

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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DIOCESE OF GRAND FALLS

March 23, 2020

Re: Restrictions on Funeral Liturgies during the time of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As the situation in our Diocese, our country and throughout the world continues to evolve regarding the COVID-19 Pandemic, further precautions against spreading the virus have become necessary. For this reason, out of pastoral concern for the health and wellbeing of all our people, and in consultation with the Vicar General of the Diocese, I am hereby providing our clergy with the following directives regarding funerals in this Diocese:

- ***Until future notice, due to the severe threat presented by the COVID-19 virus, the Clergy of the Diocese are not to preside at funeral liturgies in our churches or in funeral homes.***
- ***For the time being, the Clergy of the Diocese may preside at graveside prayer services with immediate family members of the deceased, it being understood that these services must be in keeping with government regulations regarding gathering sizes and social distancing.***
- ***The Clergy of the Diocese are encouraged to do all that they can to be available via telephone to help families struggling with the death of loved ones and to assist them in the planning of funeral liturgies to take place at a later date when it is deemed safe to do so.***
- ***I ask that the Clergy of the Diocese make this information available to parishioners on parish websites and parish messaging services.***

I realize that these are extraordinary measures but given the present circumstances and concerns regarding the spreading of the coronavirus, they are measures that seem prudent and wise. However, during this time of necessary social distancing, it is more important than ever that the Church find ways to be personally present to parishioners and to all those seeking spiritual nourishment and support.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R. Anthony Daniels', is written over a horizontal line.

Most Reverend R. Anthony Daniels
Bishop of Grand Falls