

ST. LAWRENCE O'TOOLE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

19450 Opeongo Line, Barry's Bay, ON K0J 1B0

Est. 1934



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PARISH OFFICE HOURS:

Monday & Wednesday - Friday 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

PASTOR

Rev. Patrick M. Dobec, P.P.

SUNDAY MASS

Saturday: 4:30 p.m.

Sunday: 9:30 a.m.

WEEKDAY MASS

See Bulletin

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Saturday 3:45 p.m. – 4:15 p.m.

In the Crying Room at entrance

Weekdays – Before all Masses or by appointment
in the Sacristy

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

27 December 2020

Let us pray . . .

For those who have lost loved ones an haven't been able to gather to mourn and pray.

For those who been sick themselves, whether with COVID or a disease untreated because of COVID restrictions.

For those who have no easy access to the vaccine

For those entrepreneurs who are facing the loss of their business or employees losing jobs.

For all front-line workers who daily put themselves at risk for the benefit of others.

For those who live in abusive relationships to shelter-in-place.

For those this cold winter without shelter to find open, warm, healthy and safe spaces.

For those suffering from mental illnesses to cope with isolation that COVID has inflicted.

Let us all reflect on all the blessings we have received and always look to share these tangibly with others.

For those who have died and left this transitory life . . . especially the repose souls of Susan McEnery wife of Dr. Peter McEnery and all the Pandemic Victims. Requiescant in Pace!

CELEBRATION OF MASS

All public Masses Cancelled at this Time

Today's Feast of the Holy Family reminds us that being a family is a journey of changes and challenges – what Simeon calls “piercings” in today's Gospel – and that it's the love of our spouses and children and brothers and sisters that enables us to negotiate and survive those “piercings” to learn from those challenges, to move on from those difficult situations wiser and more loving. Our belonging to a family means that every one of us – parent and child – reflects for one another the selfless, limitless and unconditional love of Christ, both in good times and bad. The Holy Family is a model for our own families as we struggle together to adapt and change and cope with the many tensions and crises that challenge the stability, peace and unity that are the joys of being a family.

I express my sincere gratitude to all who were so kind over this Christmas Season. Your prayers, cards, gifts and delicious baking are deeply appreciated. May God bless you for your kindness and support. Fr. Patrick Dobec

GRATITUDE – Our entire parish family expresses our heartfelt gratitude to the many volunteers who tirelessly ensure our community and our church buildings are sanitary and safe for public worship. 99% of parishioners and visitors are so polite and co-operative as we obey our Bishop's and public health experts. These generous souls have been carrying out hidden, diligent and faithful service in the house of the Lord for the safety of all. So many people remark how safe they feel in our church and at our liturgies thanks to the co-operation of so many conscientious and responsible individuals.

We should never allow the Solemnity of our liturgies to be distracted from our worship of God, and so I wish also to take this opportunity to publicly thank the many people who work assiduously to ensure their dignity: Our music ministry, readers, ushers, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, collection counters, our cleaners, who register our guests and those who decorated our church. Thank you to our parish staff who work behind the scenes with many practical details related to these days.

Letter to the Priests, Deacons and faithful of the Ontario sector of the diocese Bishop Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.

Tuesday, December 22, 2020

Dear confreres, dear colleagues, dear faithful,

Yesterday's decision by the Ontario government to reduce our liturgies to a maximum of 10 people (including the priest) for the next 28 days, starting December 26, 2020, once again forces us to limit drastically the number of our faithful who will be able to receive the Holy Eucharist or other sacraments. I am very sorry about this, rest assured, for our gatherings contribute to our growing together in unity, fraternity and charity, all of which have their source in the divine heart of the Father and the Son.

Last July, I sent you a letter in which I invited you to observe as faithfully as possible the directives of our governmental and health authorities. I would like to thank you sincerely for all the efforts and sacrifices you have made since then in each of our parishes, which have helped to prevent and considerably reduce the spread of the virus. Virtually no other organization or business frequented by the general public offers so many ways to prevent the spread of the virus : systematic decontamination of the premises after each religious service; use of hand sanitizers; wearing a mask when entering, leaving and receiving Communion in the hand only, except for a few rare exceptions; physical demarcation of the places where one can sit in order to maintain the social distance of 2 meters; elimination of all songbooks or even holy water to avoid possible contamination; volunteers or employees trained to educate and guide the faithful who enter the premises; courteous invitation to sign the register of participants in each of our liturgical celebrations; elimination of choirs and songs where the risk of contagion is greater; training and education often renewed to get used to the new ways of proceeding; elimination of the traditional way of giving the sign of peace; and so on.

This means that if we continue to adhere to all the health measures recommended by the authorities, we will eventually come to be recognized by the authorities as one of the safest places for the public to gather in times of pandemic. I believe that the greatest challenge we still have to overcome is to convince our authorities that our places of worship are truly "essential" places, on a par with, if not more than, the food chains or the liquor boards. Our churches must not be closed in the future, because they are truly essential to the psychological and spiritual well-being of people, especially when they are experiencing periods of insecurity and anxiety in times of great trial.

Today, I would like to draw your attention to some of the health regulations and measures that have evolved since the beginning of the crisis, and which the Renfrew County District Health Unit is urging us to adopt as soon as possible. These guidelines were communicated to me directly yesterday by the RCDHU Manager of Healthy Environments, Mr. David Tantalo. I assured him that he would see my message prior to publication so that he could approve it before it is sent to you.

In my last message sent at the end of July, I wrote that we had to enter the church wearing a mask and that we could lower it once we arrived in our pew, since at that time we were observing physical distancing. We also had to wear it before and after receiving Communion in our hands, and wear it again when leaving the church. Now, the RCDHU is asking us to wear the mask throughout the whole celebration, not just at certain times. I suppose that the alarming increase in the number of cases in some parts of Ontario plays a big part in this new request, even though our region is not currently experiencing a serious risk of an explosion of new cases. The purpose of this request is no doubt based on the fact that because of the present lockdown in high-risk areas like Toronto, there is concern about the possible movement of people from these areas to come and participate in our liturgies simply because they could then benefit and participate in our Eucharistic celebrations. So, by confining all areas of Southern Ontario at the same time (we are in this category!), as the government just did yesterday, the risk factor of contamination is considerably reduced, according to them, because we avoid the movement of people from out of town.

When congregants enter the church, assuming a person is not wearing a mask, RCDHU invites our volunteers to ask them, "Are you able to wear a mask?" If the answer is yes, then the volunteer offers a mask free of charge from a designated area in the church. However, I made it clear to Mr. Tantalo that volunteers or priests are not police officers. If the person is stubborn, we simply have to let them go. They are not to be threatened or insulted with unkind words. This is why physical distancing of our parishioners is so important in that it acts as another level of protection. We must also avoid judging those who do not wear masks, because they often have medical reasons for not wearing them. I also take advantage of this moment to ask those who would be tempted at some point to make a complaint to the RCDHU or to the bishop directly, to first go through the pastor of the parish before lodging the complaint. The present letter that I am sending you today could already help to alleviate or elucidate certain tensions or possible criticisms and unfavorable judgments. I invite pastors to keep a number of copies of my letter in the church.

Let us not forget that all the other elements present in my previous letter are still in force. I am thinking here in particular of the question of Communion on the tongue. During the time of the pandemic, I recommend that those who prefer to receive Communion on the tongue refrain from doing so until further notice. For those who have serious problems of conscience with the reception of Communion in the hand, I invite you to proceed as I have already indicated: wait until all those who receive Communion in the hand have received it first, and present yourself at the end of the line only. If your pastor is in the habit of distributing Communion in the pews, let those who wish to receive Communion on the tongue be the last to receive it. And I add that if the pastor who is circulating in the pews realizes that he has accidentally touched the tongue or lips of the communicant, despite all his usual precautions, let him go immediately to purify his hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer before continuing his service. Public health has asked that hands be purified after each person receiving Communion on the tongue. Let us remember that I have also asked priests to provide a number of larger hosts, cut in half before the beginning of the celebration, for those who might still want to receive communion on the tongue. In this way the possibility of making a false move at the moment of giving Communion is considerably reduced.

The RCDHU has put forward the observation that the priest or extraordinary minister distributing Holy Communion may also utilize a face shield over the mask when carrying out this function. As many parishioners are already doing, communicants are encouraged to step aside, lower their mask and then consume the Host to reduce face-to-face contact. Ensuring this procedure would mean a face shield would not be necessary. This does not apply to those receiving Communion on the tongue.

Thank you once again, dear fellow priests, deacons and faithful who have, since the beginning of the pandemic, observed with such meticulous attention all the directives of the health and government authorities, even if some among us have at times doubted or continue to doubt the true effectiveness of certain health measures. You have done so with zeal and perseverance for the greater good of our Christian communities and for the good of the population in general. Let us not cease to focus first and foremost on the apostolic mission that Christ entrusts to us, that of making him known and loved here and now. In spite of and because of all the obstacles that confront us during this pandemic, they will bring out more clearly our true nature as sons and daughters of God. Our patience, charity, peace and trust in God in the midst of trials will become signs of God's presence and love for those we encounter and whom we must evangelize by our words and deeds, by our prayers and by the comfort we can provide for them.

May God bless you in these times of rejoicing and festivities as we celebrate the birth of our Savior,



+ Guy Desrochers, C.Ss.R.
Bishop of Pembroke

GREY ZONE – Parishes in the Ontario sector of the diocese:

On December 21st, Premier Doug Ford announced that, effective 12:01 a.m. on December 26th, the entire province will be in the “grey zone” (lockdown). In light of this, Bishop Desrochers wishes to convey the following message: The Bishop strongly recommends that churches remain open for personal prayer and for sacraments that can be celebrated with the allowed ten people present (including clergy). It would be possible for there to be confessions, baptisms, weddings, and funerals. Priests may schedule Masses for those circumstances in which no more than ten people will be present. In some parishes, this will mean that weekday Masses can continue.

St. Lawrence O’Toole Parish:

In our Parish we will cancel everything for at least a week to observe how this pandemic develops and how we all can be responsible and safe in these unknown circumstances. We will continue to evaluate every week. Of course funerals will be celebrated according provincial and diocesan guidelines. The essential sacraments will be available WHEN necessary and sanitation and masks will be compulsory at all times for all our protection. I am confident that we will come together as a Parish Family of Hope and positive co-operation.

Registered Households 183
Last Sunday's Offering \$4162.00

63 Household Envelopes & 6 E-transfers: \$2842.00
Up to date Christmas Flowers: \$986.00

Visitor: \$70.00 **Loose: \$5.00**
Christmas Offering: \$145.00

Donations: \$1050.00
Building Fund: \$50.00

Turn your prayers into action by naming St. Lawrence O’Toole Parish in your Will.
Your gift will help us maintain our wonderful parish.