



Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador

July 14th, 2021

Re: returning to Normal

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

Grace and peace in our Lord Jesus Christ.

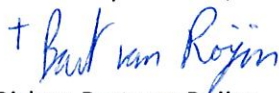
As the Provincial Health Regulations change, so our protocols change. With the numbers of people able to attend in-person celebrations on the increase (maximum of 200 people, or 75% capacity with proper physical distancing), a return to some form of “normal” is anticipated when a majority of eligible people are considered fully vaccinated (two weeks after their second dose). Though mask wearing and contact tracing list are still required, there may soon come a day when masks become optional and contact tracing lists are no more.

With a return to normal, not too far in the future, the dispensation from in-person attendance at Sunday Mass will be lifted, as each parish prepares to welcome its people home. Live-streamed Masses will also be limited to a central venue serving all those who, due to illness or old age are considered shut-in to their homes, hospital rooms and long-term care residences. Parishes will be encouraged to return to Mass without the distraction of cameras, to facilitate the full, conscious and active participation of the faithful. As Pope Francis has rightly observed, the Mass is not meant as something to be watched, but fully entered. The Church in the Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador looks forward to the day when we can give full expression to that reality.

There are some things that may become part of our new normal, this would depend largely on the prevalence of this or any other virus, the comfort level of the parishioners and the habits we have formed. The liturgy itself, however, will need to return to normal, with proper use of ambo/lectern, full return of music and the re-introduction of all liturgical ministries. The Pastoral Notes contained in the General Introduction to the Roman Missal should serve as the pattern of all good liturgy in the diocese.

Awaiting the day with great anticipation, I thank you for your patience and understanding during these trying times. I thank, especially, those who may have felt unduly burdened by the protocols. All measures were necessary to comply with Public Health regulations. By adhering to the measures, and temporarily closing those churches where potential outbreaks were brewing, we have ensured the safety of parishioners and the community-at-large. For this, I thank you.

Fraternally in Christ,



Bishop Bart van Roijen

Diocese of Corner Brook and Labrador

