

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 53 - DECEMBER 31, 2021
INFORMATION

To members of pastoral teams,
To priests, deacons, PCLs, LPAs,
To the faithful active in their communities,
To members of religious communities,
To Archdiocesan staff,

Dear brothers and sisters,

The recent exponential spread of the COVID virus requires the implementation of drastic measures that affect our entire society. These measures affect the life and activities of our faith communities, especially our places of worship.

Therefore, **until further notice**, here are the instructions that come into effect **today at 5:00 pm**. Additional information will be communicated to you as soon as it becomes available.

1. Our liturgical gathering places must be **closed**, not only for liturgical celebrations and other prayer times, but also for individual visits.
2. The only exception to this rule is for **funerals**, which may be held in churches, **without the need for a vaccination passport**, with a **maximum number of 25 participants** (excluding liturgical actors, whose number must be limited to the essential).
3. Funerals or **other religious ceremonies may be held outdoors (e.g., mass)**, without the need for a vaccination passport, with a maximum of 250 people. At all times, it is necessary to respect the **physical distance of one meter** between participants. In addition, **a mask is still required**, except for eating and drinking.
4. Where possible, pastoral teams are encouraged to **broadcast or livestream** Eucharistic celebrations on social networks (Zoom, YouTube, etc.). In these situations, a **maximum of 4 or 5 people, those required for the broadcasting**, are authorized to be present: the presiding priest, a reader, one or two musical contributors (e.g., cantor, organist), the person providing technological support. Please make sure to **respect at all times the sanitary rules in force** (e.g.: distance between the speakers).
5. Wherever possible, **communion may be distributed to the faithful** who have participated in an "online" Mass, by setting up a short time after the celebration for prayer with them, **outside the church**.
6. **Sacrament of Reconciliation**: due to the directives that limit the meetings to members of the same family bubble, and since the sacrament must be celebrated in the presence of the penitent, it is not possible to administer this sacrament at present.
7. **Sacrament of the Sick**: the celebration of this sacrament is only possible for a person at the end of life.

However, the **services of assistance to the population** (ex.: food banks; support groups, such as "AA") located in the same building as the place of worship itself **can remain open**.

For the time being, **meetings and social gatherings** cannot take place.

In these particularly trying times, we encourage pastoral teams and members of local communities to promote the "**ministry of connection**" through listening and mutual support: a phone call; an email or other message; where possible, according to the rules in force, a brief visit to the isolated or sick, to bring them communion, etc.

Dear brothers and sisters, this return to curfew and the closing of places of worship may be perceived by some of us as a step backwards. I encourage us to see in it rather the call of the Holy Spirit to take steps "forward", in attending to the spiritual, psychological and material needs of our neighbor. May the Lord bless all our initiatives in this direction!

In Him,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+Alain Faubert". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

† Alain Faubert, VG
Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal