Archdiocese
of Toronto

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MEMORANDUM

2 pages via e-mail

To: **All Priests, All Parishes, All Chancery & Satellite Offices**
From: **Cardinal Collins**
Date: **November 17, 2020**
Re: **ACTION REQUIRED – Important Updates for Red Zone Parishes – York Toronto and Peel Regions**

Thank you for all that you continue to do during these challenging days. As you are aware, at this time, the City of Toronto, Region of Peel and York Region are now in the Province of Ontario's "Control" stage (Red Zone). Over the past week, I have been in regular dialogue with local officials in these areas to convey the effective measures that parishes have been implementing through the WorshipSafe protocol and to better understand the challenges faced by local municipalities in trying to reduce the rapid spread of Covid-19.

While we know that our 30% capacity restrictions as well as our extensive health and safety protocols have been extremely effective, we must also seriously consider the direction of local medical officers asking that places of worship further restrict attendance at liturgical services.

At this time I am directing parishes in York, Toronto and Peel Regions to implement the following measures:

- **By Tuesday, November 24, 2020**, parishes must restrict attendance at all liturgical celebrations (Mass, Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, First Holy Communions, Confirmation, etc.) to 50 worshipers in the entire building, excluding those who are involved in ministry (priest, cantor, ushers, etc.). Please continue to ensure strict adherence to sanitization, distancing and other measures as outlined in our protocols. Parish halls <u>may not</u> be used to accommodate additional parishioners at the same time as a Mass in the church.

Previously announced and already in place in red zones:

- <u>No meetings should take place in parish halls or other church spaces at this time</u>. The only exception would be those deemed as essential services ie. 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 should move to Phase 2 – Limited Operations.

Other points for consideration:

- I grant permission, where practical, for parishes to schedule additional Masses. Please consult with the Regional Bishop if you are planning to do so. Homilies limited to an appropriate length may help in this regard.

- Parishes should consider creative solutions to help minimize cleaning requirements. Reduced capacity may allow some parishes to use a section/s of the church for one Mass and another for the next celebration, limiting the need to sanitize the entire church between services. Parishes could also consider a Mass in the church followed by a Mass in the hall to increase the number of scheduled services.

- Parishes may wish to extend hours that the church is open for prayer recognizing the capacity restrictions for liturgical celebrations.

- Those parishes wishing to learn more about the EventBrite reservation tool can contact Dora Batres de Mejia at dora@archtoronto.org or view past webinars on EventBrite that can be accessed at: https://www.gotostage.com/channel/67bd58c2d97244c0a7a3bb055f91967b

- For parishes in Durham and Orangeville (Orange Zone) as well as Simcoe (Yellow Zone) - no additional changes at this time are necessary and they can continue with the current 30% capacity limits and other measures as previously directed (see November 13 communication).

I recognize this is an extremely challenging and difficult situation for clergy, pastoral teams and parishioners. We must also be mindful of our primary concern – our love of neighbour and our collective need to reduce the potential transmission of Covid-19 during this period of pandemic.

We will continue to keep you updated with any other relevant information. Thank you once again for your incredible work.