



23 March 2020

**COVID-19 Coronavirus
Update 5 for Priests, Parishes & Staff**

Reverend Fathers & Colleagues in Christ,

Thank you for your attention to the measures that the Archdiocese has progressively implemented since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, and for your patience as we all navigate the uncharted waters of this 'new normal.' Please be assured that we are keeping everyone in our archdiocesan family in prayer. We continue to rely on guidance from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer as we strive to protect the health and safety of our people. Today we have the following updates to share:

Pastoral & Administration Offices (PAO)

Effective immediately, our offices will be closed to the public, except to those with appointments. We will continue to be available to parishes and the wider community via email, phone or video conferencing.

In light of the advice from the Chief Medical Officer, we encourage staff to work from home if their duties allow it. Supervisors can help with the necessary arrangements. We realize not everyone can work remotely. Those who remain in the building will practise social distancing and frequent hand-washing to help reduce risk.

To maintain our supplies, we will still accept courier packages at the PAO. Effective immediately, any courier packages will be deposited at the front vestibule for us to pick up.

Parishes

We encourage our parishes to remain available to the faithful who are looking to the Church for support in these challenging times. As the Archbishop has indicated, the faithful should still have access to the church for private prayer, confessions, and funerals, provided that social distancing measures and liturgical directions are followed. Hours may need to be limited, depending on parish resources. You may wish to consider the same measures we have in place at the PAO for the parish office as well. Our PAO staff are here to support you as we make this journey together.

Parish Pastoral Outreach

As we have noted before, it will be important during this time to reach out to our homebound and vulnerable parishioners. The question has been posed: Can volunteers do this on behalf of the parish? Answer: The personal information of parishioners, such as phone numbers and email addresses, must be protected. Personal information must not be disclosed without a parishioner's consent to anyone other than the pastor and parish staff. This means it cannot be shared with volunteers. We recommend that this outreach – whether by phone, email, or post – be done by the pastor and/or parish staff.

Events

For your information, the following events have been cancelled:

- Friars Ball (1 May)
- Assembly of Priests in Jasper (4-8 May)
- Faith Fitness Fun Run (23 May)
- Diocesan Days (26-27 May)
- Summer camps recruitment is currently paused until a review is completed. We expect to have a clear direction next week.

We will continue to work with provincial health officials and keep you updated as appropriate. Provincial government updates are posted twice daily at www.ahs.ca/covid.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Father Adam Lech at the Chancery Office.