

**COMMUNIQUÉ No. 36 – April 8, 2021**

**INFORMATION**

**To pastors, pastoral teams and religious communities**

Brothers and Sisters, on April 6, Quebec Premier François Legault announced stricter health guidelines for red and orange zones in response to the rapid evolution of variants in Quebec.

This news is naturally a disappointing setback for us. At the same time, we recognize the gravity of the situation and understand that, for the coming weeks, we are all called upon to work together in solidarity.

As the Archbishop has done, I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to all the pastoral teams and volunteers, as well as to the participants in the Easter Masses that were held in our churches. Given the circumstances, we can be proud that we were able to celebrate the Risen Christ joyfully and in safety.

I encourage you to keep offering Masses and services for the benefit of the members of your Christian communities in spite of the new constraints that are being imposed.

The following guidelines come into effect as of today, April 8, 2021:

**1. Masses (weekdays and Sundays), Baptisms, First Reconciliations, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings and Funerals**

a) **The limit of 25 participants** (not including liturgical servers and volunteers) applies to both Sunday and weekday Masses.

b) **The limit of 25 participants** also applies to the following celebrations: Baptisms, First Reconciliations, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings and Funerals.

c) **The limit of 25 participants** applies to the entire building and does not refer to individual rooms, regardless whether they have separate access.

d) **The limit of 25 participants** also applies when people come to worship outside the hours set aside for Masses.

**e) Current rules:**

- ❖ Please remind your parishioners of the importance of respecting all the sanitation rules in compliance with the public-health protocol and other resource information available on the diocese website under the thumbnail COVID-19: <https://diocesemontreal.org/en/parish-resources/pastoral-personnel>

- ❖ In order to keep our places of worship safe, procedure masks<sup>1</sup> must be worn at all times inside the church, and we must wash or disinfect our hands and maintain two metres' distance from others at all times.
- ❖ All singing may be performed by the cantor (not by a choir), with no response from the congregation.
- ❖ Encourage people who think they have symptoms to stay home and have themselves tested.
- ❖ Remind people that socializing (gatherings, extended conversations in small groups) remains a high-risk activity for the transmission of the virus and should be avoided.
- ❖ It is **mandatory to keep a register for each celebration**; Masses, Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, First Reconciliations, First Communions, and Confirmations.

e) **Streaming Masses online:**

We ask that you continue to offer Masses in our places of worship (in compliance with the rules set out above), but we also encourage you to continue to stream Masses online, where possible.

**2. Make your voice heard**

We know that spiritual needs are vital for human beings. Among these, the opportunity to pray together is paramount.

We have proven that we can hold safe gatherings in our churches.

These arguments need to be advanced in the public arena. Do not hesitate to contact your MP, and invite your parishioners to do so as well, so that our voices can be heard.

Contact your MNA via this link: <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/deputes/index.html>

In Jesus the Risen Saviour,



+ Alain Faubert, VG

Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal

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<sup>1</sup> The procedure mask is a three-ply mask (most often light blue, but also available in other colours) for single use only, as opposed to non-medical mask or face covering which is made of fabric and is washable.