



21 May 2020

**COVID-19 UPDATE (Update #8)
A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP FABBRO**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As many of us have heard, churches in other parts of the world are reopening for services as COVID-19 restrictions begin to be lifted. In the Diocese of London, we cannot reopen at this time as gatherings of more than five people are still not permitted under the provincial government's emergency orders.

All of us are longing to return to our churches. I certainly am looking forward to that day when we will be able to gather and celebrate in our parish communities.

I want you to know that I am currently working with the other bishops of Ontario to coordinate plans for the safe return to our churches. Our foremost concern is the health of our parishioners and we know, if we work together with others in our communities to fight the spread of the coronavirus, we will once again be able to celebrate the sacraments safely.

Following these deliberations with the Ontario bishops, I intend to issue directives for the Diocese of London. These directives will provide all our parishes with clear instructions about how to reopen our churches as well as any changes required for the celebration of the Mass and the other sacraments, including the Sacrament of Penance.

If you are concerned about access to confession, please remember that Pope Francis granted the faithful a plenary indulgence during the pandemic and, though you are unable to confess to a priest, you can express your contrition directly to God and receive forgiveness.

I know that alternative celebrations are being offered in different places, such as parking lot Masses, Eucharistic adoration, drive-through confessions and Rosary rallies. The Diocese of London does not endorse these as necessary at this time or good liturgical practice. Instead, I encourage you to continue to take advantage of alternatives such as online Masses and prayers. There are many helpful links on the outreach page of the diocesan website <https://dol.ca/outreach>.

For now, our churches will remain closed until we can open them in cooperation with provincial and local officers of health.

I want to assure you of my prayers for your well-being. Through the intercession of Mary, may God bring an end to the pandemic; may you experience the merciful presence of Christ; may we soon be able to gather again in our churches to be nourished by the Eucharist.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Ronald P. Fabbro, C.S.B.
Bishop of London