



Thursday 11 June 2020

To Priests in the Diocese of Palmerston North

Dear Fathers and Lay Pastoral Leaders

Greetings to you all and thank you again for all the work you have done during the lockdown period. You are part of the team of 5 million who have helped keep us all safe!

Now that we are at Alert Level One people are asking questions with regard to our liturgical practices during this coming period.

The first thing to say is, KEEP SAFE; you need to be well to ensure those you minister to stay well.

The advice from the government during this level focuses on maintaining basic hygiene measures which include good hand hygiene, cough and sneeze etiquette, avoiding touching your face, and cleaning surfaces. The Ministry of Health advises people to:

- **Wash your hands** with soap and water often (for at least 20 seconds) and dry thoroughly. Use an alcohol-based sanitiser and rub hands together if soap and water is unavailable.
- **Cough or sneeze into your elbow** or cover your mouth and nose with tissues. Put them in a bin immediately.
- **Avoid touching your face**, including your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean. Surfaces may have infectious droplets.
- **Clean surfaces regularly**. This includes items frequently touch like door handles and phones.

Above all else, people should stay home if they are sick, and contact their doctor if they have flu like symptoms. As pastoral ministers you must also adhere to this advice if you are unwell.

We need to encourage anyone who is unwell or has flu-like symptoms to remain at home and pray with the community from home by reflecting on the Scriptures of the day.

Please ensure that all parish buildings are kept clean and regularly disinfected. As well please provide sanitiser so that people can clean their hands upon entry to parish buildings.

We need to recognize that many people are still anxious about their safety and we do not want this to be an impediment to them coming to Mass.





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These recent guidelines from the Bishops for our liturgical practices remain in place for the meantime:

Holy Communion - The faithful are to receive Holy Communion in the hand only, and not from the chalice. These practices are in keeping with present hygiene advice as seen above.

Sign of Peace - The exchange of peace can be by spoken word, by a gesture such as bowing, or by a pause for silent prayer for peace. At this stage people should not feel obliged to shake hands.

Holy Water Fonts - are to remain without Holy Water.

These guidelines will be re-evaluated as further health advice is given, or in one month's time.

The dispensation from Sunday Mass remains in place for this weekend. The bishops will make a decision about removing it when they meet tomorrow.

Many reflections have been offered over the past several weeks. I think an important question for all of us to ask at this time is, "How does this help me in my relationship with God?"

With best wishes and every blessing

Yours sincerely in the Lord

✠ John A Cardinal Dew
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Palmerston North

