

Office of the Bishop

29 May 2020

Dear Pastors, Parish Staff and Parishioners,

Greetings in the Lord!

I am very happy to announce that we will be re-opening our parishes for Mass and prayer on the June 6th/7th weekend. Please check with your parish to confirm Mass times and how-to sign-up for Mass. In our new reality, it may take a few weeks to get everything running smoothly, so please be patient.

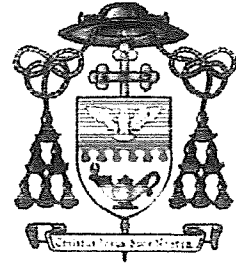
I have prepared a document on "How to prepare for Mass and Prayer" to assist you, as we make the transition and begin using our churches again. You may find other instructions at your parish for specific areas of use, such as washrooms, etc.

I understand how difficult it has been since the parishes closed. Thank you for your patience and faithfulness during this time. I am sure that God has given you many blessings as you discovered new ways to celebrate and pray. I also thank our parish priests, who provided many creative ways and opportunities to enrich your Faith lives and keep the Faith alive. And we cannot forget to thank God for the gift of our Faith, which has sustained us thus far.

Unfortunately, the pandemic is not over and we still have a long way to go. Please continue to pray for those who are sick, for those who care for them, and for the development of a vaccine to bring an end to the pandemic.

God bless all of you and keep you well,

✠ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson



Office of the Bishop

How to prepare for Mass and Prayer under COVID -19

Dear Parishioners,

In order to safely open our parishes for Mass and prayer, the following guidelines must be carefully and consistently followed. They will be in effect until further notice or changes are made by the government or health authorities. Your patience, understanding and cooperation are greatly appreciated.

It is important to note that re-opening our parishes will not mean returning to what we were used to pre-pandemic. At the same time, these are temporary measures in response to the pandemic and are not intended to be permanent.

GENERAL INFORMATION

- The Dispensation from the obligation of Sunday Mass remains in place
- Anyone attending Mass does so at their own risk
- Anyone who has even the slightest respiratory symptoms or is feeling unwell must remain at home
- Vulnerable (65+ years), at-risk (underlying medical conditions) and otherwise concerned persons should remain home
- Mass attendance is limited to 50 people in accord with government and public health directives; this includes the priest and other ministers, so the total number of ministers/volunteers should be at the bare minimum

BE PREPARED TO:

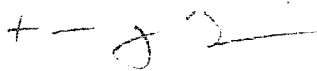
- Sign up for the Mass you wish to attend either electronically (Doodle, fillable form, email) or by phone
- Provide your full name and phone number when you sign up
- Agree that a record of your attendance at Mass/Prayer will be kept for 30 days for contact tracing if there is an exposure to COVID-19 (Public Health Directive)
- Be at the church no sooner than 30 minutes prior to Mass when the doors will be open
- Verify your attendance at the door and to hand sanitize when entering the church

- Maintain social distancing at all times - a minimum of 6 feet apart except for members of the same household everywhere on church property
- Attend Mass at your own parish only, unless your Masses are full and a nearby parish can accommodate you
- Wear a non-medical mask to church
- Enter through one door and exist through another
- Hand sanitize when leaving the church
- Not be able to use the "Cry Room" which will be closed and locked
- Use only designated pews following social distancing guidelines
- Place your donation in a secured container/basket near the entry door of the church; no collection baskets will be passed from person to person
- Receive Holy Communion at the end of the Mass, after the final blessing
- Receive Holy Communion only on the hand; no Communion on the tongue, by the chalice or by intinction
- Not wear gloves for reception of Holy Communion
- Approach the priest in one line, one side of the church at a time, keeping social distancing, between yourselves and the priest
- Stand in front of a table or a line to receive Holy Communion and lower your mask
- Stretch out your arm forward as far as possible when receiving Holy Communion
- Step 6 feet to the side, and consume the Eucharist
- Immediately leave the church through the designated exit door(s) after receiving Holy Communion
- Not gather in large groups before or after Mass

PRAYER IN CHURCH

- Sign-up for prayer in the church
- Provide your full name and phone number when you sign up
- Use only designated pews for prayer must be used
- Wear non-medical masks during prayer time
- Hand sanitize on entry and exit from the church

Sincerely in our Lord,



✠ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson

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