



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

UPDATE ON COVID – 19 PROTOCOLS **Diocese of Hamilton** **October 7, 2020**

Dear Parishioners:

Given the recent rise in numbers of those who have recently contracted the COVID-19 Virus, and what appears to be the beginning of a second wave of infections, it is opportune to remind everyone of the protocols in force in our churches in the Diocese of Hamilton. Some of the following norms clarify those which were published in June 2020; others have been added in view of more recent directives provided by the Ontario government and local health authorities. These protocols are in place to ensure, as much as possible, the safety of all.

- Entrance is not permitted to those who have an elevated temperature, or are suffering from cough, sputum production, shortness of breath, undue fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle aching, runny nose, chills involving shakes, loss of sense of smell or taste. If you are sick, you are kindly asked to stay at home.
- Anyone who has travelled outside Canada within the past 14 days, is not to enter the church until having completed the period of self-isolation.
- Everyone must use hand sanitizer provided upon entry to the church.
- In accord with the current government legislation, all persons are required to wear a mask or face covering upon entry into the church. This includes priests and other liturgical ministers. Only the priest, reader and cantor are permitted to remove their masks when in the sanctuary at a distance of six meters from the members of the assembly.
- Those who are unable to wear a mask because of an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a mask, are to be admitted to the church, and are to be seated in a designated area at least six meters away from others. They may not come forward to receive Communion with others; the priest or extraordinary minister will bring them Communion where they are seated.
- Only 30% of the seating capacity of the church is permitted by government regulations at this time. Ushers will direct parishioners to the available designated seats.

- All members of the assembly are to maintain a two-meter distance at all times: when seated and when approaching the altar and returning from receiving Communion. (Members of one household are permitted to sit together, provided they are two meters away from other parishioners.)
- No hymnals or song sheets are permitted in the pews. During Mass, minimal singing is permitted, led by a single cantor. No choirs are permitted at this time.
- Only one lector will proclaim the readings before the Gospel, and the petitions.
- There is no collection and presentation of the bread and wine at the usual time. Parishioners are invited to deposit their offering in the basket/receptacle as they leave the church.
- Before Communion, following the prayer (*Lord, I am not worthy...*) the Priest will say once: *The Body of Christ*. All will respond together: *Amen*. Communion will be received in silence.
- The Priest and Extraordinary Minister(s) of Communion must sanitize their hands before and after distributing Communion.
- Communion can be received only in the hand at this time. There are absolutely no exceptions to this norm. Those receiving Communion are to extend their hands, placing one hand upon the other to receive the Body of Christ. Communion from the chalice is not permitted at this time.
- Ushers will direct parishioners, row by row while maintaining physical distancing, to approach the Priest or extraordinary minister of Communion.
- Following the dismissal, parishioners are directed to leave the church, row by row, following the directions of the ushers. They are to maintain physical distancing and are to refrain from socializing in the church. No bulletins are available at this time.
- Crying rooms and adoration chapels and Reconciliation rooms remain closed at this time. Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament may take place at scheduled times in the church provided there is staff to supervise and to sanitize the space as needed. The Sacrament of Reconciliation may be celebrated at scheduled times in a larger space which provides privacy and permits the necessary social distancing.
- The number of persons permitted to participate in the celebration of Baptisms, Marriages, and Funerals is determined by the size of the church and the 30% capacity limit of each church. Because participants in these celebrations are frequently visitors to our churches, attendance with contact information is to be obtained when they enter the church.

- Those who are elderly or whose immune system is compromised, and those who are hesitant to return to church at this time, are reminded that the obligation to participate at Sunday Mass is suspended until further notice.

Let us continue to be united in prayer for one another, for all who are suffering in any way because of the pandemic, and the many people who are responding in love to those in special need at this time.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI

(Most Rev.) Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton

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