

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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DIOCESE OF GRAND FALLS

TO ALL PRIESTS AND PASTORAL LEADERS – DIOCESE OF GRAND FALLS

(Information to be shared with Parish Secretaries, Ushers and Greeters)

Dear Friends,

Effective October 22, 2021, it will be mandatory for all persons 12 (there is a three month grace period for children to be vaccinated once they have reached 12 years of age) and older wishing to attend Masses or Services in our churches to demonstrate proof of vaccination by using the Vaccine Passport: NLVaxPass or by showing proof of vaccination by presenting their QR code before entering our churches. Therefore, beginning the weekend of October 23/24, entry into our churches will be restricted to those who show proof of vaccination.

The Ministry of Health and Community Services has allowed for exceptions to this mandate. If, for pastoral reasons, it will be a burden for those attending to provide proof, then entry into our churches will be allowed with restrictions upon all attendees. For example, if at a funeral or wedding, persons who are necessary to the celebration cannot show proof of vaccination, then the celebration can go on with restrictions (see page 2).

To facilitate our compliance with the Mandate, two things are needed.

1.) Each person wishing to attend our celebrations must download their Electronic QR Code through the Vaccine Portal: [Vaccine Portal](#). Then, after downloading their Electronic QR Code, they must download the app: NLVaxPass and add the Electronic QR Code to the app.

OR

Each person wishing to attend our celebrations must download their Electronic QR Code through the Vaccine Portal: [Vaccine Portal](#). Then they must print out a copy and present it to the ushers before entering the church.

2.) Ushers or Greeters or other volunteers monitoring entrance to our churches must download the app: NLVaxVerify. This app will allow Ushers use their smartphone's camera to scan the Electronic QR Code on the attendees smartphone or on the printed page to confirm proof of vaccination.

Additionally, after verifying proof of vaccination, you must also review identification. This must include the person's name and date of birth. For people ages 19 years and older, the identification must include a photo. The name on the identification must match the name on the COVID-19 Vaccination Record QR code or other form of proof of vaccination. If it does not, you may request a second piece of identification. ***(Please note that I am checking with the Ministry of Health and Community Services to verify that this step will be necessary.)***

For the time being, all the current restrictions presently in place will continue even for churches using the NLVaxPass and NLVaxVerify applications. As the Department of Health and Human Services monitors the increase or decrease of the spread of the disease, these restrictions will be reduced for churches using these applications. As a reminder, these **restrictions** are:

- Capacity is limited to 50 per cent;
- Everyone must wear a non-medical mask at all times (including the officiant and musicians);
- Congregational singing is not permitted;
- The names and contact information of all attendees must be recorded and retained for 14 days for contact tracing, and must be shared with public health officials if requested;
- Physical distancing must be maintained between individuals from different family groups; and,
- Entry must be restricted to only those who do not have COVID-19 symptoms and who are not required to self-isolate for any reason.

As restrictions are eased for those parishes/churches complying with the Vaccine Passport Mandate, the MHCS has assured us that we will be notified in a timely manner to effect those changes in our parishes.

For those who attend regularly, there is a way to simplify the process. With an individual’s consent, Parish Offices may keep a **Record** that an individual’s proof of vaccination was previously verified ie:

Date	Name	Contact Information	Proof of Vaccination	Consent to keep on file	Proof of Identification		

Please note that we cannot keep a copy of an individual’s OVID-19 Vaccination Record QR Code but we may keep a record that the Proof of Vaccination has been verified. Parish Offices must immediately destroy these records once the Proof of Vaccination Program ends, or at the individual’s request.

This is all new to us; there will be a learning curve and there will be glitches. Our patience and the patience of our parishioners will be tested. But we cannot let the pandemic win. Our people need access to the Sacramental life of the Church especially now. Together we can make this work. Thank you.

In Christ,



R. Anthony Daniels
Bishop of Grand Falls

October 15, 2021