



Archdiocese of Vancouver
ARCHBISHOP'S OFFICE

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

After today's Provincial Health Order from Dr. Bonnie Henry, and with considerable sadness, I must direct that **all Masses, whether Sunday or weekday, beginning on Friday, November 20 and until further notice, are to be offered without a public congregation.** This directive likewise applies to other liturgical services as well as to social activities and gatherings held in church facilities. The new order from the Ministry states: "In-person religious gatherings and worship services are suspended under the order. For example: Do not attend a church, synagogue or mosque service."

It is important to note that **Funerals, Weddings and Baptisms may all still go ahead**, but with restrictions on attendees: "Funerals, weddings and baptisms may proceed with a limited number of people and a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place. You can have a maximum of 10 people attend, including the officiant. Receptions associated with funeral, wedding or baptism receptions are not allowed at any location."

Wherever possible – that is, whenever the health and safety of the community can be scrupulously attended to – churches may remain open for private prayer, Adoration and individual Confession.

"The order is in effect from November 19, 2020 at midnight to December 7, 2020 at midnight," although it may be extended beyond that point.

I fully understand that this is a difficult measure to have to take, especially on such short notice, and I am aware of the strain this will put on pastors and parishioners alike. From today's order it seems that religious institutions are not being treated with the same consideration regarding the number present at religious gatherings compared to that at secular indoor gatherings. While this is very disappointing, we are called to be beacons of light to the community at large and must do our part in a spirit of sacrificial love for our neighbours.

Further communication may come in the next days to help clarify the situation regarding other events or activities.

With the assurance of my prayers for you and your families as we weather this new trial, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ J. Michael Miller, CSB, Archbishop of Vancouver