



Office of the Bishop

New Public Health Orders - COVID Restrictions Lifted

11 March 2022

Dear Pastors, Parish Staff and Parishioners,

Greetings and Peace in the Lord!

Today marks the two-year anniversary of the day British Columbia declared COVID-19 a pandemic. It has been a long two years of uncertainty, having to change with the restrictions at a moment's notice. However, today we can celebrate this significant anniversary with the removal of most restrictions affecting our parishes and how we practice our faith. Effective immediately, Dr. Bonnie Henry has lifted the order to wear masks in public places as well as lifted the capacity limits on worship services. It will be a blessing to see our churches full again and the smiling faces of our parish family!

Effective April 8, just in time for Holy Week, the vaccine passport will no longer be needed to access our parish halls, meeting spaces, etc. The invitation to the Chrism Mass on April 11th is therefore open to everyone without capacity limits or needing reservations. The social events in the hall are also open to everyone. Thanks be to God and our Lady of Monte Berico!

Holy water may be used in the entry fonts, paper bulletins may be circulated and the collection may be taken up by ushers. The sign of peace may be offered as each person is comfortable. It may be in the form of a bow, a smile with a wave, a knuckle bump or yes, even a handshake. Singing by everyone is welcomed back at long last.

Finally, I am removing the dispensation from the Obligation to Attend Mass in person on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation effective the weekend of April 2/3, 2022. Welcome back everyone!

I encourage you to continue practicing safety measures like having good ventilation in the church when warmer weather permits it, offering hand sanitizer at entry/exit, and staying home if you have any kind of illness. As expressed by the Public Health Officer, people may respond differently to the lifting of restrictions and may prefer to continue to wear a mask, social distance and pass up on physical contact - handshakes or hugs for instance. Please continue to be kind and respectful to one another as each person has a reason for that personal decision.

I wish each of you a Lenten Season filled with grace and renewal. May God bless you!

Sincerely in Christ our Lord,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Gregory J. Bittman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

✠ Gregory J Bittman
Bishop of Nelson