

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 24 — December 17, 2020
INFORMATION
To Pastors, Pastoral Teams and Religious Communities

Dear Brothers and Sisters, we begin to see the great light of Christmas breaking... and a smaller light at the end of the pandemic tunnel. The following guidelines, reminders and indications will help us 'make it through':

1. A sign of solidarity: Christmas bells

Our Archbishop encourages the parishes and chapels in the Diocese, where possible, to ring the bells in their places of worship on December 24th at 6:00 p.m., to signal the joy of Christmas reaching out to all our fellow citizens.

2. Directives for the Advent – Christmas Season

a) In accordance with a decree received yesterday from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, **priests may celebrate as many as four Eucharistic celebrations** on the *Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord, the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, and the Solemnity of the Epiphany* in this time of pandemic.

b) Reminder concerning essential guidelines

- According to our understanding, the announcement by the Government maintains the guidelines already in effect for our liturgical celebrations in the red zone. The guidelines will remain in effect until further notice, stipulating **a maximum of 25 participants in the congregation** (each family member counting as one participant), not including those leading the liturgical celebration.
- Regarding those **leading the liturgical celebration**: please limit as far as possible the number of those involved. For instance, allow one family but not two into the sanctuary in order to perform the reading and altar service.
- With respect **to singing**, a small choir may be assembled, as long as distancing of 2 metres is observed separating singers from each other and from the congregation. Masks must be worn by the singers, and singing by the congregation is strictly prohibited.
- For the safety of all, we are advised **to avoid any gathering in groups** or engaging in conversations inside the church following celebrations.

Further to the above, please consult the essential guidelines concerning de-confinement which appear on the diocesan Covid-19-dedicated web page at: <https://diocesemontreal.org/en/parish-resources/pastoral-personnel>.

c) Liturgical gatherings in residences of consecrated life

All liturgical gatherings and even the distribution of communion in religious residences where an outbreak has been identified are to be avoided until the lifting of restrictions is issued by local authorities in concert with public health bodies.

d) Sacraments for the sick in seniors' residences and CHSLDs

To the extent that local authorities allow, a priest whose health is not deemed to be 'at risk' may make himself available to celebrate the sacrament of the anointing of the sick. He must in these circumstances ensure that the guidelines for this celebration are followed: simplified ceremony, using cotton wool for the anointing.

e) Confirmations

The extraordinary faculties with respect to Confirmation of children and adults given to priests until December 13, 2020, have not been renewed for the time being. If a necessity arises, kindly contact the Chancery in order to obtain an *ad hoc* authorization: chancellerie@diocesemontreal.org.

f) Parish offices

The governmental guidelines respecting compulsory remote working for 'office employees' from December 17 does not directly affect parish reception services, according to our understanding. However, ensure that remote working is encouraged and that office meetings are by appointment only.

3. Reminder about creative ideas for Advent and Christmas

a) A reminder that creative ideas for celebrating and other activities intended for those living alone or with their families is posted on the Diocese website: <https://diocesemontreal.org/en/parish-resources/pastoral-personnel>. If you have more ideas to suggest, do not hesitate to forward them to me at: vg@diocesemontreal.org, so that we can add them to the list.

b) To announce your respective Masses over the Christmas and New year's eve holidays, parishes are invited to update their information page on the Montreal diocesan website, specifying especially the times for Masses to be broadcast online, as well as hours when churches will be open in order to welcome personal visits to their Nativity scenes. For any questions on how to proceed, please contact Laurie Siguidé at: lsiguide@diocesemontreal.org.

4. Microsite

The microsite dedicated to *Waiting in Joyful Hope* and *Welcoming our Joy and our Hope* features many ideas for celebrating the Advent and Christmas Seasons. Make sure you share the link with friends and family: <https://microsites.diocesemontreal.org/microsites/avent-noel/>

5. Reminder: Epiphany Greetings – January 8, 2021

This year, the traditional exchange of greetings with our Archbishop will be held on Friday, January 8, 2021, from 7:30 to 9:00 p.m. The Zoom link for participating in this festive event of brotherly fellowship will be sent out shortly. Pastors, pastoral teams and those working closely with them, and members in consecrated life are all welcome.

6. Bishop Ignace Bourget Diocesan Medal of Merit

In the current situation, Archbishop Lépine considers it best to postpone the presentation of the Bishop Ignace Bourget Diocesan Medal of Merit until the patronal feast day, May 31, 2021, at which time the recipients will be honoured, in person we hope.

7. Various

a) Weekly meetings of local de-confinement committees

The Zoom meetings held weekly on Tuesdays from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. for local de-confinement committees are temporarily suspended. They will resume in January, 2021.

b) Offices at 2000 closed

The services of the Archdiocese will be closed from December 24, 2020 to January 4, 2021, inclusive. However, telephone service will be maintained throughout this period. In the event of an emergency, please call: (514) 931-7311.

c) Missionary event (in french)

Our missionary movement is living up to its name: Saint-Bonaventure parish is holding a [forum](#) under the theme “Parishes on a mission” on May 29, 2021. This event will be open to pastoral teams throughout Quebec. For further information, please email: new.pasto.rosemont@gmail.com

d) A revised translation of The Order of Baptism for Children approved for Canadian Dioceses and edited by the CCCB will be available towards mid-February, 2021. Pre-orders are now being processed by written request through Liturgy Services of the Diocese of Montreal addressed to: LD_ServiceDePastoraleLiturgique@diocesemontreal.org. Please specify:

- Quantity
- Name of person requesting
- Name of Parish
- Parish mailing address
- Phone number

This book can be used as reference upon reception and its usage will be mandatory as of April 4, 2021. It retails for \$43 with a 20% discount granted to the Diocese before shipping charges.

As we enter the Novena of Christmas 2020, I wish you may find in the contemplation of the Child of Bethlehem the deep Joy and Peace which can come only from the Saviour of the world.

Merry Christmas and a happy and holy New Year!



+ Alain Faubert, VG
Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal