



DIOCESE OF BATHURST
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

MARCH 12, 2020

COMMUNIQUE

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ Jesus,

Last Thursday, officials of NB Health, announced several preventive measures to stem the spread of COVID-19. The bishops of NB wish to act in solidarity with the competent authorities of the province. Thus, I share with you the unanimous decision of the Bishops of New Brunswick, taken this Friday, March 13, 2020.

Given the impossibility in many places of managing the 150-person limit, also given that many of our parishioners are over 65 years of age and at greater risk of contracting the virus, as a preventive measure, **we have decided for all dioceses and Catholic churches in NB**

- **that all Saturday (afternoon and evening) and all Sunday Masses and Celebration of the Word will be cancelled beginning next weekend (March 21 and 22) until further notice.**
- that smaller gatherings such as weekday Masses, baptisms, weddings and funerals, can still take place because of the smaller number of people at these meetings. It will be necessary to ensure that there is no reception (lunch) following funerals in our churches. Other guidelines may be communicated in due course.
- that all other parish activities (bingo, brunch, etc.) be strictly monitored.

Also, we invite people to unite in prayer with their brothers and sisters by listening to a televised Mass or by reading the Word of God using their Bible or resources available on the web.

Churches will remain open, especially during normal Sunday Mass hours, to allow the faithful to reflect, to recite the Pope's special prayer invoking the Virgin Mary our patron, to meditate on the Word of God, to make a spiritual communion, to recite the rosary, to do the stations of the cross, to take a moment of adoration, to light candles or to celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation if the priest is present. The Church is a mother who takes care of her children and gives them special comfort when they need her most. This is why, in these difficult times, it is important that the churches remain open and that the priests are even more available.

I ask that all parishes put in place these guidelines while remaining attentive to the evolution of the situation. **Specific guidelines for Holy Week will be issued in the near future.**

For catechism classes, we are following the same guidelines as those given to schools.

We pray for those affected by this virus, for those who are concerned about it, and for the health care workers who are very generous.

We thank all the church leaders and volunteers for their valuable cooperation in this exceptional situation.

+ Msgr Daniel Jodoin
Bishop of Bathurst

Diocese of Bathurst

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