



ARCHDIOCESE *of* KINGSTON

St. Anthony of Padua
June 13, 2020

My Dear Faithful of the Archdiocese of Kingston,

Greetings to you in the Lord!

Know of my prayers for you as we re-open our parishes after the safety measures mandated by the government authorities are implemented. I pray that you and your families are safe and healthy. I am confident that even in this time of difficulty, the Lord has showered many graces upon the faithful of the Archdiocese.

On Monday, June 8, Premier Ford announced that our churches could open on June 12, 2020. The government has asked that our Masses and other liturgical gatherings be restricted to 30 percent of full capacity and physical distancing be maintained.

Since shortly after Easter, the Bishops of Ontario began to take steps to assist dioceses for the re-opening of the parishes. Working with the provincial government, they provided assistance to the dioceses in early June so that each bishop could work with the priests and diocesan personnel to make local preparations. I wish to thank all those who generously cooperated in this task with great wisdom and care.

On Friday, June 12, I met with the priests and deacons of the Archdiocese to discuss these next steps. As a result, our churches will be open for Sunday Mass for the weekend of June 20-21, if the pastor is confident that he and his volunteers are ready to open in a safe and unrushed manner. I have asked the pastors to refrain from opening until they are fully prepared. The process of re-opening our larger urban parishes may not be as simple as presumed. I ask that you continue to be patient if your pastor deems that more time is needed. Some parishes may be open for weekday Masses beginning this coming week at the discretion of the pastor.

To open our churches in this fluid environment will require some changes that will be uncomfortable and at times frustrating for all of us. I ask for your patience in advance. Fr. John Hibbard has prepared a video for YouTube, which is very helpful for your own preparation to be present for Mass in the parish.

As we move into this re-opening, the following priorities guide our planning:

- The health and safety of the faithful, clergy, staff and volunteers;
- Proactive measures to avoid the potential of a second surge of this virus;
- Recognizing the very basic commandment – love of neighbour – we have a responsibility to care for one another.

It is my hope that these measures will be temporary; for this to be the case, each one of us should follow the advice of local health authorities to minimize any potential transmission of the virus. For those who are sick, have a compromised immune system or feel uncomfortable returning to church at this time; it is recommended that you refrain from attending Mass. I wish to make clear that the faithful are not required to observe the obligation of Sunday Mass. The dispensation remains in place until this period of uncertainty is over.

Please contact the Archdiocesan website for further information. Local parishes will also communicate their plans regarding their Mass schedules. Please contact parish websites if you are able. I ask that you help one another in these preparations, especially those without access to the Internet.

We will need to adapt to the situation as it unfolds. Approaching these uncertain days with a true Catholic charity and generosity to one another will help us all as we navigate the path ahead. I am thankful for the many acts of charity and kindness taking place throughout our Archdiocese.

Above all else, may we continue to pray for the sick, for those caring for them, and for those who have died during this pandemic and their loved ones. Be assured of my gratitude for your patience and faithfulness during this period of closure.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Michael Mulhall
Archbishop of Kingston