



WILLIAM T. MCGRATTAN



BISHOP of CALGARY

March 27, 2020

Dear Faithful of the Diocese of Calgary,

It has just been over a week since I last wrote to you announcing the suspension of the public celebration of Masses. In this short time frame, we have witnessed an increase in the number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Province and the plea for the strict adherence to the government's public health measures in preventing the further spread of the disease especially in our local communities. Already, there has been a marked difference in the level of awareness in people for the necessary sacrifices we each have to make which can potentially and directly save lives, especially those of seniors and the elderly and those with chronic health conditions.

The suspension of public Masses has proven to be very difficult for all of us. While many comprehend, laud and appreciate the reasons behind this difficult decision, there are also those who advocate for the immediate resumption of public Masses. In all these, I recognize the desire of each person to encounter Christ in the Eucharist. Please remember, however, that while regularly scheduled public Masses have been suspended, the Priests and I have been offering daily and privately the Holy Mass for you and for the world. They have also been available to provide the Sacraments for those in need, such as the Sacrament of Penance - being available to those who come to pray in our churches and for those who seek spiritual support and counsel in these difficult times. I acknowledge their efforts and the sacrifices they are making. It is during these times that we recognize the power of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass through the Holy Spirit who unites us as the Body of Christ, the Church.

In my letter of March 16, 2020, I informed you that the suspension of public Masses would continue until April 5. Today, I am writing you this letter to inform you of the extension of the suspension indefinitely until the situation improves, and we will be able to gather publicly.

As a sign of hope that the sacramental life of the Church will continue in the face of this pandemic, Holy Week and the Paschal Triduum will proceed in the following manner.

Mass of Chrism

I will celebrate this Mass with the Blessing of the Holy Oils on Thursday, April 9 at 10:00 am in St. Mary's Cathedral.

Once public Masses resume, a Mass of Thanksgiving will be celebrated by me with all the priests concelebrating and renewing their Priestly Promises. The Holy Oils will be brought in procession during the Mass and will be distributed to the parishes.

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CALGARY

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The Paschal Triduum

I will celebrate **Holy Thursday** (7:00 pm Mass, April 9), **Good Friday** (3:00 pm Service, April 10), a simplified **Easter Vigil** (9:30 pm, April 11) and **Easter Sunday Mass** (10:00 am, April 12) at the Cathedral.

All these Masses and the Good Friday service will be live-streamed and can be accessed from the website of the Diocese, www.calgarydiocese.ca. Weekday and Sunday Masses will continue to be live-streamed from the website as well.

I am providing you with this information so that you may be able to anticipate what is being planned and to help you prepare spiritually and communally as you enter the Sacred Week as the “domestic church” gathered in your homes within the parishes of the Diocese of Calgary.

In an Easter letter by St. Athanasius, Bishop, he wrote about the sacred feasts that we celebrate as a Church each year particularly the feast of Easter.

This feast guides us through the trials that meet us in this world. God now gives us the joy of salvation that shines out from this feast, as he brings us together to form one assembly, uniting us all in spirit in every place, allowing us to pray together and to offer common thanksgiving, as is our duty on the feast. Such is the wonder of his love: he gathers to this feast those who are far apart, and brings together in unity of faith those who may be physically separated from each other.

May we be brought together in spite of the distance that separates us through our unity in Christ.

I realize that without the Sunday Mass, communication from the parish may be challenging not having direct access to the Sunday bulletin. I would encourage you to visit your parish's website or to visit the website of the Diocese of Calgary for up-to-date information and for resources to support you spiritually, www.calgarydiocese.ca

Thank you for the sacrifices that you are making in a spirit of solidarity and for your contribution to the common good, which at this time can be the highest act of charity for others. Let us continue to take care of one another and to carry each other in prayer.

*“The Lord bless you and keep you;
the Lord make his face to shine upon you, and be gracious to you;
the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and give you peace.”* (Numbers 6:24-26)

Sincerely yours in Christ,



+Most Reverend William T. McGrattan
Bishop of Calgary

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