



18 March 2022

### **COVID-19 UPDATE (UPDATE #25)**

We have come a long way during this pandemic and have all had to make difficult decisions and sacrifices. We have kept in mind our love for our neighbours, the safety of our parishioners and parish teams, and acted out of a duty to pursue the common good. Because of that, as a diocese we have an outstanding health and safety record to look back on. I thank all of you for your part in that. Recently, the Government of Ontario lifted more of the pandemic restrictions, which allows us to do so for our worship spaces, halls, and parochial and diocesan offices.

#### **A. The following changes come into effect on Monday, 21 March.**

1. Masks are no longer required in churches, halls and offices, but any individual is welcome to continue wearing one.

In some offices, where they are aware that one or more individuals within may have a higher risk of vulnerability, people should continue to wear masks in public spaces in that office. In such cases, a decision is made for that locale by the people there. Consideration should be given to visitors to our offices who may be wearing masks. As a courtesy to them and respecting their concern for safety, those receiving such visitors should extend the kindness of wearing a mask while they are present.

2. Mask and hand sanitizing, however, are still required for those distributing Holy Communion. This is a prudent caution for the foreseeable future, which will be reviewed at the end of April.
3. Communion from the Cup is not to be given to members of the congregation. Deacons and concelebrating priests must continue to use separate cups.
4. Food and drink may be given at Children's Liturgy/Sunday School.
5. Good ventilation continues to be a deterrent to the spread of any virus.

#### **B. The following directives given in Update #23 will apply for Holy Week and the Triduum.**

##### **Palm Sunday**

The Solemn Procession, as given in the *Roman Missal*, may take place either within the church proper or from an adjacent space (e.g., a parish hall), or from outdoors. Palm branches may be distributed.

## **Mass of Chrism**

I will celebrate the Mass of Chrism at the Cathedral at 7:00 p.m. on Monday of Holy Week. Members of the faithful from across the Diocese, including Religious, will be invited to participate. All priests in the Diocese will be invited to concelebrate, with Episcopal Vicars taking their usual places in the sanctuary. The Mass will be livestreamed. Oil will be blessed and consecrated as usual, with distribution to follow the Mass.

## **Holy Thursday**

Each priest may preside or concelebrate at only one celebration of the Mass of the Lord's Supper. Families of Parishes may offer Masses in different churches according to their number of priests and their determination of pastoral needs. The ritual of the washing of the feet and the transfer of the Blessed Sacrament take place as outlined in the *Roman Missal*. Arrangements for the faithful to remain in prayer, up until midnight, may be made.

## **Good Friday**

To maintain the liturgical integrity and continuity of the Sacred Triduum, only priests may preside at the afternoon Celebration of the Passion of the Lord. Two readers may assist with the proclamation of the narrative of the Lord's Passion as in the past. It should be noted, though, that it is just as appropriate to have one reader – a priest or deacon – who proclaims the word of God in an exemplary fashion to do so. The veneration of the Cross is done with the usual procession as found in the *Roman Missal* with one exception: the Cross may be venerated by genuflection or a profound bow only, without touching the Cross. All other norms, as found in the *Roman Missal*, are to be observed.

Other services may be offered in the morning of Good Friday to accommodate families with children or youth. These services would be a modified liturgy based on the Celebration of the Passion of the Lord, and without Holy Communion. A deacon or lay person may preside at such a service. The Director of Liturgy will provide a format to be used for such an alternate service.

## **The Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday**

The Easter Vigil may be celebrated according to the norms as found in the *Roman Missal* with the following adaptation: Baptism and Confirmation will be celebrated according to directives already given, i.e., using separate water for each person to be baptized and cotton balls for the imposition of the Sacred Chrism. It is recommended that water be blessed in a suitable container and taken from there to be poured over the heads of the candidates as they lean over the baptismal font.

The sprinkling of the entire congregation is restored at the renewal of baptismal promises at the Vigil and the Masses of Easter day.

I join with Bishop Joseph in offering our prayers for you and your communities throughout this joyful season of Lent. May Jesus continue to accompany you on your Lenten journey.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Rev. Ronald P. Fabbro, CSB  
Bishop of London