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Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

We would like to offer our thanks and appreciation to the people of the Diocese of Calgary for the hard work of meeting the challenges of navigating protocols and restrictions over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. Today, the Province of Alberta has entered Stage 2 of lifting restrictions and there are no longer any public health measures in place that affect church gatherings. There is no guarantee that this will be permanent, so we do encourage you to monitor the following Alberta government webpage for guidance and changes in public health actions:

<https://www.alberta.ca/covid-19-public-health-actions.aspx>. The section identified as “Gathering Restrictions” deals with places of worship, weddings and funerals, and social gatherings.

While measures such as masking and distancing are no longer required from a provincial standpoint, the Archbishop and COVID-19 Task Force continue to strongly recommend these protocols as best practices for mitigating the spread of the virus in our communities, and promote them as a positive expression of our consideration for others.

Stage 2 includes the lifting of any remaining restrictions on social gatherings, which in turn eliminates any ambiguity around coffee hours and other church socials that we encountered in Stage 1. These are now permissible.

Parishes may also now return to the use of the common cup for administering communion. We recognize that this could create challenges for many who are receiving communion as they might not yet be ready to drink from the common cup. So that these people can be included as fully as possible, priestly intinction continues to be recommended as an authorized alternative practice for the administration of communion.

As we have come to learn, the ways that these recommendations are interpreted and implemented will vary from parish to parish depending on local context. Parish leadership is encouraged to make reasonable decisions that take into consideration the needs and context of the community they serve.

Lastly, please encourage your parishioners to monitor their health and not attend in-person worship or other activities if they are not feeling well or are presenting symptoms. This is good advice not just for COVID-19, but also for any sickness that may be present in the community.

We pray for health and encouragement as we have opportunity to observe a holy Lent together this year, and we look forward to celebrating the Resurrection at Easter. God bless you.

Yours in Christ,

Archbishop Kerr-Wilson and the COVID-19 Task Force

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