



The Diocese of Huron **Pastoral Care Guidelines**

The provision of pastoral care is an important part of the ministry of the Church, especially so in times of crisis and illness. Social distancing measures enacted to limit the spread of COVID-19 require new and adaptive practices to be deployed, however, pastoral care must continue to be a priority of all clergy and lay pastoral assistants in the diocese.

Guiding Principle: Strictly adhere to all federal, provincial, municipal and diocesan directives and recommendations with regards to social distancing measures, self-isolation procedures, and/or health hygiene.

The following guidelines have been established to in order to ensure the care of those we serve as well those offering care.

1) **Limit Pastoral Visiting**

- Keep in-person visits to parishioners and others in need to those most in need of care and compassion, where the presence of a minister is essential, for instance anointing a gravely ill person and/or to comfort the dying.
- In-person pastoral visits should not be undertaken to people who are self-isolating or to those who have been infected by COVID-19 unless they are dying.
- Follow all institutional guidelines when making visits made to long-term care homes and/or hospitals. Visit only one person at any time, even if that means separated visits to the home or hospital. If you are unsure of the protocols, call ahead and speak with the nursing station.
- Following a visit to an institution where COVID-19 may be present, wash your hands thoroughly, go directly home, change clothes, and wash the clothes you have worn in hot water.

2) **Enhance Communication**

- Ministers should implement a parish plan for regular communication with parishioners, by phone, email, social media and/or other remote means.
- Pastoral visiting teams should now make their visits by phone, prioritizing those who may not have family or friends to check in on them.
- Clergy and lay leaders should send regular emails to parish email lists which include prayer resources and spiritual encouragement.
- Share pastoral care contact information widely so that those in need of care know how to connect with ministers without visiting the church.

3) **Postpone Pastoral offices**

- Weddings and funerals should be postponed until further notice.
- In extraordinary circumstances, permission may be sought from the bishop in order to conduct a service for which the extraordinary pastoral circumstances are such that postponing the service is not possible. If permission is granted, such services are to be held in private and in such a way as the number of those gathered is kept as small as possible.

