



Office of the Bishop

New Update – COVID19

31 March 2020

Dear Pastors, Parish Staff and Parishioners,

Greetings in the Lord! I am sending you this new update as we approach Holy Week and need to plan for the weeks ahead. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, it is vital to keep connected to our families, friends and faith communities. Fortunately, we live in a time when many forms of communication are available, and I encourage you to reach out regularly so that we can support one another and bolster each other's spirits. This may also mean materially assisting others with basic necessities, such as groceries or medications, etc.

Our Christian and civic responsibility to protect one another and our community from exposure or infection from the corona virus continues, and our health and governmental authorities have given no concrete indication when the pandemic will end. Therefore:

1. Parishes & Parish Offices: will remain **closed to all members of the public** until further notice.
2. Chrism Mass: will be postponed until such time we can safely gather as a diocesan family to celebrate.
3. Easter Triduum: will be live-streamed as has been done these last Sundays of Lent. We will strive to provide resources to help everyone participate. The times (Pacific Time) for the celebrations are as follows:
 - Holy Thursday: 7:00 pm
 - Good Friday: 3:00 pm
 - Easter Vigil: 8:00 pm
 - Easter Sunday: 9:00 am
4. Faith life: I encourage everyone to continue to nourish and deepen your faith life by prayer, spiritual reading, on-line programs and acts of charity. Each morning, during this crisis, Mass is celebrated at 8:00 am, preceded by the Rosary at 7:30 am, in Immaculate Conception Parish in Kelowna. This Mass is live-streamed so that you can at least participate in that way. A link to this is found on the diocesan website www.nelsondiocese.org. There is also a link to the Sunday Mass, which I celebrate at 9:00 am, preceded by the Rosary at 8:30 am.
5. Sick calls/Anointing of Sick for clergy: please follow the instructions issued by your local health care institutions regarding sick calls or anointings. The following should assist you in an actual visit to a resident or patient if they are in isolation or on respiratory or other precautions:
 - i) Follow all the instructions specified on the door of a patient's room to mask, glove, gown and washing of hands. Ask for assistance from the nursing staff if you are unsure.

- ii) Do not bring anything into the room such as a Pastoral Care book, or the container of the oil of the sick, etc.
 - iii) Make a copy or print up the Rite for Anointing and the Prayers for the Dead on a single sheet of paper so that you can dispose of it in the room after use.
 - iv) Ask one of the nursing staff for a "med cup" (plastic) for a small amount of the oil of the sick before entering the patient's room. When finished, dispose of the med cup in the "sharp's container" before leaving the patient's room. The sharp's container is incinerated when no longer usable.
 - v) Wash your hands after seeing the patient.
6. Donations: On the diocesan website, you will also find information about how you can support your parish through electronic donations like Stewardship Pre-Authorized Giving (SAG) or delivering (or mailing) your weekly envelope to the parish. A generic SAG form will be forthcoming. Instructions on how to donate to your parish by automatic withdrawal or electronic transfer are on the form.

Please continue to pray for those who are sick, and for those who care for them, and also for those whose livelihood is endangered in this crisis. In this time of increased isolation and tribulation, it is all the more necessary that our life in Christ be lived fully, even though our public activities are necessarily restricted for a time.

God bless all of you and keep you well,



✘ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson