



## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** April 3, 2020

**TO:** All diocesan and religious priests

**COPY:** Permanent deacons, Parish Life Directors, Seminarians, Parish Secretaries, Superiors of Religious Communities, Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Parish Pastoral Councils, Employees of the Archdiocesan Centre

**FROM:** Most Reverend Albert LeGatt  
Archbishop of Saint Boniface

**SUBJECT:** **COVID-19 Pandemic - Weekly Update No. 2**

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Dear friends,

As promised, my office will issue every Friday a weekly update with new information and also further clarification on questions that have been brought forward, especially by the Deans at our weekly Tuesday morning teleconference.

### **Protocol Level**

**Protocol III is still in force.** The March 27 directive of Dr. Brent Roussin, Chief Public Health Officer, also remains in force: *"Public gatherings are limited to no more than 10 people at any indoor or outdoor place or premises. This includes places of worship, gatherings and family events such as weddings and funerals."*

### **Places of Worship**

The latter point being still in effect, churches can still be open to receive individuals or families who wish to come on their own initiative to pray. This of course presumes all the hygienic measures that the Public Health officials are constantly reminding us:

- Physical distancing (2 metres)
- No flu-like symptoms
- No one who should be in social isolation because of travel or have been in contact with people who possibly have COVID-19.

The time may come when the Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. Brent Roussin, reduces gatherings to 5 or 3 or 2 people. Then, we readily adjust for the common good. And, who knows, the day may come where the Chief Public Health Officer, with the full force of the



Provincial Government, dictates a lock-down where everyone is to stay in their house and only go out the door for the most essential of needs. This is the case right now in several European countries. Then, of course, our church buildings will be locked.

But until then, they need not be, and I would encourage parishes to continue offering some hours where people completely of their own initiative, can come to pray and adore the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle. A small suggestion: if you do communicate with your parishioners that your church will be open from such an hour to such an hour, make sure it is. For a person to come to the church at an hour they were expecting the doors to be opened and to find them closed is doubly insulting.

### **Palm Sunday – Diocesan Livestreamed Liturgy**

French at 9:00 AM; English at 10:30 AM. Both masses are presided by Archbishop Albert LeGatt at Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Parish.

### **Masses are livestreamed via the diocesan Facebook page:**

<https://www.facebook.com/ArchSaintBoniface/>

### **As well as on the Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Parish YouTube channel:**

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFLbnkM6HIRYpb4QjiXeBOq/live>

### **Easter Triduum – Diocesan Livestreamed Liturgies**

Holy Thursday:	French at 6:00 PM; English at 8:00 PM
Good Friday:	French at 2:00 PM; English at 4:00 PM
Easter Vigil:	French at 9:00 PM (Presider, Archbishop Albert LeGatt at <b>Saints-Martyrs-Canadiens Parish</b> ) English at 9:00 PM (Presider, Fr. Carl Tarnopolski, VG, at <b>St. Bernadette Parish</b> )

We invite all priests to participate in this Easter Vigil by viewing these livestreamed archdiocesan vigils, unless of course their parish is livestreaming its own celebration of the vigil. Otherwise, priests are encouraged not to celebrate the vigil just by themselves as this highest celebration of the mysteries of Christ's death and resurrection really does require an assembly, liturgically speaking. The priests are of course asked to celebrate privately the Easter Sunday morning mass.

### **Collection for the Holy Land 2020**

This collection is suspended until September 13, 2020. Please see attached document *"Communique of the Congregation for the Eastern Churches"*.

### **Archdiocesan Centre Remains Open**

Despite having closed the Diocesan Centre to the public, all diocesan services, including the Archbishop's Office, Administration, and Pastoral Services, continue to be offered remotely with as few interruptions as possible. Diocesan employees are now working from their homes. Incoming calls are being forwarded directly to the employees. Please note that business hours remain 8:30 AM until 4:30 PM. The reception desk at 151 Avenue de la Cathédrale will remain open to receive phone calls, deliveries and the mail. Unfortunately, no visitors will be granted access to the building, including those wishing to



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visit the resident priests.

### **Sunday and Daily Private Masses by the Pastors**

In Protocol III, it was stated in *no. 1) Assemblies* that, “All pastors are of course to celebrate the Sunday mass (privately or with a very, very small group of people) for all their parishioners (i.e. *pro populo*). They may consider livestreaming their celebration of the mass to their parishioners if the parish is equipped to do so”. And, in *no. 4) Weekday Masses* it was stated that, “Assembling for weekday masses is also cancelled. This will also be so throughout the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. The priests are to celebrate daily mass privately ».

These two directives have been the source of many questions and subject to many interpretations. Through the weekly Deans’ meeting every Tuesday by teleconference, followed by Fr. Carl Tarnopolski’s private calls to priests, we have tried to clarify as best as possible what to do, and not to do, in a constantly evolving situation. Thank you for your questions and your patience.

Especially now as the need for social isolation increases due to community contagion ramping up, we wish to put forward these guidelines:

- A very, very small group of people joining the pastor for his private mass means 4 parishioners at the most, so that this assembly is limited to five people (i.e. half of what the Province of Manitoba now allows).
- There can be no communication of mass times, only of mass intentions for each day.
- There can be no call to assemble, no invitations (personal or in general), no scheduling or rotation of parishioners, no calling people to exercise certain ministries (except in situations of the parishes’ own livestreaming efforts and even then, no more than 5 people in attendance).
- In short, there is to be no invitation, promotion, coercion or even influence exercised to have people come to church for the priest’s private mass. And the churches should be locked at the time of the celebration of this private mass. Therefore, only those parishioners who of their own complete initiative have contacted the pastor beforehand asking to come to participate in the mass may be present. The priest can then decide to allow a number up to 4 or not to allow any at all. This allows the pastor to make sure the maximum number of people is never surpassed, and that the possibility of contagion is minimized as much as possible, especially now.
- However, at this particular moment, we take up the call of the Public Health Officer that all people should stay at home, unless there is an essential need to move about.

### **Ringling of Church Bells**

Upon the suggestion of Martine Bouchard, Executive CEO of St. Boniface Hospital, who had seen this practice spring up in Quebec, I am inviting you to ring your church bells at noon on Easter Sunday and on every Sunday until Pentecost, i.e. till the end of the Easter season. Please ring them for five or more minutes.



In this context, the joyous ringing of bells is to signal our gratitude to all frontline workers throughout our society, all those thousands of people who leave their homes and the security of their good health, to engage in the whole sphere of essential services by which the rest of us continue to live, as normally as possible, to be in security, and to know we will be cared for as we need it.

This practice of ringing the church bells will be a sign of our deep appreciation for all these people. However, for this to have its maximum effect we need to inform our parishioners, why the bells are being rung. If your parish decides to embark on this project, please inform your people of this in the coming days.

United in prayer,

*+ Albert LeGatt*

+Albert LeGatt  
Archbishop of Saint Boniface



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