



3 pages via e-mail

December 11, 2020

To all clergy, staff and the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

As previously communicated, once again I wish to express my profound gratitude for the heroic work that has taken place following our June re-opening. Since that time, with attendance of more than 1.5 million, we have experienced an extremely small number of positive Covid-19 cases. To our knowledge, none of these cases have been directly traced back to the church as the origin of transmission. This is due, in large part, to the incredible work of clergy, staff and close to 10,000 volunteers, following our strict WorshipSafe protocols.

It is increasingly frustrating for all of us to see certain businesses open while others remain closed and that some, including places of worship, appear to be severely restricted with little evidence to suggest they are a cause of transmission. Earlier this week, I communicated these concerns directly to Premier Ford.

We must endeavour to balance this frustration with the fact that we are still in the midst of a pandemic, 13,000 Canadians have lost their lives to the virus and hospitals in many regions of the archdiocese are approaching or exceeding capacity. Our reverence for the sanctity of every life compels each one of us to follow the restrictions out of love for our neighbour, to reduce the spread of Covid-19 and to help us return to full ministry as soon as possible.

I have said throughout this pandemic and will repeat once again that participation in the Mass and especially the opportunity to receive the Eucharist and other sacraments gives all of us the spiritual strength to not only endure the crisis, but also to reach out to serve, day after day, all of those who are suffering.

In light of restrictions announced by the Province of Ontario earlier today, I must, once again, ask that these be followed as directed in this communication (details enclosed). I recognize the significant spiritual suffering that these restrictions have placed both upon our clergy and the faithful that look to us for guidance and direction. As we have demonstrated our ability to safely worship together, I trust that we will soon be able fully to resume public worship.

Let us redouble our efforts to enter more deeply into prayer, to be mindful of those who are sick and those who have died as we make every effort to reach those who are isolated in creative and profound ways.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto



Recognizing the health and safety measures announced by the Province of Ontario on December 11, 2020 I am directing parishes to implement the following in their respective regions:

Lockdown Regions as designated by the Province of Ontario
Toronto, Peel and York (new)

Note – all measures outlined will continue in Toronto & Peel and must be implemented in York Region by Monday, December 14, 2020.

- Parishes must restrict attendance inside the church to 10 people, including priests hearing confessions or a staff member/volunteer required to monitor capacity restrictions. Due to these measures, public Masses must be temporarily cancelled. Priests are asked to celebrate private Mass daily for the intentions of parishioners and for those suffering from Covid-19.
- Churches, wherever possible and according to the judgement of the pastor, are encouraged to remain open for private prayer and for the faithful to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Weddings, funerals and baptisms (without Mass) are restricted to 10 persons, including those who are involved in ministry (priest, cantor, etc.). First Holy Communions and Confirmations should be postponed at this time.
- Parishioners are encouraged to view online/livestream/televised Masses. A full list is available at www.archtoronto.org and I will continue to celebrate the livestreamed Mass each day from St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica at 7:30 a.m.
- No meetings should take place in parish halls or other church spaces at this time. The only exception would be those deemed as essential services eg. Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Meetings. These meetings should be restricted to 10 people and ensure that all appropriate health and safety measures are in place (use of masks, hand sanitizer, physical distancing, etc.). Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible.
- Parish offices should move to Phase 1 – Parish Offices Closed/Significant Operating Restrictions. Only essential staff in the office. Employees should work remotely wherever possible. Parish offices closed to the public - limited essential appointments only. Staff should take direction from the pastor regarding the local situation on the most prudent approach. In larger parishes, it may be possible to rotate staff.



**Red Zones (Control) as designated by the Province of Ontario
Durham, Simcoe Muskoka (new) & Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (Orangeville) (new)**

Note – all measures outlined will continue in Durham and must be implemented in Simcoe Muskoka and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph (Orangeville) by Monday, December 14, 2020.

- Parishes must restrict attendance at all liturgical celebrations (Mass, Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confirmation, etc.) to 30% capacity. Please continue to ensure strict adherence to sanitization, distancing and other measures as outlined in our protocols.
- No meetings should take place in parish halls or other church spaces at this time. The only exception would be those deemed as essential services eg. Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Meetings. These meetings should be restricted to 10 people and ensure that all appropriate health and safety measures are in place (use of masks, hand sanitizer, physical distancing, etc.). Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible.
- Parish offices should move to Phase 2 – Limited Operations.