



Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

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MEMO

Date: November 20, 2020

To: Clergy, Parishes, Religious, Parishioners, Staff

From: Bishop Gary Gordon

Re: *Revised Directives in response to COVID-19 Provincial Health Order*

On Thursday, November 19, 2020, Minister of Health Adrian Dix, and Provincial Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry announced new restrictions to curb the spread of COVID-19. The new Provincial Health Order, effective immediately, has implications for our parishes in the Diocese, as follows:

- All Masses, Sunday Celebration of the Word, and scheduled Liturgical events with a congregation are suspended. Parishioners in the Diocese of Victoria **remain dispensed** from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass.
- During these extraordinary circumstances, parishioners are encouraged to participate remotely in the celebration of the Eucharist utilizing various means of communication, including the television, live-stream or taped options. The opportunity to enhance the celebration of the Liturgy, though remotely, with the addition of a cantor, musician, proclaimer, and videographer is permitted.
- Priests will continue to respond, upon request, to people in the hospital or at home who are gravely ill.
- Baptisms, Weddings, and Funerals may be celebrated, with immediate family only, and no more than 10 people present (including the priest). Receptions are not permitted.
- Individual appointments for Confessions are permitted.
- Parishes that normally keep their churches open during the day for private prayer may retain this practice, while maintaining normal protocols, including maintaining physical distancing, masks, and sanitizing
- In order to reduce social isolation, we are encouraged to communicate via phone and email, and to perform acts of charity by staying in contact with friends, neighbours, co-workers, and parishioners in need.

We are being challenged to embrace the reality of our poverty and to do so in a spirit of solidarity with those in our Diocese, and the tens of thousands of Catholics throughout the world who do not have access to the Mass and the Sacraments. We have been entrusted with the mission of Jesus Christ to care for all the members of our community, following the great command to love God and our neighbour (Matthew 22:37-40). United in prayer and gratitude for the selfless efforts of the Clergy and the People of God in our Diocese, we look to the light that will dawn on the horizon of hope in the future.