



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

Date: August 6, 2020

To: Priests/Administrators

From: Bishop Peter Christensen *+ P. C.*

Re: UPDATE – CARE FOR OUR PARISHES

At today's press conference, Governor Brad Little announced that Idaho remains in Stage Four of the Idaho Rebounds Guidelines. (Some counties have reverted to Stage Three, or are designated "Red Zone.") Regardless of where your county is, we continue to urge the following:

- Maintain the six (6) foot physical distancing requirement.
- Disinfect your facilities and regularly clean them, especially high-touch areas.
- Keep pews free of missals, bulletins, and other handouts.
- Provide prevention supplies such as hand sanitizer, tissues and trash cans.
- Encourage anyone who enters the place of worship to wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to or just after entering the building.
- Bishop holds up the requirement to wear masks in our facilities, in counties where masks are mandated.
- There is some concern regarding singing; consider using instrumental music, refraining from singing the parts of the Mass.
- Ask all to self-monitor for fever or symptoms of COVID-19 and refrain from entering the building if there is any concern about possible infection.

With the Governor's decision to remain in Stage 4, these provisions remain in place:

- **Mass Dispensation.** I will continue to dispense with the obligation to attend Mass for those over the age of 60, for those who are immunocompromised, and for those whose anxiety about their health makes them apprehensive about attending Mass;

- **Communion to the Faithful Under One Species:** Parishes will continue to offer only the Body of Christ to the faithful—for now, only clergy will receive from the chalice. A decision at a later date will be made as to *when* all may receive from the Cup; further, I request that all receive communion on the hand;
- **Sign of Peace:** Respectfully showing a sign of peace will be a gesture the faithful may determine for themselves;
- **Resumption of Other Prayer/Devotional Services:** Normal devotions such as holy hours, Exposition/Adoration, etc., may resume;
- **Ministries to the Sick and Homebound:** Ministers who visit facilities such as hospitals and nursing homes will do so only insofar as they are in compliance with policies in place in those institutions;
- **Holy Water:** *For parishes located in counties in Stage 4*, the rite of sprinkling may take place, and holy water fonts may be filled, presuming that each parish’s usual cleaning practice for these fonts is maintained (use of the fonts is something the faithful may determine for themselves); Stage 3 parishes (or those in “Red Zones”) should empty fonts and refrain from the sprinkling rite;
- **Receptacles for the collection:** Long handled offertory baskets are recommended;
- **Non-Liturgical Gatherings:** *For parishes located in counties in Stage 4*, social and extra-liturgical gatherings (workshops, classes, coffee hours, receptions, etc.) may take place, as long as social distancing and sanitizing practices are maintained. Parishes in Stage 3 or “Red Zone” counties should refrain from gatherings outside of Mass.

Again, all of these are recommended unless otherwise indicated by state and local guidelines.

Our parishes remain open and so far have not become loci of outbreaks, and this is due largely to your leadership, diligence, and common sense. I thank all of you again for your excellent work. I ask you to continue to model not fear, but responsible care for each other.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact Tish Thornton (tthornton@rcdb.org) or Marisela Baca (mbaca@rcdb.org) in the chancery office.