



January 13, 2022

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Saint John,

As of 11:59 pm tomorrow, January 14, 2022, the Government of New Brunswick is moving the province to level 3 of its Covid-19 Winter Plan. For faith venues, this means that only “outdoor, virtual or in-car religious services” are permitted.

We have been told that this is only temporary, for the next few weeks until January 30, 11:59 p.m. Meanwhile, it is important for you to know that the Church is here for you and that your pastors truly care about your physical and spiritual well-being. I am urging the priests of the diocese to continue to celebrate Mass on a daily basis, even when it is not possible for the people to be present, to pray the Liturgy of the Hours and to spend time daily before the Blessed Sacrament in prayer for the people we serve.

Let us make every effort to find new and innovative ways to reach out to one another in this time, through phone calls, social media or by other means. I encourage you to continue to develop and strengthen the domestic church, your family, through devotions and prayer within your home. Let us intensify our prayer, lifting our voices in supplication to God our providential Father for all those who are afflicted at home and abroad, those who have died, those who are on the front lines caring for the sick, for our leaders, and for all who are anxious and face difficulties as a result of the impact this virus is having on our communities and families. Reach out to those who are vulnerable, our elderly sisters and brothers and those who are at an increased risk because of their frailty. Our parishes are continuing their outreach to the needy through such organizations as St. Vincent de Paul or in conjunction with local food banks. Your donations of canned goods and other necessities as well as ongoing financial contributions to the parishes to continue our mission is much appreciated.

Some of our parishes that have the technology will be livestreaming their liturgies. Please check with your parishes to see what is planned. If livestreaming is not possible, parishes could provide a resource for parishioners to participate in a Mass from home (ie. by providing a link to another livestream Mass, such as the Bishop’s Sunday Mass at 10 a.m. from the Cathedral on our Diocesan Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/DioceseofSaintJohn>, or information for TV Mass). If at all possible, following the Mass, at a predetermined time and time frame, parishioners could then proceed to the church to receive Communion from their vehicles or at

the door of the church. More information about precise protocols will be posted on our website as it becomes available.

I eagerly anticipate reopening our churches to the public celebration of the Eucharist, and to the gathering of the faithful once again within our communities after this short lockdown duration.

May our Blessed Mother intercede with her Son for us in this moment of tribulation and obtain for us relief from COVID-19 as soon as possible.

Mary, Health of the Sick, pray for us!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christian Riesbeck", with a small cross symbol to the left.

✠ Christian Riesbeck, CC
Bishop of Saint John

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