



BISHOP OF HAMILTON

June 10, 2020

Dear Parishioners:

Thank you for your patience during these difficult times, and for your support of your Pastors and Parishes.

The Premier of Ontario recently announced that all churches in the Province of Ontario are permitted to open for prayer and worship, effective June 12, 2020. In order to ensure that our churches are prepared to open for personal prayer and for Mass, according to the requirements of the government and health authorities, churches in the Diocese of Hamilton, who are prepared, will be opened on June 16th for weekday Mass and for prayer, and beginning on Saturday, June 20th for the celebration of Sunday Mass.

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

It is important to remember that the COVID-19 Pandemic is not over, and that everyone must continue to pay attention to the measures being put in place to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Therefore, please note the following requirements for entry into the church:

- 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 or taste or smell. If you are sick, you are kindly asked to stay home.
- If you have travelled outside Canada within the past 14 days, you are not to enter the church until you have completed the period of self-isolation.
- You are strongly encouraged to wear a mask upon entering the church.
- Everyone is to use the hand sanitizer provided upon entry to the church.
- Maintain a two-metre (six foot) distance at all times in the church and on church property.
- Only 30% of the seating capacity is permitted by government regulations at this time. Ushers will guide you to the available designated seats.

During the celebration of Mass, you will notice a few changes based on the recommendation of health authorities to ensure everyone's safety as much as possible:

- The entrance procession will be simplified.
- There will be no hymnals in the pews; singing will be led by an instrumentalist and cantor only.
- Only one lector will proclaim the readings before the Gospel, and the petitions.
- There will be no collection and presentation of bread and wine at the usual time. You will be invited to deposit your offering in the basket/receptacle as you 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.
- You will be directed by the ushers to come to Communion row by row, while maintaining physical distancing. Particular directions will be given before Communion.
- Communion can be received only in the hand at this time. Carefully extend your hands, placing one upon the other to receive the Body of Christ. Communion from the chalice is not permitted.
- Following the dismissal, you will be directed to leave the church, row by row, in order to maintain physical distancing. No printed bulletins will be available.
- You are asked to refrain from socializing with others following Mass.

If you are visiting the church for personal prayer or adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, you will be required to observe all the health directives as for Mass.

At this time, the Sacrament of Reconciliation cannot be celebrated in the usual Confessional or Reconciliation Chapel. Another suitable location which provides physical distancing as well as privacy will be designated in your church.

As we welcome this first stage of returning to our Parish churches and resuming our public worship, let us continue to be united in prayer for one another and especially for those who, for whatever reason, are not able to join us at the Table of God's Word and the Table of Christ's Body and Blood.

Sincerely in Christ and Mary Immaculate,

+ Douglas Crosby, OMI

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