



## **New Faith Gathering Restrictions**

November 16, 2020

Dear Clergy and Faithful,

Governor Brown and state health officials have announced additional statewide restrictions to reduce the transmission of COVID-19. This two-week “freeze” begins Wednesday, Nov. 18 and applies to all faith communities in all counties in all phases. Multnomah County will be on a four-week “freeze.”

- Statewide: Faith gatherings must not exceed 25 people indoors or 50 people outdoors. Physical distancing of 6 feet and wearing of face coverings are still mandated. These directives apply to all faith gatherings, regardless of where the gathering is being held, including in-home faith gatherings.
- Multiple faith gatherings (use of satellite locations on the same campus) are still permitted if there are:
  - Separate entrances and exits
  - No shared facilities such as bathrooms
  - No shared spaces such as hallways & foyers
  - Separate enclosed spaces

These new restrictions go into effect this Wednesday, November 18. The order is in place until December 2; however, it may be extended in "hotspot" counties. You can read the full order [here](#).

Because of the spike in cases, Archbishop Sample will remain observant of the Governor’s new restrictions. Nevertheless, he is disappointed and frustrated with the requirements, especially because spread of the disease has not been happening in Catholic churches. We are continuing to press the Governor’s Office about her rationale for further limiting faith gatherings, and we are advocating for expansion of gathering sizes to a percentage of capacity unless and until there is clear evidence the disease is being spread at concerning levels through faith gatherings where congregants are adhering to the protocols.



In the meantime, and until further notice, all parishes must remain strictly observant of the directives in place:

- Maximum of 25 people indoors for all faith gatherings (50 outdoors)
- Masks are strictly required throughout all faith gatherings (in accord with our current, diocesan protocols and legal requirements)
- Physical distancing must be strictly maintained (also in accord with our current protocols and legal requirements)

Parishes need not cancel any planned faith gatherings or activities so long as they meet the new restrictions.

If you have any questions about the new restrictions, please let me know. Thank you in advance for your good work and cooperation in implementing the new restrictions as we continue to navigate this pandemic. With a new vaccine in production, it looks like the good Lord has heard our prayers, and we may begin to see some relief in 2021.

Sincerely in Christ,

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