

Letter to the Diocese from Bishop Andrew

Posted on March 30, 2020

Dear Friends in Christ,

Over the past two weeks we have received many questions from clergy and churchwardens. This is good! The more we can share our questions and answers, the better we can equip ourselves and our churches for ministry in this challenging time.

To that end, our Diocesan Centre will be sending out a “Questions & Answers” bulletin each week. The bulletin will contain your questions along with answers from senior staff at the Diocesan Centre. The questions can be on any subject, and we will do our best to answer them. Our staff is working on the first bulletin now, and we hope to email it to you this week. In the meantime, please visit our [COVID-19 Updates page](#) on our website, which contains a wealth of information and resources and is updated almost daily.

As you know, our Diocese has announced a Jubilee to help parishes with their finances in April and May. In these two months, parishes will not be required to pay their monthly allotment to the Diocese or cover the cost of clergy remuneration. I was delighted to share this news with you last Friday after our Diocesan Council approved several important steps that will allow this to happen. I have been deeply moved by the positive response to this measure and look forward to talking to you more about it in a video on Wednesday.

Over the past two weeks, our churches have been remarkably creative in providing online worship services. These have helped a great many people not only stay connected with their faith but actually deepen it. I encourage you to continue these efforts, but please remember that we must follow the Ministry of Health guidelines. In particular, no more than five people should be gathered at one time and social distancing must be observed, with no contact between participants and nothing passed hand-to-hand. An exception has been articulated today for funerals, allowing up to 10 people to be present. Ideally, burials only should take place with gathering limits, physical distancing and hand hygiene all vigilantly practiced.

I'd like to conclude by saying how proud I am of all of you – of our bishops, clergy, deacons, staff and lay members. Your efforts over the past two weeks to provide care and comfort to an anxious world have been remarkable. The love you have shown to each other, to our communities and especially to the most vulnerable in our society has truly been the Body of Christ in this broken world. Thank you for all that you are doing.

I look forward to speaking to you again on Wednesday.

Yours in Christ,

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Asbil

Bishop of Toronto