



Anglican Church of Southern Africa
Diocese of Grahamstown

The Bishop of Grahamstown
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08th APRIL 2022

Ad Clerum April 2022

Lenten greetings to you all in the Name of Jesus Christ
We are praying, we are reflecting on the Holy scriptures that we are reading as set by our Lectionary of 2022. They are inspiring and sustaining in our spiritual journeys. We pray and hope that it does the same with you as we move together in our various spiritual journeys as we approach Palm Sunday, Holy Week and Easter, may God bless you with the riches of His Grace.

The President of the Republic of South Africa has spoken to us as the Nation, we Bishop in Chapter with our Regulations Team rule as follows:

To: The Dean at the Cathedral, Members of Chapter, Rectors, Priests – In - Charge, Church Wardens, Leaders of Guilds and the People of God in the Diocese of Grahamstown.

**Recommended Standard COVID -19 Protocols for the Diocese of Grahamstown
Consequent upon the Presidential Address on the repealing of the National
State of Disaster w.e.f. 05 April 2022:**

1. The announcements made by His Excellency the Honourable Cyril Ramaphosa on Monday night that after more than two years of the country being under the clutches of a National State of Disaster; in God's perfect timing the Government has deemed it opportune to repeal the measures of such National State of Disaster as of midnight **04th April 2022**.
2. This is indeed most welcome tidings for all the people of God in the Land; and particularly so for us the worshipping community at large and in the Diocese. This particularly so with the Passion tide at our doorstep and the implications this has for our worship programmes and rites during this season of the Church Calendar.
3. Clarification guidance is deemed necessary in the circumstances, and this is at the core of this communique. Of paramount importance is the fact that the repeal of the National State of Disaster is not to be understood to mean a reversal to the Pre – Covid 19 status quo. The virus is still very much in our midst with a **Fifth Wave** in the offing by a variant which by the look of things could 'dodge' or escape the protection offered by current vaccination.
4. To this end, the President emphasized that with the falling away at midnight on Monday 04th April of the National State of Disaster, some transitional measures will remain in force, only to automatically fall off **Thirty Days** hence.
5. During this transitional period, of specific contextual significance for us are that the Four cardinal universal measures intended for protecting oneself and others still apply; namely:

- a) **wearing a mask that covers both your mouth and nose;** b) **Keeping a safe distance from others – one meter in this instance;** c) **Avoiding closed or crowded spaces;** and d) **Washing your hands regularly with soap and water or sanitizer.** In addition that people feeling unwell are encouraged to stay at home until such time as they are in good shape.
6. Specifically the following strictly apply:
- a) **Masks must be worn in indoor public spaces. Children under six years are exempted.** Relief is only as regards to outdoor public spaces.
 - b) **All health protocols must be observed.** No need for screening or maintaining registers, save that a list of attendees is needed as evidence portfolio for compliance substantiation as regards the 50 per cent maxim. Observance of ventilation requirements critical
 - c) Pertaining to **Public Gatherings** the following is permissible:
 - i. **No more than Fifty percent of the venue capacity may be used**
 - ii. **With proof of Vaccination or a negative Covid Test** - No upper limit on numbers
 - iii. **Without proof of Vaccination or a negative Covid Test** – upper limit of 1000 people indoors and 2000 people outdoors
 - d) We would implore all people of God in the Diocese to please heed the call to get vaccinated. All people above the age of 12 are eligible. Please visit your nearest vaccination centre or use the online registration platform by dialling ***134*832#** or alternatively the National toll-free centre on **0800 029 999**
7. Specifically the ACSA Provincial Covid Advisory Committee consequently has come up with the following recommendations by way of amendments to the Guidelines:
- a) **Passion and Holy Week Services:** Palm Sunday Services may take place in keeping with tradition for as long protocols and social distancing as stated above are adhered to. On Good Friday the three-hour service may proceed, save that with the veneration of the cross regard is to be had to protocols and that kissing is specifically prohibited.
 - b) **Sharing of the Peace:** Continue to wave to each other. Fist or handshake for those comfortable; maintaining the 1meter distance. **No hugging though!**
 - c) **Receiving of Communion:** Communion in one kind only remains the best practice advocated. However, regard being had that prohibition on sharing fluids has been done away with; **reintroduction of communion with the shared cup is now permissible as of Palm Sunday - with due care and mindfulness being applied in so doing! *This applies to those who wish to share in the common cup. Those who are comfortable in sharing the blood of Christ in individual cups are allowed to do so. Those not comfortable are free to continue receiving communion in one kind only!***
 - d) **Funerals:** These can be held with limitations on numbers as stated above and observance of health protocols. Vigils and after funeral gatherings as per community customs can resume.
 - e) **Other Sacraments:** These to be resumed bearing in mind the health and physical protocols.
8. We do trust and hope that as a collective and individually we will at all times material make every effort to comply by this guidance directive; thereby contributing to the curtailment of spread and the ultimate eradication of this public danger. Should you still need any further clarification in this regard, please contact our Diocesan Covid -19 Liaison, the **Rev Canon Dr Sam Beja – 083 378 1113** or email sbeja@yahoo.com

These is our guidance as the Diocese of Grahamstown, never the less; you are also allowed to read the communication from the Archbishop's office for your information.

may you all with the humility, grace and love of Christ approach the Passion tide looking forward to a glorious and fulfilling Easter!

+ George Grahamston

BISHOP OF GRAHAMSOWN