. Mary's Cathedral with the Bishop as celebrant

FUNERAL MASSES

Funeral Masses may be celebrated in the parish church but attendance is restricted to the immediate family. Funeral services without a Mass may be held in the funeral homes. Funeral receptions are prohibited.



- **Sprinkling:** When holy water is required for blessing, fill a clean vessel with fresh water. Bless the water either before or during the celebration. Immediately following the celebration, pour the remaining water down the sacrarium. You should not touch the water with your hands but use an aspergillum.
- **Sign of Peace:** Refrain from shaking hands – a simple bow, nod, or “Peace be with you” to your neighbour is appropriate.
- **Holy Communion:** Only distribute Holy Communion under the Body of Christ (Host). Only priests may distribute Holy Communion to those who choose to receive on their tongue at a designated area apart from the main aisle. Those who choose to receive Holy Communion in the hand will be asked to approach the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion or a priest who is not distributing Communion to those receiving on the tongue. Only priests are to consume the Precious Blood.
- **Recognizing non-communicants:** Ministers may offer a brief prayer for those in the Assembly who come forward in the communion procession and who are not receiving Holy Communion, such as “May God bless you” or “May God continue the good work in you.” This prayer is to be offered audibly and may not be accompanied by the gesture associated with a blessing, e.g., the raising of the hand or the sign of the cross. Neither ordinary nor Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should touch the individual.
- **Hand Hygiene:** Ministers of communion should sanitize their hands both before and after distributing communion.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

The Sacrament of Penance may be celebrated in a manner that fulfils the requirements mandated by Alberta Health Services:

- Confessions from behind a screen: the required distance needs to be maintained between the penitent and confessor and the confessional screens should be sanitized after each use. Due to the small space of some confessionals, it may be necessary to set up a separate reconciliation room to ensure the required distance between the penitent and confessor. The screen should still be sanitized after each use unless there is a distance kept between the penitent and the screen as well.
- Face-to-face confessions: these are permitted as long as the required distance is maintained between the penitent and the confessor.
- There should be no physical contact between the penitent and the confessor.
- Public penitential services are prohibited.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Anointing of the Sick may be celebrated according to the following directives:

- Only immediate family, if present, may gather with the priest and sick person.
- If confession is to be celebrated before the anointing, please maintain the required physical distance.
- Use a cotton ball to apply the oil for the anointing. The cotton ball should be burned later.
- If the person to be anointed is in a health care facility, the priest has the obligation to check restrictions in place in the facility.

LENTEN MISSIONS

Only live-streamed Lenten missions are permitted.

SACRAMENT PREPARATION

All sacrament preparation workshops or sessions are cancelled and are prohibited. With parents being the first teachers of the Faith, parents are responsible for the formation of their children using the prescribed program materials and are to attest to the readiness of the candidates for the sacraments. If you have questions, please contact Huy Nguyen, 403-218-5547, huy.nguyen@calgarydiocese.ca or Dorothy Burns, 403-218-5503, dorothy.burns@calgarydiocese.ca.

RCIA

Formation of catechumens and candidates are suspended. It will be left to the Pastor to determine their readiness. The celebration of full initiation will be postponed to later in the year. The celebration of the sacraments for full initiation will be postponed to later in the year as determined by the Bishop in consultation with the parish priest.

HOLY WEEK

Prior to the week of April 5, a new directive will be issued to address Holy Week and the celebration of the Paschal Triduum.

SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

When we receive the sacrament of Holy Communion, “we unite ourselves to Christ, who makes us sharers in his Body and Blood to form a single body,” (CCC 1331). Those who are unable to attend Mass

or to receive the Sacrament are encouraged to unite themselves to Christ in prayer through what is known as a spiritual communion. As Pope St. John Paul II explained in his encyclical *Ecclesia de Eucharistia* (no. 34), when it is not possible to receive communion it is beneficial to cultivate in your heart a constant desire for the Sacrament. This prayer from St. Alphonsus of Liguori can help you to make this act of spiritual communion:

*My Jesus,
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,
come at least spiritually into my heart.
I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You.
Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*

RESOURCES FOR DOMESTIC CHURCHES

Other ways to pray when you cannot attend liturgical services include:

- Read Scripture or practice *Lectio Divina*. A link to the daily Mass readings is available through the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops: <https://nlo.cccb.ca/index.php/weekday-lectionary>
- Pray the Liturgy of the Hours, also known as the Prayer of the Church. <http://universalis.com/> offers access without a subscription
- Do spiritual reading
- Silent prayer
- Rosary and other devotional prayers

PUBLIC GATHERINGS

Apart from Funeral Masses, there are no other public gatherings permitted in the church until further notice.

ACCESS TO CHURCHES

Parishes are asked to keep the churches open during the day so that individuals may be able to visit and pray before the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. However, groups are not allowed to assemble in churches. The number of people present in Adoration Chapels should be restricted so as to observe the AHS recommendations for social distancing.