

FAQ

Sanitary measures for churches in the Green zone

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

In response to the recent announcements by the Quebec government, the following FAQ addresses the most frequently asked questions.

Q1. Are the rules for signs indicating directions and sanitary measures going to be changed?

NO. All existing measures pertaining to these signs will remain in effect. In addition, the measures of hand-washing, wearing of masks when moving about inside the church and maintaining a distance of 2 m between participants will continue to be practised at all Masses.

Q2. Should we disinfect the pews?

According to the WHO, even though infection through contact with inanimate objects is possible, the risk is low. This means that cleaning inside the church can be performed once at the end of each day that the building is used. In the event that there is more than one service in a day, it would be wise to perform a cleaning, once only, following the last activity. For more information, please visit the web page: <https://www.inspq.qc.ca/en>.

Q3. Are we required to register in advance to attend Sunday Mass?

This depends on the church you attend. To be on the safe side, call the secretariat of your parish to find out.

Q4. How many people may take part in a Mass?

It depends.

* For a Mass and Liturgy of the Word, up to 250 people may be permitted in the building taken as a whole. Physical distancing of two metres must be maintained.

* For weddings and funerals, the maximum allowable number of participants is 250 in the Green zone. This applies to the building as a whole. Physical distancing of two metres must be maintained. Receptions following the Mass are limited to 25 persons if the gathering is held indoors, and 50 persons for a gathering held outdoors.

Q5. Are we required to keep a logbook of the faithful at Sunday Masses?

NO. In Yellow and Green zones, it is not required to keep a logbook of parishioners for the 250 people who attend Mass. The situation is different for weddings and funerals.

Q6. Are we required to keep a logbook of the faithful at weddings and funerals?

YES. Maintaining a logbook is mandatory at celebrations of weddings and funerals. However, the parish may request a guestlist from those about to be married of the names of all guests. The parish may also request that bereaved families keep the book of condolences provided by the funeral home. The wedding guestlist and the book of funeral condolences can be turned over to the public health authorities if need be.

Q7. Can we start giving Communion on the tongue?

NO. This is not yet permitted. On this topic, we will continue to refer to the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops' document

Q8. Is singing permitted during liturgical celebrations?

NO. Choirs are now allowed in places of worship. Choir members must follow guidelines stipulated by CNEST for the performing arts (<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/organisation/documentation/formulaires-publications/guide-covid-19-arts-scene-salles-spectacles>).

They must be considered employees or volunteers of the place of worship. They must maintain a distance of 2 metres separating them from each other and, if they are singing before an audience, the distance must be greater than 2 metres (in theatres, there must be at least 3 metres between the soloists and the first row of the public).

Please note that singing by the congregation is still not permitted.

Q9. With respect to Mass hours, are all churches open according to their usual schedules?

NO. Given the recent changes and adaptations related to the gradual resumption of activities, as well as the context of summer holidays, several parishes have altered their normal procedures. We recommend that you call the presbytery office to get the up-to-date schedule.

Q10. What about the wearing of masks for the faithful? What about the wearing of masks by priests and other ministers?

For every member of the faithful in the congregation (except for children under ten years of age), it is mandatory to wear the procedure mask when moving about in the place of worship. However, you may remove your mask once you are seated in your place and either remaining silent or responding in a low voice.

Priests, cantors and lectors may take off their masks while maintaining a distance of more than two metres from each other and from the congregation in performing their functions.

During the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest must be wearing his mask.

Q11. Are people who have been vaccinated required to comply with the health measures?

YES. In order to maintain the security of our places of worship, persons who have been vaccinated are asked to respect these measures.

Q12. How many people may attend a burial?

In the Green zone, 250 people may attend a burial. The same limit pertains to funerals and weddings. Receptions following the ceremony are limited to 25 persons if the gathering is held indoors, and 50 persons for a gathering held outdoors.

Q13. Is viewing the body or ashes permitted in the church?

YES. In addition, during the viewing of the body or ashes of the deceased, as well as during the expression of sympathy by friends and family, it is permitted to organize a rotation of persons in the church, provided that the number of persons present at any one time never exceeds the stated maximum. A logbook of all those attending must be maintained.

Q14. Are Fabrique or Parish meetings allowed to be held?

YES. Fabrique meetings may be held, provided that there is no audience. It is recommended that a sufficiently large hall be reserved in order to allow proper distancing of two metres between participants. Masks must be worn, but the person can remove it when he or she begins to speak. Parish meetings must be held in 'conference mode.' This means that participants must wear masks and must be seated at a distance of two metres from each other. The maximum number of persons allowed to attend is 250.

Q15. Are Masses allowed to be held outside?

YES. However, guidelines governing places of worship must be obeyed, including allowing a maximum number of 250 persons to attend. If a tent is erected for outdoor Masses, the maximum number of persons allowed to attend is 250, provided that the tent has no walls. In the event that the tent has walls, the maximum allowable is 50 persons in attendance.

Q16. Are meals allowed to be served in Parish halls?

YES. However, service cannot be buffet style. The meal must be served at the table or as individually prepared lunches, with beverage and cutlery included. Guidelines applicable to restaurants must also be obeyed, such as the distance required between tables and the number of persons allowed per table.

Coffee may be offered following Mass, however the coffee, cream, sugar and stir-sticks must not be set up for self-service. If the event is taking place indoors, the maximum number of persons allowed is 25; if outside, the maximum is 50.

Q17. Can bingo games be held? Can the Knights of Columbus have meetings?

YES. Knights of Columbus and other similar groups are allowed to meet again in the Parish hall: the maximum number of persons allowed to attend is 50. Bingo games can be held again. The guidelines to be followed may be found at this web page: <https://www.racj.gouv.qc.ca/section-covid-19/modalites-du-palier-1-vigilance-vert.html#c1428>