

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 25 – January 7, 2021
INFORMATION

To pastors, parish pastoral teams and religious communities

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

The Government of Quebec, in accordance with Public Health officials, has just announced that from January 9 to February 8, 2021, the province will be returning to stricter conditions of confinement.

Even though our places of worship are not the focus of any outbreaks, we stand in solidarity with the spirit of this appeal to help overcome this ever-expanding pandemic which threatens in particular our most vulnerable.

Through our participation in the Interreligious Roundtable and the secretariat of the Assembly of Quebec Catholic Bishops, we are in constant dialogue with the Government and Public Health, as we speak to the importance of the spiritual needs of the people.

For our part, let us continue as before making every effort to keep up communication, especially with those who are alone and cut off. The methods we use may vary: by telephone, regular mail, email, virtual conversations, etc. However you may choose to do this in your specific setting, it would be advisable to call on a large number of volunteers to establish “chains of solidarity.”

Here, then, are the measures to be taken through the coming weeks, **beginning at midnight Friday night the 8th to Saturday the 9th, January 2021:**

- 1. Funerals** may be held in places of worship and attended by a maximum of 25 persons who are family members or friends. The maximum of 25 persons does not include participants in the liturgy.
 - Currently under discussion is the possibility for a further 25 attendees to follow the service online in an adjacent room which has separate street access.
 - Attendees must be reminded to wear masks throughout the entire service.
- 2. Masses:**
 - Gatherings for the celebration of Mass, including those scheduled for this Saturday, January 9, are suspended in all places of worship.
 - On line Masses are permitted exclusively. The least number practicable of liturgical participants and technical personnel may be present during the video recording.
 - Since gatherings out of doors are prohibited, it is not possible to offer outdoor Masses.
 - For religious residences, I encourage members of consecrated life to keep abreast of directives and information provided by the Canadian Religious Conference (CRC) and by the *L'Association des trésorières et des trésoriers des instituts religieux* (ATTIR).
 - Archbishop Lépine reinstated exemption from the Sunday obligation, which will remain in effect during the pandemic until further notice.

3. Except in the case of spiritual care administered to a dying person, **the distribution of Communion and the sacrament of forgiveness** are temporarily suspended in contribution to the extra effort that is being requested of us.
4. **Weddings, baptisms and Confirmations** must be postponed.
5. **Anointing of the sick:** anointing is permissible only in the case of a person in imminent danger of dying. Priests who are available may be present at the bedside of the dying at the request of the family in environments where access is permitted.
6. **Catechism:** no in-person gatherings or meetings for the purpose of carrying on activities of Christian initiation may be held during the coming weeks. We encourage conducting such activities online or within the family.
7. **Community organizations** that occupy premises in the parishes will be permitted to keep providing their services while strictly observing the rules concerning distancing, wearing masks and washing hands.
8. **Parish offices** must remain closed. Office reception may be permitted by appointment and only with respect to funerals and burials. For other Fabrique employees, Government provisions must be followed which stipulate that only those employees whose presence is deemed by the employer to be essential to continued operations may work in person.
9. **Fabrique meetings** must be postponed until after the confinement period. In emergencies, it is to be preferred that wardens meet by teleconference or videoconference, and that they deal only with the emergency issue.
10. **The next meeting of the Diocesan Deconfinement Committee** will be held Tuesday, January 12, from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. The usual Zoom link will be used.

I thank you for your much appreciated cooperation. With the vaccination campaign under way, we can detect a little light at the end of the tunnel. May the true Light, Christ in his Epiphany, guide us through this time of trial.

In Him,



+ Alain Faubert, VG
Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal