



Office of the Bishop

New Directives as COVID-19 Worsens

23 November 2020

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Lord!

As you have heard, new orders were recently issued from the Provincial Health Authorities that restrict our gathering as a Faith community to celebrate Mass in-person.

This is very discouraging since all of you have been so faithful in following our diocesan COVID protocols and precautions. Up to this point, we have not had an exposure or outbreak in any of our parishes, thanks be to God and to you. I couldn't be more grateful for you and for all you have done to keep our parishes safe.

Since the Eucharist is central to our Faith, it is important to note that Mass will continue to be celebrated and offered for you and your intentions. Please check your parish or the diocesan website for live-streamed Mass information. I have also given permission to have Holy Communion available for the faithful who attend Mass virtually. The procedure to receive Holy Communion in your car after Mass is as follows:

- Wait in your car in the parking lot. When the priest comes to your car, roll down your window, extend your hand to receive Holy Communion, remove your mask, and consume the Eucharist

Please note that our parishes remain open for prayer and visits to the Blessed Sacrament. Your parishes will also continue to offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please continue to observe our COVID protocols and precautions.

Now is not the time to give in to our frustration and anger. It is important we acknowledge our feelings, but direct them to something positive, such as becoming more prayerful or patient or thankful. It might even mean writing the Provincial Health Officer or your elected officials to voice your concerns over Mass restrictions.

If one thing the pandemic has taught us, we need to continually work at being a people of Faith, Hope and Love.

Please pray that all of our sacrifices will bring down the numbers of those infected and prevent further spread of the virus, so that our churches can be open for Christmas celebrations, and we can celebrate our Saviour's birth, Christ Jesus our hope (1 Tim 1.1).

May Our Lady of Monte Berico continue to protect us and accompany us during this pandemic.

God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ our Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Gregory J Bittman', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

✠ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson