



Diocese of Kamloops  
BISHOP'S OFFICE

March 13, 2020

Dear Clergy, Religious and faithful of the Diocese of Kamloops,

On Wednesday, March 11, 2020, British Columbia Premier John Horgan, Minister of Health Adrian Dix and Public Health Officer Dr. Bonnie Henry held a teleconference call with faith community leaders from across the province to discuss preventive measures to contain the spread of COVID-19. Yesterday, BC's Public Health Officer directed "all event organizers to cancel any gathering larger than 250 people" and suggested that people maintain a two-metre space (approximately two arms' length) between one another, to reduce any potential transmission of the coronavirus.

In line with the Provincial Health Officer's recommendations, I ask all parishes of the diocese to observe the following measures immediately until further notice:

***Sunday Obligation***

Most communities in our diocese do not pass the 250 people restriction. However, if any of the faithful are unable to attend Sunday Mass due to this restriction, they may be encouraged to find another Mass to participate in. However, given that someone has attempted to go to Mass and could not do so for reasons beyond their control, they have already fulfilled their obligation. If they have access to television or the internet, they may watch Mass. Please encourage those who are not able to attend Mass to spend time for prayer, if possible, meditate on the Sunday readings and spiritual communion prayer (see attached). Do not attend Mass or any event if you are sick or feel even remotely unwell.

**Visits to the Homebound**

The ministry of presence and compassion is important and this is an opportune time for pastors and parish staff to find creative ways to mobilize people to make phone calls to those who must remain at home, and to provide services such as delivering food and necessary items. Being in regular contact with the parish community will alleviate loneliness for the homebound. Encourage your parishioners to call their neighbors by phone or video call, so as not to put them at risk of exposure by visiting.

***Reception of Holy Communion***

Before each Mass, the priest should remind the faithful that as a result of consultation with the Public Health Officer, the faithful are strongly recommended to receive Holy Communion **only** in the hand



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Those distributing Holy Communion are encouraged to avoid direct skin-to-skin contact when placing the Host into the hands of the faithful. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not receive the Precious Blood before the general distribution of Holy Communion. Furthermore, no one should feel obligated to serve as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion if they would rather not at this time.

***Parish Events***

For all parish activities, the following recommendations should be followed:

- Hand sanitizer or hand washing stations should be available to all at the entrance of the church, parish hall and other parish facilities; and,
- Meeting rooms should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected after each activity.
- Attached is a poster on Hand-Hygiene. Please post in all bathrooms, kitchens and parish halls.

We remain in close communication with the provincial and national public health authorities so we can keep you updated. These measures are taken for the safety of the faithful in our diocese.

As we journey through this season of Lent, please join me in praying for our diocese, our country and our world. Through the intercession of our Blessed Mother, we ask for a swift end to the spread of this illness, comfort for all those affected, and wisdom and generosity for all those who must respond to this in any way.

With prayers,

✠ Joseph Phuong Nguyen  
Bishop of Kamloops

*att: Spiritual Communion Prayer  
Poster – Hand-Hygiene*