



# **Diocese of Saint John Protocols for the Public Celebration of Masses and Other Religious Services in the “Red Level” of GNB Health and Safety Measures**

## **Outdoor (Drive-in) Religious Services Only**

In the current “Red Level” churches are restricted to “outdoor (drive-in) religious services only”. Parishioners are required to remain in their vehicle for the duration of the Mass. Be assured that the dispensation from the Holy Obligation to attend Mass on Sunday is still in effect.

Priests are being asked to celebrate Mass daily for the intentions of parishioners and for those affected by COVID-19.

Pastors are encouraged to celebrate a Sunday Mass at a specific time within the church, and, if possible, livestream the Mass. If livestreaming is not possible, the parish 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 on our Diocesan Facebook page, or information for TV Mass). Following the Mass, at a predetermined time and time frame, parishioners could then proceed to the church to receive Communion, while remaining in their vehicles, following the directions of staff and volunteers when they arrive. In order to maintain reverence for the reception of Holy Communion, even if connected to a Mass in which they have participated online or via the TV, a short Rite should be celebrated before receiving Communion at one of the vehicle windows. Our priests have been instructed to take every precaution with hand sanitizing and ensuring, as best they can, the safety of all involved. In order to ensure reverence for the Eucharist, I would encourage parishioners to do their best to enter into the online or TV Masses in a spirit of prayer, maybe even designating a special prayer space for the viewing of the Mass with candles and a bible, not using their phone during Mass, observing the one hour Eucharistic fast, and maintaining a time of silence before and after the Mass, on their way to the church for the reception of Communion.

For the Masses livestreamed from inside the church, up to 4 people are allowed to assist the celebrant.

Funerals, Weddings, and Baptisms are not permitted during the “Red Level”, as per the Mandatory Order article 32(e), January 19, 2021.

Church offices can remain open with an operational plan. We recommend that staff work from home as much as possible.

No in-person meetings are to take place. Virtual platforms are encouraged for all parish meetings, religious education, and faith studies.

No meetings are to take place in any parish buildings. The only exception would be those deemed as essential services (eg. Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Meetings, etc.). These meetings should be held virtually or with as small a group as possible. All necessary health and safety measures are to be followed (strict physical distancing, contact tracing, mandatory masks/face coverings, proper hand hygiene, etc.).

Ongoing dialogue is taking place with Public Health regarding the celebration of Sacraments in a safe and dignified manner. More details will follow as soon as they are available.

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

January 19, 2021