

A recent letter from Bishop Wayne Kirkpatrick (June 12, 2010) included new regulations for conducting funerals, internments, weddings, baptisms and penance. I've included a copy below.

Even though funerals and internments are now allowed, we are still not able to offer receptions at St. Joseph's, either at the church or at the community centre, because of concern about the risk to our volunteers, most of whom are either in a high risk group themselves or are caring for family members who are at high risk for complications from COVID-19. I was recently in touch with the Bishop about my concerns, and received the following response:

**Our public celebrations of the sacraments were suspended, not out of fear, but out of the deepest respect for human life and health and so this same principle applies to funeral receptions. We cannot have funeral receptions that puts people, especially vulnerable people at risk.**

Thank you for your continued understanding. It's a difficult decision, but we have to put the health and safety of our volunteers and other vulnerable parishioners first.

Jean Collins

Co-ordinator, St. Joseph's Auxiliary

### **Covid-19 Protocol Update:**

In the Diocese of Antigonish, as of June 11, 2020, the following regulations adopted entirely from the Archdiocese of Halifax are updated and in effect in the Diocese of Antigonish until further direction is provided:

1. **Churches will remain closed to the public** for private prayer, devotions, and the celebration of Mass (livestream and video Masses can continue)
2. By way of exception, the church may be used for **funerals and weddings**, following the new "10-person rule."
3. If the church is used for a **funeral**, the following is to be observed:
  - a. The funeral home staff, with the pallbearers (wearing masks) will bring in the remains to the front of the church. They would leave the church and then the mourners would enter wearing face-masks.
  - b. The prescribed Catholic ritual will be the Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass.
  - c. When the liturgy ends, the mourners leave the church and the pallbearers and funeral staff return and take the remains to the hearse.
  - d. In the event of a cremation, with the family bringing the urn, there would be no need for the family to wait to enter the church.
  - e. Live streaming of the service is permitted.
4. During the **internment at the cemetery**, the funeral home staff, and pallbearers (wearing masks) would bring the remains to the graveside and leave the area. The priest or deacon would arrive with the mourners (because this is outside, there can be 15 mourners). Following the prayers, the mourners leave and then the cemetery staff complete their work.
5. For **weddings**, the priest or deacon together with the couple, two witnesses and 6 more people can gather at the Church (photographers, cantor, any musicians make up part of the 10). The prescribed Catholic ritual will be the Order of Celebrating Matrimony without Mass. Live streaming of the service is permitted.
6. The **Sacrament of Baptism** is to be delayed; if this is not possible, then the 10-person rule is to apply.
7. **Sacrament of Penance** may be arranged through appointment.
8. In all these circumstances, the rules of social distancing must be observed, as well as hygiene protocols such as ensuring that the church is cleaned and made safe.