



26 February 2021

COVID-19 UPDATE FROM BISHOP FABBRO (Update #18)

With the lifting of the lock-down across the Diocese, the Episcopal Council met to consider a few specific questions.

1. Stations of the Cross

Throughout the season of Lent, the traditional devotion of Stations of the Cross may be observed in churches. One person will preside from the ambo or other place in the sanctuary. If space permits respecting the distancing, a cross-bearer may move from station to station. The usual restrictions of capacity and distancing must be observed. Registration and retention of contact-tracing information, as carried out for Masses, are to be followed.

2. Catechetical Sessions in Churches

Churches may be used to host catechetical sessions for sacramental preparation or other such reasons. It is expected that such sessions be done within the context of a prayer service. It is most fitting to begin, after the Sign of the Cross, with a call to prayer, followed by a reading from Sacred Scripture. It would be appropriate to offer some intercessions for the Church, the parish, and the participants. The usual restrictions of capacity and distancing must be observed. Registration and retention of contact-tracing information, as carried out for Masses, are to be followed.

3. Use of Masks During the Liturgy

With the lessening of restrictions concerning the wearing of masks, it is expected that masks must be worn by all who participate at Mass in a church. Those who are presiders, deacons or lectors may remove their masks only when leading prayers, proclaiming the Scriptures, or preaching, and for the reception of Holy Communion. Masks must be worn at all other times. The exemptions to this directive were previously given in Update #13, including directions for those who require an exemption.

4. Parish Offices

Until further notice offices remain closed, and staff are only to come into the office to work on tasks they are unable to do at home. Use of masks is mandatory when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

We are now hopeful that all will soon be able to receive a vaccine. We have been encouraged, nonetheless, to maintain vigilance and care in our day-to-day lives. This care must also be part of our participation in church-related activities. Let us all do our part, as we continue to pray for an end to the pandemic and for all who have been affected by it.

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