

Message from the Diocesan De-confinement Committee following the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops August 3, 2020 press release and the recent Government guidelines

Top 10 questions and answers related to de-confinement

1. What about the increase from 50 to 250 people?

According to the most recent public-health and government guidelines, we can now accommodate up to 250 people (a percentage criterion no longer applies) in our churches, chapels, sanctuaries and oratories, as long as a distance of 1.5 metres between people in the pews can be maintained. To determine the number of places available in your church, please refer to the Appendix in the *Guide for a Successful Implementation of the De-confinement Plan*. It is important to continue to observe the basic preventive measures in place to reduce the risk of contagion, which are the following: physical distancing (1.5 metres between seated persons), disinfection, handwashing and the wearing of masks.

2. Physical distancing in places of worship: when to maintain 2 metres?

According to the most recent public-health and government guidelines, 2 metres should be kept when entering and leaving the church and when moving within the place of worship.

3. In what context can a distance of 1.5 metres be maintained?

Public Health and the government require that a 1.5-metre distance can be maintained between people once they are seated in their seats. There should be limited movement within the church.

4. Is it possible to distribute printed material (prayers, parish bulletins, letters or announcements) in the church?

It is better to project information on a screen or make it available on the website and on social media. Many parishes are already doing so using these means! However, it is possible to distribute *Living with Christ* and parish bulletins, making sure that these materials are placed in their distribution spot 24 hours before the event. When leaving the church, never leave the booklets, bulletins and other items in the pews; parishioners can throw them in a recycle bin (outside the church) or take them home.

5. About masks (face coverings) for all the faithful: what are the current practices recommended by Public Health and the government?

When you arrive at church, wear your mask. Once seated in your place, you can remove it (the decree to this effect will be modified a little later: the measure takes effect immediately). The mask must be put on again for all movement within the parish (i.e. going to Communion). Once again, people are asked to limit their movement within the church.

6. Wearing a mask (face covering) for priests and readers: what is the directive?

According to public-health and government regulations, presiders and readers may remove their masks once they are in their place in the sanctuary. It is mandatory that they put it on when they approach the assembly for the distribution of Communion or for other reasons.

7. Is it allowed to sing in the church?

Yes and no! Explanation: Only one person can provide the singing for the celebration. Congregational singing is strictly forbidden. The person providing liturgical singing must be at a distance of more than 2 metres from all other participants. No masks or visors are required for the singer when he or she is at the spot reserved for singing. The singer should not be positioned between the communion rail and the first set of pews.

8. A CNESST poster is now produced: can it be placed in the church? Why is it allowed in the church?

Yes, the poster that is produced by [CNESST \(Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail\)](#) must be printed and posted outside all churches. It will bear the government signature and colours, and is produced specifically for places of worship. The poster will certify that the site complies with government requirements. The poster will also signify the commitment of the place of worship to respect the government-issued instructions.

9. Can baptisms, confirmations, funerals and weddings be performed in churches? What are the conditions? In addition, can mourners receive condolences in church before the funeral is held?

Yes, but those in charge must ensure that all measures are taken to guarantee the safety of the participants; namely, wearing masks, disinfection of the premises and ensuring physical distancing. If you have taken and will take all the necessary precautions to ensure the safety of such a gathering, why not.

10. Have we received the most recent updates from the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops (AÉCQ) and the government on the de-confinement of our churches?

Yes, a Health Protocol for Masses was published on August 3, 2020. It can be found on the diocesan website. But, the essential content of this protocol can be found in the nine previous questions and answers. The health rules decreed by the government can be found on the [CNESST website](#).