

Diocese of Thunder Bay



SPECIAL NOTICE TO ALL PARISHES RE: CORONA VIRUS – COVID 19

In consultation with health officials here in Thunder Bay and in an attempt to curb the spread of this virus in northwestern Ontario and to safeguard the health of everyone, especially of the elderly and most vulnerable, I am regretfully making the decision to **CANCEL ALL SUNDAY MASSES IN ALL PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE** (Saturday night and Sunday) for the next **TWO WEEKENDS: March 21-22, and March 28-29.**

We will assess the situation for coming together for Masses again on Palm Sunday, April 4-5, 2020 and for Holy Week.

Weekday Masses can continue in the parishes since crowds are usually much smaller for these Masses. *People using their discretion attending* should practice “**social-distancing**”, that is keeping **one meter away** from each other at the Mass.

No shaking of hands and Communion is to be received **only in the hand.**

Funerals are to be celebrated when necessary and again “social-distancing” should be encouraged for those attending.

Parishes should provide tissues and hand sanitizers where possible, in appropriate places in the church or foyers. Washrooms should be kept clean and sanitized if possible. People should be encouraged to wash their hands regularly.

People who are feeling even slightly ill, with colds are asked to **NOT** come to church until they are better, for the safety of all.

Please encourage your people to view Mass on Television on Vision TV or on the internet and to pray at home, the rosary or study scriptures on the Sundays there is no Mass.

Priests may celebrate a 'private Mass' on Sunday but without a congregation, for their own spiritual life. All Catholics are dispensed from the requirement to attend Mass, on weekends when the Masses are cancelled.

Parishes should put a sign on their doors on the weekends indicating the situation.

Future information will be coming for the Mass of Chrism and Holy Week Celebrations, please stay tuned.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ *Fred J. Colli*

Most Rev. Fred J. Colli
Bishop of Thunder Bay

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