



June 26, 2021

Dear Pastors and Parishioners,

As of Thursday 1 July 2021, the whole Province of Alberta enters Stage 3 of COVID19 protocols. In compliance with the freedom being allowed by Government regulations, and wanting our churches to remain safe for one and all, I offer the following for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan:

- As we prepare to welcome parishioners back, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues and will be evaluated at the end of August 2021.
- Parishes within municipalities that have a mask bylaw or other COVID-19 restrictions in place should follow the local bylaws of that municipality. We understand that this may be different from region to region across the Archdiocese. If mask bylaws are still in place in your area, please keep mandatory mask signs visible and prominently displayed in your church.
- Beginning July 1, 2021, preregistration for Mass and contact tracing no longer need to take place.
- It is good to have hand sanitizing stations remain as we continue to follow health directives for good hand hygiene.
- Masks will no longer be required. Some parishioners may feel comfortable wearing masks. They may continue to do so.
- Please consider for your parish continued disinfecting and sanitizing protocols of surfaces and pews, but this is not mandatory.
- Please continue to remind parishioners that if they have COVID symptoms, they should stay home and follow AHS directives. In addition, the COVID symptom posters should remain in the main entrances of the parish to remind parishioners of the general screening questions.
- Hospitality after Mass can take place.
- Holy Water Fonts can be filled.

Mass (Sunday and weekday)

- There is no capacity limit.
- The celebration of Mass will look very similar to pre-pandemic time. You may once again have Servers, Lectors, Music Ministers, Greeters/Ushers and Sacristans.
- The Sign of Peace can resume as intended in the liturgy.
- The distribution of Holy Communion will continue to be under one species, the Body of Christ. This will be re-evaluated at the end of August 2021.
- The distribution of Holy Communion on the tongue is allowed. However, if the priest or the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion makes contact with the Communicant, they must sanitize their hands with hand sanitizer before continuing to distribute Communion.
- Music Ministry: All Mass parts can be sung. Congregational singing is allowed.

Weddings (With Mass and Outside of Mass)

- There is no capacity limit.
- You may have servers assist you.

Funerals (Funeral Mass or Funeral Liturgy outside of Mass)

- There is no capacity limit.
- Please follow guidance from AHS on Funeral Receptions.

Baptisms

- Parishes can continue to celebrate baptisms, one family or a few families at a time. I recommend that we wait until after the summer months before returning to group baptisms or baptisms during Mass.

Confirmation

- Confirmation ceremonies may occur during a Sunday or weekday Mass.

Visitation to the Sick

- A priest or deacon may take Holy Communion to the sick.

- If visitation is to a hospital or nursing home, please adhere to the institution's admission and risk mitigation policies.

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

- Adoration is permitted.
- There is no capacity limit.

I anticipate many conversations between clergy, with your parish team, PPC, volunteer leaders and volunteers. The leadership and discretion that priests provide will help all parishioners in their return to parish life.

Please note: These guidelines are for all our churches, but please contact your local church to find out when these changes go into effect and for any additional changes to Mass times and procedures. For example, St. Joseph's Church in Grande Prairie will not be changing their protocols for Mass until the weekend of **July 10-11**.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "+ Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R." with a flourish at the end.

Most Rev. Gerard Pettipas, C.Ss.R.
Archbishop of Grouard-McLennan