



Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, NL

Message from the Archbishop

March 27, 2020

Re: Closing of Church Buildings due to the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear People of the Archdiocese of St. John's,

In my letter to you of March 16, 2020 I recommended that where possible our churches remain open to the public at their usual hours for the faithful to come for personal prayer, for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and for private devotions. Unfortunately, due to the way that the situation has developed in our province since that date, and in keeping with our provincial efforts to limit the spread of this virus, it now seems prudent that we close our churches.

Therefore, out of pastoral concern for the health and wellbeing of all our people, and in consultation with the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council, I am hereby instructing the parish priests of our Archdiocese to keep closed the churches of their parishes until further notice.

During these past 11 days, many good and innovative initiatives have been taken by our clergy and their parishioners to reach out in prayer and service to the sick, the anxious, the home bound and the self-isolated. Along with telephone ministry, assistance in obtaining food and medication, and online catechesis and social gathering, many parishes have made Mass and spiritual devotions available to their parishioners and to the general public through the internet and Facebook. (Our Archdiocesan website, www.rcsj.org, lists news and information regarding some of these online initiatives.) I congratulate all those whose kind, imaginative and generous efforts has made this outreach a reality and this spiritual ministry possible. May God bless you and the good work that you are doing in His Name!

We are being told that it may still be a long while until this pandemic is behind us and things are back to "normal". In the mean time I ask that you join with me in praying for serenity in dealing with our present situation, for courage in facing the challenges that confront us, for charity in reaching out to those who are in need and for steadfast faith in God's goodness and love.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Peter Hundt
Archbishop of St. John's, NL