



Office of the Bishop

Important COVID19 Reminders

13 August 2020

Dear Pastors, Parish Staff and Parishioners,

Praise the Lord!

We are entering our fourth month after re-opening our parishes and now is a good time to ensure we stay on track and maintain the preventative measures that were put in place to protect one another from the corona virus.

Here are some reminders and additional enhancements to maximize what we're doing to keep everyone safe:

1. **Physical distancing:** it is easy to lose our social distancing without physical reminders. Sacristies, entrances and exits to the churches/halls are all places where we need to be extra mindful of our physical spacing.
2. **Holy Communion:** we need to remember to fully stretch out our hands, not to lean forward, and hold our hands still when receiving Holy Communion.
3. **Music and Singing:** both are so important to our praise and worship of God. When we hear our favourite hymns or Mass parts, "How can I keep from singing?" Since singing carries a high risk of spreading the virus, we should continue to limit the use of music and hum, not sing along instead. Please ensure all Mass parts are only spoken.
4. **Ambos:** since it is impossible to clean and sanitize the lectionary, it would be best to print up disposable copies of the readings so that no more than one person touches them. A second ambo for the Gospel and the homily should also be set up. The priest can either have a separate stand for the Sacramentary or place it on the altar.
5. **Ministers at the Altar:** should be at the minimum wherever possible. This means, only one lector, and not having altar servers for instance.
6. **Masks:** the BC Health Authorities have not mandated the use of masks, but tell us that a mask can help to protect others from our own droplets. Please make allowances for those who come to Mass or prayer and cannot wear a mask.

The BC Centre for Disease Control has produced an updated document to assist Faith-based organizations to prevent the spread of COVID 19. The link is: http://www.bccdc.ca/Health-Info-Site/Documents/COVID_public_guidance/Guidance_Faith_Based.pdf. I encourage you to read it.

I am ever so grateful to all those who have been helping to clean and disinfect our worship spaces so that they are safe for prayer and the celebration of Mass. Everyone deserves a touchless pat on the back for respecting the restrictions we're following to keep everyone safe. Thank you one and all.

Please continue to pray for an end to the pandemic, for those who sick, those who have died and for the speedy development of a vaccine.

God bless all of you.

In Faith and Prayer,



✕ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson