



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

19 March 2020

Dear Reverend Monsignor:

Dear Reverend Father:

Re: Emergency Hospital Coverage

At this time hospitals, nursing homes and hospices are advising us of strict protocols which impact our ministry to the sick and dying.

Priests are to refrain from visiting patients immediately, unless near death and at the specific request of his or her family, in order to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Obviously, if a Priest is feeling unwell or whose health is compromised in any way, he should ask another Priest to respond to emergencies. Priests are asked to consult with the nursing station regarding the need (or not) of whatever Personal Protective Equipment is required.

I have spoken to all Deans and requested that the usual rotation for the Hospital on-call pager be suspended, and, where possible, one priest be assigned to each institution in the Deanery during the present pandemic. This includes hospitals, nursing homes and hospice residences.

Furthermore, a Priest who is called to minister in an emergency situation in one institution is not to go to any other institution. This will reduce the risk of transmitting the virus.

We have been advised that it is not possible to visit or anoint a patient who is hospitalized as a result of COVID-19. Priests and visitors will not be admitted to the patient's room.

Finally, with respect to the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick, the Priest should lay hands over the patient (without touching the person) and anoint the patient using a cue tip, which can then be placed in a tissue and burned.

Your collaboration with hospital and health care personnel is much appreciated.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Monsignor Murray J. Kroetsch, PH, VG
Chancellor