



Bishop's Office – Bureau de l'Évêque
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March 23, 2020

To priests and parishes of the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

Re: Closing of all non-essential services

At a press conference given today, Ontario Premier Doug Ford ordered the mandatory closure of all non-essential services and workplaces, in an attempt to slow the spread of COVID-19. These measures will come into effect on **Tuesday March 24th at midnight and will be maintained for at least 14 days**. This includes all parish properties: church, hall, office, rectory. The Diocesan centre will also be closed as of Tuesday, March 24th at 4:30 pm.

1. **Reasons**

- 1) Premier Doug Ford's order that all non-essential businesses and facilities be closed.
- 2) Inability to maintain proper standard of sanitization of facilities, inability to maintain safety of premises
- 3) Prevention of possible gatherings of people.
- 4) In compliance with civil authorities and public health guidelines.

2. **Communication**

a) **With diocesan office**

- Call the regular number 705.674.2727,
- use the option for Directory of Personnel
- please press 411, then leave a voice mail.
 - Bishop Damphousse 222
 - Msgr. Jean-Paul Jolicoeur 261
 - Father Jean Vézina 224
 - Ted Hargreaves 228
 - David Sirois 237
 - Robert Larivière 229

Everyone will try to return the call within 4 hours

b) **Direct communication with individuals by cell phone**

Bishop Damphousse - 705.923.3914

Father Jean Vézina - 705.698.8046
Msgr. Jean-Paul Jolicoeur - 705.688.8558
Ted Hargreaves - 705.665.6569
David Sirois - 705.923.4436
Robert Larivière - 249.360.4131

c) Communication by email

Bishop Damphousse - m.damphousse@ssmd.ca
Fr. Jean Vézina - j.vezina@ssmd.ca
Msgr. Jean-Paul Jolicoeur - jp.jolicoeur@ssmd.ca
Ted Hargreaves - tedh@ssmd.ca
David Sirois - d.sirois@ssmd.ca
Robert Larivière - r.lariviere@ssmd.ca

3. Finance

- a) Church buildings need to be inspected every 24 hours, for insurance purposes. This can be done by the Pastor or by a person to whom the Pastor delegates this responsibility.
- b) There is a system in place to access financial assistance from the Diocese for parishes.
If a parish feels it is facing a financial crisis and will not be able to issue cheques, please contact Ted Hargreaves, the Diocesan Financial Administrator.
- c) Please postdate and issue the payroll cheques for the period between Tuesday March 24 at midnight and April 7, 2020 at midnight.
- d) The PADP Pre-Authorized Donation Program will be deposited April 10, 2020 for the month of March 2020.
- e) Please do not terminate nor lay off any employee until after the ordered 14-day closure.
- f) Parishes are exempt from DAE from the date when Masses were cancelled (Friday, March 13th) until the date when parishes will again be allowed to open and offer religious services and liturgies. The DAE will be prorated to the actual amounts.

4. Chrism Mass

Please note that changes have been made to the private Chrism Mass that was to take place in the Diocesan Centre Chapel on March 31. According to the Decree from the Congregation of Divine Worship dated March 19, the Bishop has the faculty to postpone it to a later date. After consulting with the Pastoral Regional Chairs, I have decided to have the Chrism Mass in Sault Ste. Marie once the crisis is over. Therefore, keep your Holy Oils (of 2019) until the next Chrism Mass.



+Marcel Damphousse
Bishop of Sault Ste. Marie