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COVID-19 Update
Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas
April 2, 2020

It is with a sad heart that I need to announce there will be no public Masses or gatherings this Holy Week and until further notice. We continue to work with our local public health authority and community leaders to ensure that how we are living these days is keeping our elders and people as safe as possible.

We continue to try to find the balance between not panicking and yet taking seriously the need for social distancing and other precautions.

- 1. Palm Sunday:** *The priest can bless the palms at a private Mass. The palms can be available to the people in a way that ensures not more than ten people (or the number advised according to your local health authority) are in the Church at a time and that the palms are individually laid out so people are not touching the same surfaces. It would be good to have hand sanitizers available if you have them. If your community has the tradition of blessing tree branches that is fine, too, just have the same precautions after blessing them.*
- 2. Calling Parishioners:** *As an Archdiocese in these days ahead until the restrictions are lessened we invite the priest and some volunteers to try to call your parishioners, especially the elders. The first reason is to check in with them and to see if there is anything that they need. The second reason is to see if they are willing to give us their email address. Then we can send them updates, a copy of the parish bulletin if you have one, and special updates. You can let them know that we will remove their email address at any time if they wish. If you are willing to help your priest by volunteering to make some of these calls, please contact him.*
- 3. Holy Thursday:** *For the washing of the feet by video, we suggest that a picture of Jesus washing feet is put up on the screen and not actual foot washing to take place this year. We need to demonstrate social distancing. Adoration can take place Holy Thursday evening to pray for our community and our world but to avoid any gatherings of more than ten (or the number advised according to your local health authority).*

4. **Good Friday:** For this service on internet or local TV, we will have a time at the Veneration of the Cross to invite people in their own homes to go to a crucifix in each of their homes and make a veneration there. We especially encourage families to do this together while maintaining no more than ten people together at a time (or the number advised according to your local health authority).
5. **Easter Vigil:** For the blessing of the Holy Water, we suggest that your local parish get crates of individual water bottles and that they are carefully marked with a cross or the words: Holy Water and that they are given out individually limiting the contact as much as possible.
6. **Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Please feel free to ask for confession if the priest is in your community. Again maintain the two metres and do not have a crowd in the line-up. If there is no priest in your community the best you can do is to make a confession to God and then make a good act of contrition. Once a priest returns to your community you can celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation with him.

Other Resource for People to go to: You are encouraged to visit the website for the National Catholic Mission at <https://dailytvmass.com/about/account-ncbc/> (click on yearly mission) during Holy Week from April 6-11. The National Catholic Mission will be airing a two part series: Part 1 “The Sacrament of Baptism” and Part 2 “The Anointing of the Sick.” This series can also be viewed on VisionTV and/or Salt & Light Catholic TV. Please check your local listings for dates and times. More information can be found on our Facebook page.

Archdiocesan Masses on Internet: You can view the Masses from our Cathedral on our Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/KeewatinYouth/> or you can go to our Youtube channel at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCe6PQ_Tl-xM6-mxCfz3e9JA

We continue to look for God’s blessings and love in this time. We realize how much we take for granted when our health or freedoms are limited. We continue to pray for you all, for all who are and will be affected by the virus, and for all our communities.

Yours in Christ,

Archbishop Murray Chatlain
Fr. Jim Fiori OMI