



Episcopal Office, Diocese of Ottawa
Anglican Church of Canada

Bureau épiscopal, Diocèse d'Ottawa
L'Église anglicane du Canada

The Right Reverend John H. Chapman
Bishop of Ottawa

Son Excellence Monseigneur John H. Chapman
Évêque d'Ottawa

*With God's grace, the mission of our ministries
is to enable people to know Jesus Christ,
to live and share the good news,
to grow in faith, and to serve God's world.*

March 26, 2020

Pastoral Letter #2 from the Bishop Regarding COVID-19

Greetings in the name of Jesus.

I want to formally advise you all that our communal liturgies will continue to be placed on hold until further notice. This will of course include all of the celebrations throughout Holy Week and Easter. Together, we already feel the absence of the sacramental community of God's people which sustains us throughout our days and upholds the ministry of clergy and the baptised.

Each Monday evening the Provincial House of Bishops, which includes our Bishop-Elect, Dean Shane Parker, meet (via Zoom) to share stories and counsel one to the other. On March 23, we all came to the unanimous decision that as an Ecclesiastical Province, we will together observe a Eucharistic Fast and Feast upon the Word. The two paragraphs following have been shared with all clergy throughout the entire Province. I commend them to you with the full expectation that the clergy and people of the Diocese of Ottawa will follow the practices described.

One of the realities for the Church living through this pandemic is our inability to physically gather as community for worship and mutual support. The Eucharistic Feast which we are used to celebrating week after week has been interrupted. On-line celebrations, prayers, bible studies, and devotions offered by parishes have been keeping us connected in a virtual way and we are grateful for these inspired links. This temporary absence from one another tests our very nature as a living body and reminds us of our deep longing to be together. We find ourselves in a time of Eucharistic Fast rather than Feast.

Therefore, the bishops of our province have agreed together that our virtual worship through Holy Week and the season of Easter, or until such time that we can gather in community together, will not include the liturgy of the Eucharist. Sacramental celebrations are the work of the whole People of God and require a gathering of people who can be physically present to one another. That is impossible for most of us at this time. The Great Three Days of Easter, and through the fifty days of the season, we will be fasting from the Eucharist but feasting on the Word. We believe that the Risen One, the Word, by the power of the Holy Spirit, is present and active with us as we hear and receive Him in the word of the scriptures, in that word interpreted and proclaimed in preaching, and in the word inwardly digested, by faith, in each person.

On another matter, please be aware that many of our seniors and shut-ins do not have the benefit of virtual anything. If a message doesn't come through their phone or mailbox, they are in the dark. Could you please, to the best of your ability, ensure that everyone in the parish is kept informed and receives communications from me, the Metropolitan, the Primate and you, the Incumbent or Associate Incumbent of their parish? The matriarchs and patriarchs in each of our parishes all know who needs to be contacted "old school." I expect there is someone in each of our communities who would welcome the job of contacting these individuals.

I continue to keep each of you in my daily prayers and I continue to keep myself open in the event you wish to chat with me. I remain,

Yours in the faith of Christ,

The Rt. Rev. John H. Chapman
9th Bishop of Ottawa

JHC/hnp