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Archdiocese  
of Toronto



To the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

Before providing an update on the latest measures implemented by the Province of Ontario regarding churches in the Archdiocese of Toronto, I wish to express my gratitude and admiration for the heroic work that has taken place following our June re-opening.

I am deeply disappointed that, in some regions of the archdiocese, we must now further restrict participation in the sacraments. This will inflict a great spiritual pain upon those who safely and with great dedication have been drawing spiritual strength to sustain them, and to help them to serve those

suffering in this pandemic. As we have demonstrated our ability to safely worship together, I pray that we will soon be able fully to resume public worship.

Since June, Catholics have safely attended Mass in parishes throughout our archdiocese. Even with the required restrictions our total attendance at Sunday Masses has been 1.3 million. We established safe and welcoming environments, ensured proper distancing, required the use of masks, and sanitized churches after every service. Clergy and parishioners have reached out with creativity and love to care not only for the sick and bereaved, but also for the needs of those suffering in other ways, who are isolated, who are facing psychological and spiritual trauma.

We also must recognize the gravity of the situation that is now before us. The number of positive cases of Covid-19 continues to rise at an alarming rate in many areas of our own archdiocese and in other regions of the province and country. We are still in the midst of a pandemic, which has already taken the lives of more than 11,000 Canadians.

We can all be grateful to those who have been dedicated to fighting the virus – first responders and front line workers along with those working selflessly in our long-term care homes among others. In my conversations with political leaders and medical officers of health, I continue to assure them of our ongoing prayers as they make difficult decisions to protect all of us.

The recently announced restrictions will affect different regions within in the archdiocese in different ways. Below, you'll find information about your region.

Now is the time to go ever deeper in prayer, and with continued love and creative zeal, build up our community of faith and reach out even more to those who are suffering in these difficult days.

Sincerely in Christ,

*† Thomas Card. Collins*

Thomas Cardinal Collins

Archbishop of Toronto

The following restrictions are in place, **as of November 23\***. Note that the various classifications, noted in brackets, correspond to the Province of Ontario's pandemic classification system.

### **Toronto & Peel Region (Lockdown – Emergency Restrictions)**

- Parishes must restrict attendance inside the church to 10 people, including priests hearing confessions or a staff member/volunteer required to monitor capacity restrictions. Due to these measures, public Masses must be temporarily cancelled. Priests are asked to celebrate private Mass daily for the intentions of parishioners and for those suffering from Covid-19.
- Churches, wherever possible and according to the judgement of the pastor, may remain open for private prayer and for the faithful to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. No public celebration of the Mass is permitted at this time. This includes Mass for weddings, funerals and baptisms, which are restricted to 10 persons, including those who are involved in ministry (priest, cantor, etc.). First Holy Communions and Confirmations should be postponed at this time.
- Parishioners are encouraged to view online/livestream/televised Masses. A full list is available at [www.archtoronto.org](http://www.archtoronto.org). Cardinal Collins will continue to celebrate the livestreamed Mass each day from St. Michael's Cathedral Basilica at 7:30 a.m.
- No meetings should take place in parish halls or other church spaces at this time. The only exception would be those deemed as essential services e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Meetings. These meetings should be restricted to 10 people and follow appropriate health and safety measures. Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible.
- Parish Offices Closed/Significant Operating Restrictions. Employees are working remotely wherever possible. Parish offices are closed to the public - limited essential appointments only.

### **York & Durham Regions (Red Zone – Control Restrictions)**

- Parishes must restrict attendance at all liturgical celebrations (Mass, Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confirmation, etc.) to 30% capacity.
- No meetings should take place in parish halls or other church spaces at this time. The only exception would be those deemed as essential

services e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Meetings. These meetings should be restricted to 10 people and ensure that all appropriate health and safety measures are in place (use of masks, hand sanitizer, physical distancing, etc.). Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible.

- Parish offices will have limited operations.

### **Simcoe Muskoka & Orangeville (Orange Zone – Restrict Measures)**

- Parishes must restrict attendance at all liturgical celebrations to 30% capacity.
- Indoor meetings restricted to 50 people maximum.

### **\* Staying Up-to-Date**

The restrictions in each region are subject to change. To stay up-to-date on how the restrictions affect parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto, please visit the [Covid19](#) page of the archdiocese's website.

