



Monday Memo

Diocese of Thunder Bay

News ♦ Notices ♦ Upcoming Events

March 23, 2020

Clergy News – from the office of Bishop Colli

In consultation with health officials here in Thunder Bay and in an attempt to curb the spread of this virus in North Western Ontario and to safeguard the health of everyone, especially of the elderly and most vulnerable, I am regretfully making the decision to CANCEL ALL SUNDAY MASSES IN ALL PARISHES OF THE DIOCESE (Saturday night and Sunday) for next weekend March 28-29.

Coronavirus - Covid 19 update for Monday Memo

Chrism Mass: Due to Covid 19 and with the announcing of a state of emergency in Ontario, regretfully we must cancel the Mass of Chrism scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 2020. Bishop Colli will celebrate a private Mass where he will bless the oils used for the sacraments and have them distributed to the parishes.

Weekday Masses; The Council of Priests voted to continue the weekday Masses in our parishes for the next week, since the attendance is quite small. Ontario does not allow gatherings of more than 50 people. At the beginning of the Mass the priest must remind the people there to separate themselves by 3-6 feet, no shaking of hands, communion only in the hand, keep a distance when receiving Holy Communion, and if you are in any way unwell, with a cold, or cough, do NOT come to church for the safety of everyone there. Please watch the Mass on TV or on the internet.

Palm Sunday and Holy Week: Information will be coming concerning these events in the near future. People are asked to pray at home and view Mass on Vision TV, Salt and Light TV, EWTN TV or on the internet with Pope Francis or Bishop Robert Barron who has daily Mass from his chapel on Youtube. A spiritual benefit is received through this and also a spiritual communion.

Staying Home: People are encouraged to stay at home, and pray at home, and to keep themselves and their families safe. There are many tools for prayer, even as simple as meal prayers that can be found on the internet or TV. Let us remember that keeping people safe is our primary concern so this virus does not spread. Let us also remember to keep health care workers in our prayers and thoughts in thanks for their work at this time.



March 23, 2020

Dear People of the Diocese of Thunder Bay,

We are living, as you have probably heard, in very uncertain times with this Coronavirus - Covid 19. We have had to cancel Sunday Mass celebrations since the government of Ontario has placed a ban on groups of 50 people or more to keep people safe. We are not sure of the Holy Week ceremonies as yet, and we are waiting for updates and consultations with our Worship Committee and also from the health units of Ontario and the federal government.

As your bishop I am forced to make some radical decisions about our churches, their openings, and the celebrations we can share. This is not an easy position to be in, and I appreciate the counsel and input I am getting from my priests, my deacons and others in authority. I also seek your support and prayers.

I ask you, as Catholics to make this time a time of prayer and reflection in Lent and to share prayer at home with your families or even if you are alone. Maybe a look at the scriptures, the readings of the day, or reading a Gospel story will help you in your spiritual Lenten journey. Prayers before meals and with your children at bedtime, are also occasions for asking the Lord to guide us through this uncertain time.

There are many opportunities to watch Mass on TV or on the internet each day to keep your spiritual life alive and growing.

I ask that you not forget the need for support for your parish community both financially and in your prayers. With no Sunday collections, some of our smaller parishes will be struggling to pay their bills. Please do your best to continue your financial support by giving on-line if possible, or sending your offering in the mail.

This is also a time when we must remember those in our community who are struggling and alone, especially our elderly. Please take the time to call someone on the telephone and check on their needs. Even a simple telephone call can help relieve the loneliness some might be experiencing.

Be assured of my prayers and thoughts for you and your families. We pray especially for our health care workers and first responders during this time of the pandemic. We want them to know of our appreciation for their work to keep us safe.

Finally, please keep yourselves and your family safe at this time. Practice distancing from others, stay at home to pray and do family events, keep mindful of the elderly who can be reassured by a phone call, follow the directives of our health care people, and pray that the Lord will guide us through this uncertain time to a time of healing and good for all.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Fred J. Colli

Bishop of Thunder Bay