

“WALKING TOGETHER TOWARDS THE LIGHT”

LITURGICAL PROTOCOL NO. IV FOR THE NOVEL CORONAVIRUS COVID-19 OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT BONIFACE AT A GLANCE

PART I – WHAT IS A VIRUS

- A virus cannot spread or live on its own; it needs to infect a host.
 - Following the civil procedures and distancing will help with keeping ourselves safe by greatly diminishing the chance of spreading the infection.
- When in doubt: stay home, stay safe.

PART II – PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES

- Persons at a greater risk of serious illnesses, e.g. people 65 years of age or older and individuals with chronic medical conditions, are encouraged to consider staying safe by avoiding public gatherings.
- No one is prohibited from entering the church or attending Mass.
- Anyone who has even the slightest symptoms of sickness should remain home.
- All attendees are strongly recommended to wear their own masks.
- Ensure 2 metres between individuals or family groups (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, any usual high traffic areas.
- Multiple stations with liquid hand sanitizer **must** be made available at the entrance of church buildings.
- Smaller churches might not be able to fit the number of people allowed by the government and still maintain social distancing. In these cases, churches will have to impose a limit of fewer people.
- 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** hold masses until they are able to do so.

PART III – OPENING OF CHURCHES AND CHAPELS

- A plan is to be established for exiting the worship space while being able to ensure proper distancing. Ensuring aisles and pathways flow in only one direction may help to prevent congestion.
- Markings on the floor and/or clear signs will assist in this process.
- Welcome people and assure no more than the allowable number of people are in the church at any given moment.
- 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.
- Display poster and/or refer them to the COVID-19 screening tool – Shared Health Manitoba.
- Remind people that no physical contact and no food are allowed, and that people **must** respect 2 metres distance at all times by using the pews delimited for each individual or household grouping.
- People **must** disinfect their hands prior to entering the worship space and not touch their face after that.
- Encourage people to remain in their pews.
- If people use the bathroom, encourage them to disinfect their hands before and wash them well afterwards.
- All areas touched by the assembly, including the washroom **must** be cleaned between Masses.

PART IV– DISTRIBUTION OF COMMUNION OUTSIDE OF MASS

- There are three ways to experience communion: spiritual communion, communion during Mass, and communion outside of Mass. All are intended to foster ecclesial communion.
- Many of our parishes, with the encouragement of the Archdiocese have opened their churches for a time of prayer and adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- If during a time of prayer in the church, someone asks the priest for communion, the priest should ensure that the person has adequately prepared himself/herself by a personal time of prayer.
- The priest, deacons or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (EMHC) **must** wear a mask at all times when distributing communion.
- **The procedure to follow:** Sanitize hands → Remove covered ciborium from tabernacle → Sanitize hands → Put mask on → Sanitize hands → take cover off ciborium → Distribute communion.

After communion, these steps are to be followed in reverse order.

PART V - THE CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC, LIMITED, AND CONTROLLED MASSES

- Control **must** be maintained to ensure approved gathering limits at each Mass.
- Masses should be spaced out in such a way as to ensure proper sanitation: time in-between **must** be sufficient to lock, clean, and reopen before the next parishioners arrive.
- Masses should be scheduled a minimum of two hours apart. (Ex. at 9 AM and at 11 AM).
- The use of facemasks is strongly recommended for all.
- The presider and deacon shall not use facemasks during the celebration of the Liturgy; **but** they **must** wear masks at the time of the distribution of Communion. This also applies to Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- Congregational singing is strongly not recommended.
- Liturgies should still have an accompanist and a leader of song for music during the Liturgy -These two individuals **must** be distanced from the rest of the congregation.
- Hymnals should be removed from the church pews and stored.
- Lectors **must** sanitize their hands before going to read at the ambo and after completing their proclamation.
- Collection baskets **must not** be passed through the assembly person to person. Collection baskets with long handles may be used, in which case, only the usher passes the collection basket.
- If a parish does not have long handled baskets, the collection should be placed into free standing baskets at the door as the assembly gathers for worship.
- The collection should not be processed to the altar but stored immediately in a place of safe keeping.
- The counters should wear gloves to handle the offering.
- The preferred donation methods remain donations through direct deposit or through the donation function of the St. Boniface archdiocesan website.

- The offertory procession is not to take place. The elements should be covered and placed on the credence table or altar prior to the beginning of Mass.
- The presider is to use a paten containing a personal-sized host and completely consume his host. The chalice is reserved for the presider and concelebrants.
- The hosts to be consecrated for the faithful should be placed in a covered ciborium to the side of the corporal. The ciborium's cover is not to be removed until the time of the distribution of communion to the faithful.
- The sign of peace is expressed with a bow of the head toward one's neighbour or some other culturally appropriate measure from a distance.
- **Priest celebrant to:** Consecrate → Completely consume personal host and consume completely from the Chalice → Sanitize hands → Mask → Sanitize hands → Distribute from ciborium to the faithful (or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion 'EMHC' if necessary).
- **EMHC to:** Receive Holy Communion → Sanitize hands → Mask → Sanitize hands → Receive ciborium from the Priest Presider to distribute to the faithful
- Communion **must** be received on the hand only for the time being.
- Distribution of communion on the tongue is not to be allowed. **After the COVID-19 pandemic is over, distribution on the tongue will of course once again be allowed.**
- Communities desirous of outdoor Masses should seek further recommendations from the Archdiocese.

The dispensation from the Sunday obligation to physically attend Mass is granted to the faithful until the end of the pandemic. The faithful are strongly encouraged to participate in Sunday Mass through live-streaming, whether from their parish, the diocese or some other source.