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# St. BERNARD'S — PARISH —

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**“To Serve and Love God’s Church and His Holy People with Compassion, Joy and Truth”**

March 18, 2020

My dear brothers and sisters of Saint Bernard's Parish,

As you may already know, our bishop, the Most Reverend William McGrattan has implemented some "more comprehensive and aggressive measures" to respond to the risks involved with the coronavirus (COVID-19). These decisions have been made through the agreement of the other Catholic bishops of Alberta, and in response to the province declaring a state of emergency. Bishop McGrattan and the Diocese sent out a public letter and a new set of directives on March 16, for all parishes to implement, effective immediately.

I am writing to you now in order to offer my encouragement and to outline the details in how our parish of Saint Bernard's will respond to these newest directives. Please be aware that from now until at least April 5, the following will be the reality at our parish:

## HOLY MASS

*All Masses are cancelled throughout the entire Diocese of Calgary  
from **Tuesday, March 17 to Sunday, April 5, 2020.***<sup>1</sup>

- Please know that Bishop McGrattan has issued a general dispensation, removing the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until April 5. Please visit the parish website to see that letter.
- I will continue to offer Mass privately, for the good of the parish, the Diocese, the Church, and the world. I will continue to keep the parish calendar of special intentions for the Mass.<sup>2</sup>
- Please join me in prayer, offering what you can from home – uniting yourselves with me to Christ in the Eucharist.
  - On our parish website, you will find the readings and prayers for daily Mass, from *Living with Christ*, the Canadian Catholic provider of monthly and yearly missalettes.
  - **I will be preparing and recording my future Sunday Homilies (maybe video, but if not, then certainly audio) during this situation, and will post them to the parish website.**

<sup>1</sup> Keep watch of news from the Diocesan website, or our parish website – we will expect a new decision just prior to April 4 as a reassessment of the situation. [www.catholicyc.ca](http://www.catholicyc.ca); [www.stbernardsparish.ca](http://www.stbernardsparish.ca)

<sup>2</sup> Please continue to request Masses to be offered for special intentions – simply call the parish office.

- There are many options to participate in the daily Mass either on TV or the internet. Two local options are:
  - 8:30 a.m. Weekday Mass will be live-streamed from St. Peter's Church. [www.st-peters.ca/live/](http://www.st-peters.ca/live/)
  - 10:00 a.m. Sunday Mass will be live-streamed from St. Mary's Cathedral with Bishop McGrattan as the celebrant. \* Please visit [www.catholicyc.ca](http://www.catholicyc.ca) to find out how to watch online.

## ACCESS TO CHURCHES

- **Our two churches will remain open for visits during the day**, in keeping with the instruction from the bishop. This provides the opportunity to visit **INDIVIDUALLY** for personal prayer before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, in repose in the tabernacle. \* *"groups are not allowed to assemble in churches", and social distancing will be expected.*
  - Our Lady of the Assumption: visits are possible from Tuesday - Friday during regular office hours: Tues.-Thurs. 9 am – 2 pm; Fri. 9:30 am – 11 am. \* ***please know the typical way to enter the church is to ring the door bell at the office door to be let in, and then to leave as you like.***
  - Saint Bernard's: please call the St. Francis Xavier Chaplaincy office phone, **(587) 232-9728**, to check for availability before visiting the church – so you will know if the door will be open. Their typical office hours are 12 – 5 pm.

## SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

- **Confessions are allowed to continue.** In our parish, confessions will be available using our regular confessionals – with some small adaptations. These are able to comply to the requirements for cleanliness and social distancing. If the penitent sits in the chair provided, there will be the recommended minimum of 1 meter between penitent and priest.

### SCHEDULE FOR CONFESSIONS:

- **Wednesdays at St. Bernard's church: 6 – 7 pm.**
- **Thursdays at Our Lady of the Assumption church: 6 – 7 pm.**
- **Fridays at Our Lady of the Assumption church: 9 – 10 am.**
- **Saturdays at St. Bernard's church: 9 – 10 am.**

## SACRAMENT PREPARATION

- **Our sessions for First Holy Communion preparation are cancelled until further notice.** Our parish office will be in touch with the participating families with resources and guidance so that preparation can continue at home. Bishop McGrattan has reminded our parents that they are "the first teachers of the Faith." If our regular preparation cannot resume as originally scheduled, then

parents "will be asked to attest to their child's readiness to receive First Holy Communion." \* **The reception of First Holy Communion may need to be rescheduled to a later date – so that the greater community can take part in the special and holy occasion.**

## FRIDAYS OF LENT – STATIONS OF THE CROSS

- Our communal gathering for the Fridays of Lent are cancelled.
  - **This includes both the shared meal of soup & buns AND prayer together.**
- As our churches are open for personal prayer during the day, you are free as INDIVIDUALS to visit the church to personally pray the Stations of the Cross.
  - \* ***This fruitful and holy devotion can be prayed at home (almost) as well, or while walking in small family groups outside.***

## OTHER TOPICS:

- **ANOINTING OF THE SICK**: In an **emergency**, don't hesitate to call the parish for Father to administer the Sacrament of the Sick.
- Please share the current news with any of our parishioners who might not have regular access to the internet. It will help answer their questions or worries.
- ***If you need any assistance because of being confined to your home – call the parish office because we have a few parishioners who have offered to make pickups and deliveries – for example: necessary groceries or medical prescriptions.***
- Please check our parish website regularly for up-to-date news, for a small weekly bulletin, daily readings for the Mass, Father's Sunday homilies, the Prayer of the Faithful petitions for Sundays, and other spiritual supports . Please feel free to call the parish office for all the regular reasons – questions, concerns, clarification, to book a Mass intention, etc.
- If you are a member of Facebook, please consider finding our parish Facebook page with similar information, inspiration, and support: [www.facebook.com/stbernardsparishyc/](http://www.facebook.com/stbernardsparishyc/)

During these days, I'm sure you are already experiencing the change in atmosphere around the city – there is an eerie calm, and a certain somberness. It already feels jarring to have locked doors and very very quiet churches. We will continue to pray for one another. We are a family of faith, and when one member hurts we all hurt; when one member rejoices, we all rejoice. This continues, especially during these days. Please continue to reach out to others – contact them to check in and to stay connected. Please look after yourselves, be attentive to your health and the health of your families, and continue to look for ways to share with your neighbours or support them.

Please know that the church is still open to you for solace, and as an anchor. Our parish churches stand as beacons in our city of God's enduring presence among us – let them be beacons of hope to you now.

The first reading from Mass on March 17 seems to be perfectly timed for us this year:

*"In our day we have no .... burnt-offering, or sacrifice, or oblation, or incense, no place to make an offering before you and to find mercy.*

*Yet with a contrite heart and a humble spirit may we be accepted, as though it were with burnt-offerings of rams and bulls, or with tens of thousands of fat lambs; such may our sacrifice be in your sight today, and may we unreservedly follow you, for no shame will come to those who trust in you.*

***And now with all our heart we follow you; we fear you and seek your presence. Do not put us to shame, but deal with us in your patience and in your abundant mercy. Deliver us in accordance with your marvellous works, and bring glory to your name, O Lord.*** — Daniel 3: 38-43

Let us all, brothers and sisters, remain united Christ who is our Living Water – and turn in intercession to our Mother Mary (the patroness of our Diocese), and to her husband Saint Joseph (the patron of Canada), and to all the saints for their loving and generous protection and guidance.

Jesus Christ, Saviour of the World,	<i>have mercy on us.</i>
Our Lady of the Assumption,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Saint Joseph,	<i>pray for us.</i>
Saint Bernard,	<i>pray for us.</i>

In Christ,



Fr. Matthew Emmelkamp  
Pastor