



Office of the Bishop

COVID19 Reminder

29 June 2020

Dear Pastors, Parish Staff and Parishioners,

Greetings in the Lord!

It has now been approximately 1 month since re-opening our parishes. From what I have heard, most things are going very well.

A big thank you to our pastors, staff and volunteers who have helped to set up our churches for Mass and prayer. I know that everyone is grateful to be able to come to church once again. Another big thank you to all who are respecting the restrictions we need to follow to keep everyone safe.

I remind everyone that we need to keep vigilant, even if it seems we're managing the virus well. This keeps everyone from harm, clergy and lay faithful alike, and protects those most vulnerable from infection by the virus. We need to be cognizant that many people are caring for sick or elderly family, and we are acting with the utmost charity, when we keep put others before ourselves.

Please be aware that we are all being scrutinized for what we do and don't do now that our churches have re-opened. This is why it is important to follow our Guidelines for Re-Opening.

There are 2 concerns that have been brought to my attention recently, which I must address since they pose the greatest risk to our clergy and lay faithful. They are:

1. Singing during Mass: there should only be an opening and closing hymn, with limited verses. All Mass parts should be spoken and no extraneous singing should be taking place during Mass.
2. Communion on the Hand: this is to be the only method of distribution and reception of Holy Communion. The danger of contamination from the virus is too great to take this risk.

I know the above restrictions will be more difficult for some people than others, but we have to look to the common good over and above our personal desires or even rights. The very lives of our vulnerable and at-risk brothers and sisters are at stake. Surely, we can put them before ourselves. Again, these measures are temporary and are not meant to be permanent.

If you have further questions or concerns, please call me.

Please continue to pray for an end to the pandemic and for quick development of a vaccine.

God bless all of you and keep you well,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Gregory J. Bittman". The signature is stylized with a large initial "G" and a long horizontal stroke at the end.

✠ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson