



ARCHDIOCESE *of* KINGSTON

***The Dedication of the Basilicas of Sts.
Peter and Paul***
18 November 2020

Dear Clergy and Faithful of the Archdiocese of Kingston,

It has been many months since Covid-19 first made an impact upon the way in which we live our lives as individuals, as a society and as a Church. In those early weeks and months our churches and much of our society were closed but in time, particularly as a result of our working with the provincial government to develop the WorshipSafe protocols that we have implemented in our churches, we were once again able to gather as Catholic communities to celebrate the Mass together.

I want to commend your efforts to implement these protocols. They allow our parishes to take care of the spiritual health of all the faithful, while being sensitive to concerns about their physical health and well-being. As Catholics we follow the reasonable restrictions that have been placed upon us in these protocols, not simply as good citizens but also because it is a matter of faith, charity and justice. In justice, as well as charity, we must not be reckless with the well-being and peace of mind of others.

As we head into the winter months and the uncertainty that they bring, I ask you to redouble your efforts to follow the WorshipSafe protocols. We must continue in the proper use of masks and to continue to practice safe physical distancing between one another (at least 2 metres if not in the same household/social bubble). Not only does this allow us to put our confidence in one another but, it also allows the civil authorities to remain confident in what we are doing as an Archdiocese.

Furthermore, with the dramatic increase in the number of Covid-19 cases at this time, the reception of Communion needs to be in the hand and not on the tongue. While reception on the tongue remains normative in our Church, it is good to recall that the practice of receiving on the hand is an ancient and venerable practice. We might remind ourselves that the 4th Century Church Father, St Cyril of Jerusalem, said that, "In approaching therefore, come not with your wrists extended, or your fingers spread; but make your left hand a throne for the right, as for that which is to receive a King" (*Catechetical Lectures*, 23:21). The law of the Church reminds us that the exercise of our rights in the Church must take account of the common good and our duty toward others [C 223 §1]; therefore, I would ask those whose practice it is to receive on the tongue, to set aside this right for the sake of others and to ensure that public celebrations of the Mass might continue. Physical distancing remains an important protocol for Communicants and when receiving Communion, masks are to be removed using the straps, without touching the front of their masks.

With prayerful best wishes, I remain,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Michael Mulhall
Archbishop of Kingston