



Roman Catholic Archdiocese of St. John's, NL

Message from the Archbishop

May 7, 2020

RE: Precautions during the time of *Alert Level 4*

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

At the April 30th Newfoundland Covid-19 briefing it was tentatively announced that the province will move to ***Alert Level 4*** on Monday May 11th.

At ***Alert Level 4***, it will still be everyone's responsibility to follow the Public Health Guidance for All Alert Levels and to stay home as much as possible, except to get essentials like groceries and medications. However, gatherings at funerals, burials, and weddings will be expanded to 10 people as long as physical distancing can be maintained. Visitations and wakes will remain prohibited.

In consultation with the Archdiocesan Presbyteral Council and ensuring that we adhere to the Special Measures Orders of the Department of Public Health, the following decisions regarding pastoral ministry and public worship have been made for the time period that this province is at ***Alert Level 4***:

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 (i.e. no Mass) provided that:
 - a) No more than 10 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 the May 5th meeting of the Presbyteral Council a subcommittee was formed to review all the Alert Levels and to prepare recommendations regarding pastoral ministry and public worship at each level.

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 please 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 in need and for steadfast faith in God's goodness and love.

Sincerely yours in the Risen Lord,

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