



Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, NL

Message from the Archbishop

June 5, 2020

Re: Precautions during the time of *Alert Level 3*

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

All things staying as they are, it is expected that the province will move to ***Alert Level 3*** on Monday June 8th.

At ***Alert Level 3***, it will still be everyone's responsibility to follow the Public Health Guidance for All Alert Levels, to stay home as much as possible and, for those who are at higher risk of complications due to COVID-19, to not go out except to get essentials like groceries and medications. However, gatherings will be expanded to 20 people as long as physical distancing can be maintained and this will include gatherings at funerals, burials, and weddings. Visitations and wakes will remain prohibited.

As the focus at ***Alert Level 3*** "*...is to control transmission while further relaxing public health measures,*" the COVID-19 Subcommittee of the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council and the Archdiocesan Occupational Health and Safety Committee are both looking to develop policies and guidelines that would allow for expanded ministry and services in the parishes of the Archdiocese. However, until such policies and guidelines are published and put into place, the following decisions regarding pastoral ministry and public worship are to be adhered to in all the parishes of the Archdiocese:

1. All people of the Archdiocese are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass.
2. All churches are to remain closed to the public.
3. Access to diocesan and parish administrative buildings will be limited to staff and those individuals conducting essential repairs (social distancing protocols to be followed in their dealings with staff).
4. Diocesan and parish meetings involving non-staff members are to be hosted virtually or postponed.
5. "Private" celebrations of funerals, weddings and baptisms may take place in the church within the context of a Liturgy of the Word service or a Mass at which only the Priest-Celebrant receives Holy Communion provided that:
 - a) No more than 20 people are present including the celebrant.
 - b) Safe distancing protocols are adhered to.
 - c) Before the celebration begins, a list of the names of those present is obtained (in case needed for contact tracing).
 - d) In the case of a baptism, the celebrant wears a facemask for those parts of the celebration where physical distancing cannot be maintained and wears a glove when performing the anointings.

At Alert Level 2 places of worship will be permitted to resume operations. Our Archdiocesan COVID-19 Subcommittee is already working on developing policies and guidelines that will allow us to do this in a responsible way that best ensures the safety of the worshipping community. Asking that you join with me in praying that God will bless them, and all of us, in our efforts to minister prudently and wisely during this time of pandemic, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

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