

Update for the Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas
For: Manitoba Parishes
May 29, 2021

Liturgical Protocols:

Due to the recent surge of COVID-19 the provincial government has extended its Code Red Alert for all of Manitoba.

1. All Churches are Closed to the Public:

- *All churches must be closed to the public while the current Code Red Alert is in effect.*
- *Parishes may conduct Masses so that they may be made available to the public over the Internet or through other remote means.*
- *Pastors are to continue to celebrate Mass privately, but with no one in attendance.*
- *“Closed to the public” means just that. No prayer services, group Adoration, etc. may take place in churches. ALL faith-based gatherings such as RCIA, catechism, retreats, sacramental preparation sessions, Bible Study, Lectio Divina and Faith Formation activities must be offered online only.*
- *Individual prayer in a church is permitted, but by appointment only.*

2. Livestreaming/Broadcasting of Masses:

- *The livestreaming of Masses is permitted. We continue to livestream the Sunday Mass from Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Cathedral every Sunday at 10:30 am on both the youth Facebook Page and on YouTube. Parishes which are also currently livestreaming Masses are encouraged to continue to do so.*
- *Parish teams providing the service can be composed of more than five persons if needed, but within reason, while following all safety protocols.*
- *Persons responsible for livestreaming, as well as the liturgical team (presider, deacon, lector, altar server, cantor and musician), are NOT to be counted among the people allowed to attend.*
- *Cantors or leaders of song are required to position themselves at least 20 feet away from others. Diocesan policy states that ideally, there should be only one*

accompanying musician and one leader of song. Other than the cantor, anyone singing must be wearing a mask.

When livestreaming a Mass, please keep in mind that it is **essential** that the proper necessary public health measures are maintained.

3. Weddings, Funerals and Baptisms:

- *Weddings, funerals, prayer vigils for the deceased and baptisms are limited to 10 people.*

Outside funeral gatherings: please note that the maximum number of people gathered at the grave is ten people. However, more people can participate as long as they stay in a car. Groups of ten can take turns disembarking from their respective cars as long as each group waits for the previous group to board their respective cars.

One can also pay their respects while staying in a car, and by driving slowly near the grave.

Please note that the celebrant, as well as other persons assigned by the parish, such as a cantor or lector, are NOT to be counted among the ten persons attending. In the case of funerals, staff from a funeral home are NOT to be counted.

Funerals and wakes are some of our most challenging times to gather. If a funeral is to be celebrated, the established hand sanitizing and physical/social distancing requirements for the assembly must be observed. The worship space and all public spaces must be thoroughly cleaned after use. A sanitizing disinfectant must be applied throughout all spaces and all surfaces wiped down after each use.

4. Reconciliation: *A reading of Order 20(5) would mean that the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as well as counselling, can be made available to parishioners. It is within the realm of providing ministry towards the spiritual (and emotional) well-being of the public.*

We therefore invite the faithful to call their priest and to set up an appointment to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation, either within the church or at the parish office.

This moment of encounter between pastor and parishioner for the celebration of penance can also be an occasion for the distribution of communion outside of the celebration of the Eucharist. The parishioner can request this of their pastor.

Within the spirit of the present health orders encouraging us to avoid contact with other people outside of our household as much as possible, we ask that appointments be arranged such that there is no "crossing of paths," the priest welcoming one parishioner at the door only once the preceding person has already left. The usual directives for physical distancing are to be respected, as well as sanitizing between each person's visit.

5. Anointing of the Sick: Communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick are not to be held during this time. Individual anointing must ensure physical/social distancing. The presider must wear a face covering (mask) and use a cotton or Q-Tip type swab to apply the sacred oil. Priests who are asked to anoint in hospital settings must abide by the hospital guidelines.

6. Communion to Shut-Ins and to the Sick: Due to COVID-19 Provincial restrictions, we are unable to bring communion to shut-ins and/or to the sick at this time.

Reminder of Health Measures and Protocols Still in Effect

- All attendees must wear masks at all times.
- Ensure 2 metres between individuals (those who live in the same household).
- All high contact areas must be thoroughly cleaned after use.
- A sanitizing disinfectant must be applied throughout all spaces and all surfaces must be wiped down after each use. Especially: pews, doorknobs, bathrooms in particular and any usual high traffic areas.
- Liquid hand sanitizer must be made available at the entrances of the church buildings.
- Hymnals should be removed from the church pews and stored.
- If parishes are not able to ensure sufficient sanitization, control of allowable number of people and proper distancing in the government prescribed manner, they must not livestream religious services until they are able to do so.
- Anyone who has even the slightest symptoms of sickness should remain home.
- Attendees must write their name on a contact tracing form upon arrival at the church and confirm that they do not have symptoms of COVID-19, nor does anyone in their household.
- Contact tracing information should be kept by parishes for a at least 4 weeks.
- Masks must be worn in all public places, at all times. In this case, people attending religious services are to adhere to this order.
- Parishes are asked to provide disposable masks free of charge to anyone arriving at a religious service without one, encouraging them to wear it. This should be done in a welcoming, loving and compassionate matter.

Conclusion

May God continue to bless all of you, so that together we may come through this time of tribulation with renewed faith, unwavering hope and self-giving love.

Yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Murray Chatlain

Fr. Jim Fiori OMI

Archdiocese of Keewatin-Le Pas