



October 5, 2020

Dear Priests, Deacons & Parishes,

Fall is upon us. The leaves are quickly falling giving us a warning that winter will soon be here.

At this time of the year, and as the Covid-19 cases are on the rise, it is opportune that I also give some warning on how to follow the regulations put out by the Government of Saskatchewan for places of worship. The SK Health Authorities are keeping a close watch on how our parishes are following the directives and so I have been contacted by a few pastors for further explanations.

FIRST AND FOREMOST: Do not risk your life nor the life others. Be prudent. We do not want a shutdown of our churches. If you are not well, please stay home.

THE GOLDEN RULE for the moment is as you know: wash your hands often, do not touch your face, keep your distance from one another, and wear a mask even during the celebration of the Eucharist.

LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR CELEBRATING THE EUCHARIST

Before Arrival of Parishioners

- Members of the hospitality team must assure that the washrooms are disinfected and that items needed for further cleaning and disinfecting are available.
- A sign-up sheet is ready for names and phone numbers.
- The doorknobs are wiped from time to time.

Upon Arrival of Parishioners

- Assure that the parishioners coming to celebrate use hand sanitizer.
- In registering, it is preferable to have parishioners use their own pens. If this is not possible, do not have the people touching the same pen without it being disinfected or replaced.
- People are to go directly to their bench as a household or as an individual.
- People do not shake hands or exchange hugs when greetings their fellow members.
- The traffic arrows are well marked to enter and to exit when possible and where need be.

During the Celebration

- If you wish to sing, wear a mask, although we do not encourage community singing at this time.
- The choir master or preferably the soloist, should wear a mask if they are less than 12 feet from another person during the full service.
- Do not have altar servers for the celebration at this moment.
- Clean mics after each reading, homily, and any other time that it is used.

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- When preparing the altar, make sure all is at the altar for the service and the person has disinfected himself or herself before touching the vessels etc.
- At the preparation of the gifts, pastors, and deacons must disinfect themselves before preparing the paten, the chalice, and the ciborium. If the ciborium is uncovered, use a corporal to protect the hosts and put it at a distance as the prayers are recited.
- The celebrant is encouraged to wear a mask during the Prayers at the altar.
- The sign of peace is but a nod of the head to one another unless you are from the same household.

Children's Liturgy

- See the documents included with this letter.

Distribution of Holy Communion

- Upon approaching the altar, the deacon and the extraordinary ministers must disinfect themselves and wear a mask.
- The priest with deacons and/or the extra ordinary ministers of communion may bring Holy Communion to the people on the hands at their benches. Less movement of the people is encouraged.
OR
- The people who come to receive Holy Communion on the hands are asked to keep their social distance at all times. Deacons and extraordinary ministers may assist in the distribution. They must wear a mask while giving out Holy Communion, keeping a certain distance. All must disinfect before approaching the altar, taking the ciborium and after returning the ciborium. The presiders or deacon serving may clean the altar and the vessels.
- Communion on the tongue is very delicate and difficult. It is the discretion of each pastor whether to give communion on the tongue.

Closing of the Celebration

- If possible, it is advised that people exit from another door especially if services follow one another.
- Spray a disinfectant on the benches or wipe them quickly.
- Depending on the numbers, use one half of the church at one service and the other half at the next.
- Be prudent, careful, and kind at all times. It is a new experience for all of us. We are adapting to a special reality. Be mindful of your neighbour.

LITURGICAL GUIDELINES WHEN PREPARING & CELEBRATING THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism

- Do not touch the child or person.
- When anointing use cotton swab.
- Wear a mask. Keep distancing.
- Put the water on the child or person's head while saying: I baptize you in the name of the Father, and the Son and the Holy spirit.
- The water is used for one baptism only. It would not be advisable to have more than one baptism at a time.

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Confirmation

- Anoint the confirmand by using a cotton swab.
- Do not touch the person or disinfecting will have to be done before going to the next.

Catechesis

- Parents may participate in giving the program at home.
- The parish may provide an online method of educating our children in the faith. The technology is there.

OR

- With keeping the SK Health Authorities guidelines as a priority, preparation or programs may take place at the parish.

Marriage Preparation

- Fr. Michael Fahlman has many suggestions. Contact him.

Visiting the Sick

- It is preferable that each pastor try to visit their sick in the hospital to give the Sacrament of the Sick when called upon.
- Wear what the hospital requires when giving the Sacrament.
- Let us not abandon our sick and vulnerable. They are traumatized by the situation as we all are.
- P.A. & Area: Fr. DJ visits mainly the indigenous people and the people from outside the city.

At the Cemetery

- Follow the regulations of the funeral home or the directives of the cemetery.

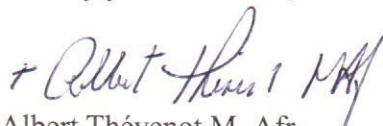
PARISH FACILITIES USE BY OUTSIDE GROUPS

- With keeping the SK Health Authorities guidelines as a priority, the use of the parish facilities by an outside group is up to the discretion of the pastor. E.g. Girl guides, AA Meeting etc.

These different regulations may frighten us or make us uncomfortable. The Covid-19 virus has changed all our lives in many different ways. We hope that these regulations will help us to prevent the spread of the virus in our communities and places of worship. It is hard for me to share with you these many details, but the health authorities want us to flatten the curve as much as possible. There are many things that I would like to do or include in our celebrations and gathering at this time, but there you are.

IN ALL THIS, BE SIGNS OF HOPE TO ALL. Do not abandon our people and the ones put on our path of life. Be joyful and peaceful as you are challenged by the circumstances of our time. Do not be afraid.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+Albert Thévenot M. Afr.
Bishop of Prince Albert

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