



May 22, 2020

To all the Reverend Clergy, Monastics and Faithful of our Archdiocese of Canada,
My beloved Fathers, Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

CHRIST IS RISEN! INDEED, HE IS RISEN!

Since my last directive to you on March 17th all of us have endured with great heartache the closure of our parishes. Over the last several weeks I have been meeting regularly with the Holy Synod to discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and have been closely monitoring developments across Canada. Additionally, I have received input from Orthodox medical and legal advisors on how to proceed now that various provinces are beginning to re-open.

I have great concern for your safety and well-being, and especially for those who are most vulnerable to the life-threatening consequences of COVID-19 disease. While it may be legally permitted for some parishes to re-open their doors to the public, I have grave reservations about doing so. It is for this reason that the Archdiocese of Canada recommends that parishes remain closed to the public and refrain from any public gatherings until July 1, 2020, or until further notice. It is with the following words of St. Paul in mind that I have come to this decision, "*All things are lawful for me, but not all things are helpful; all things are lawful for me, but not all things edify. Let no one seek his own, but each one the other's well-being*" (1 Cor 10:23-24). Therefore, while it may be legal to open churches and gather together in certain provinces at this time, I strongly recommend against it.

If your parish priest, with the unanimous consent of the parish council, chooses not to follow my recommendation and decides instead to open under the current conditions of the pandemic, then you must strictly adhere to the guidelines of the Public Health Agency of Canada as well as those guidelines applicable to your province and/or locality. Such a decision must be recorded in the minutes of a duly held parish council meeting and submitted to the Archdiocesan Secretary at secretary@archdiocese.ca

While we are waiting for the health situation to improve, the priest in conjunction with the parish council may choose to conduct services via livestream with one priest and one chanter if they are able to do so safely while observing social distancing guidelines and in full compliance with the directives provided by civil authorities. In this case the church building must remain closed to the public and the doors of the church must be closed and locked. Please consider this alternative instead of re-opening publicly.

Finally, I ask that you please post the attached sign in a prominent place by your front door or in the narthex of the church in order to notify anyone entering the premises of



the serious and life-threatening consequences of gathering together indoors during a global health pandemic. Please take care of your health and of those around you by remaining at home as much as possible and following the advice of health professionals. I also encourage you to continue meeting online for meetings and prayer together.

Kindly consult following sources for more information on COVID-19:

Government of Canada COVID-19 symptom self-assessment tool
(<https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>)

British Columbia (<https://bc.thrive.health/>)

Alberta (<https://myhealth.alberta.ca/Journey/COVID-19/Pages/COVID-Self-Assessment.aspx>)

Saskatchewan (<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/health-care-administration-and-provider-resources/treatment-procedures-and-guidelines/emerging-public-health-issues/2019-novel-coronavirus/covid-19-self-assessment>)

Manitoba (<https://sharedhealthmb.ca/covid19/screening-tool/>)

Ontario (<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>)

For Quebec, use (<https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>)

Newfoundland and Labrador (<https://www.811healthline.ca/covid-19-self-assessment/>)

New Brunswick
(https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/ocmoh/cdc/content/respiratory_diseases/coronavirus/coronavirusexposure.html#/app/symptom-checker/guides/399/what-to-do)

For Nova Scotia, use (<https://ca.thrive.health/covid19/en>)

Prince Edward Island (<https://assessment.princeedwardisland.ca/>)

Yukon (<https://service.yukon.ca/en/covid-19-self-assessment/>)

Northwest Territories (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/nwt-covid19-self-assessment>)

Nunavut (<https://nu.thrive.health/covid19/en>)



+AB IRÉNÉE

Archevêque d'Ottawa et du Canada (ÉOA)
Archbishop of Ottawa and Canada (OCA)
and the Archdiocese of Canada