

DIOCESE OF ALGOMA

From the Archbishop

March 16, 2020

Dear people of God,

As we work together as a world community to fight COVID-19 I am reminded of Paul's words to the church in Corinth that when one part of the body suffers we all suffer with it and when one part rejoices we all rejoice. Although you may not be personally affected with COVID-19, we stand together and in solidarity with those who have been. Thank you for your cooperation and understanding in this challenging time.

On Monday evening, the Ontario House of Bishops is meeting again to confer together on what to do about funerals and weddings, mid-week services, meetings etc. We are united in our efforts to do all we can to 'flatten the curve' and spread of the corona virus in Ontario and beyond. I have cancelled the upcoming Provincial Council meetings as well as the Provincial House of Bishops, Executive Officers and Senior Staff Consultation meetings.

This is to inform you that I am cancelling the Regional Gatherings (in preparation for the Special Synod in May) which were to be held in the next three weeks. In addition to this, the Clergy Retreat, which is planned for the 5th - 7th May will be cancelled, as will the Special Synod which I called to bring advice to me on whether same sex marriage should be introduced in Algoma.

On the matter of same sex marriage in our diocese, as you know, the General Synod did not make a decision to change the Marriage Canon, and as the Provincial Synod has, also, not made a decision about this, and as same sex marriage is already taking place in our church, it now falls to each Diocesan Bishop to a make decision about this for their diocese. I have been very carefully listening to the voices in our diocese as we discuss this and will continue to do so over the next month. In May of this year, I will make the decision that is now required of me.

I invite you to send your thoughts about this to me through my Administrative Assistant, Liz Hamel, at adminassistant@dioceseofalgoma.com

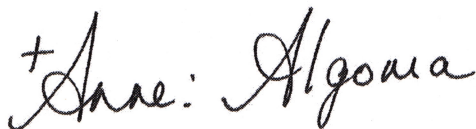
As we all continue to pray about this and listen with respect to each other, I ask you to pray for me as well. I want to assure you that I will always have the best interest of our diocese in mind as I make this decision.

In this extraordinary time, I want to thank you for sharing the news about the temporary suspension of Sunday worship with each other so quickly when it came out on Friday evening. I have been amazed at your creativity in finding new ways to be the church when we can't gather together for Eucharist and noticed online how many people participated in the livestreaming of services. There remains the matter of those who don't have access to the internet or who are not on Facebook - I am confident you will be connecting with them in other ways so they know they have not been forgotten.

Continue to pray for those who are most deeply affected by COVID-19 - frontline workers, hospital staff, those who are stranded and unable to return to their homes from abroad, those who are isolated further because of the new restrictive measures in place, and those who have been diagnosed with COVID-19 and their families and loved ones.

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of all mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God. For as we share abundantly in Christ's sufferings, so through Christ we share abundantly in comfort too." 2. Cor. 1: 3-5

May you know the abundance of Christ's comfort today,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "+ Anne: Algoma". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned below the typed name.

The Most Rev. Anne Germond
Archbishop of Algoma