

Subscribe

Past Issues

Translate ▼

[View this email in your browser](#)



Archdiocese
of Toronto

Open Ontario to Worship

Email your MPP and the Premier Today!

FIRST NAME

LAST NAME

EMAIL

POSTAL CODE

BY SIGNING UP, I AGREE TO A PLACE TO WORSHIP'S [PRIVACY POLICY](#) AND I CONSENT TO SHARING MY NAME AND EMAIL ADDRESS WITH A PLACE TO WORSHIP SO THAT I CAN RECEIVE UPDATES ON THE CAMPAIGN.

[Email your MPP and Premier Ford](#)

LET'S REOPEN HOUSES OF WORSHIP, SAFELY

Throughout the pandemic, most places of worship have adhered to government direction on COVID restrictions, limiting gathering sizes.

As the province begins to reopen, we are calling on the Ford government to take a **fair and equitable approach to the return to worship.**

March 5, 2021

My dear friends,

A few days ago, a movie scout contacted one of our churches to inquire whether the basement hall could be used to feed a crew of 50 people. “We

have dispensation from the province and strict protocols will be enforced.” Later in the week, the priest presided at a funeral in the same church, limited to 10 people inside (including himself).

Which of these do we consider more essential?

I have been providing updates to you throughout this period of pandemic. We have also been working closely with the Government of Ontario to ensure that restrictions are respected as we collectively fight a virus that has, thus far, taken the lives of more than 22,000 Canadians.

I do not believe that our elected officials and medical officers of health consciously intend to suppress religious freedom; I realize that they are in an extremely difficult position. We do, however, ask to be treated equitably. In recent days, it is becoming more difficult to believe that is happening.

It is now appropriate for us to respectfully amplify our concerns. [I am asking you to take two minutes to write to your Member of Provincial Parliament \(MPP\). A copy of your letter will also be shared with Premier Ford.](#)

The province has relaxed restrictions in Grey (Lockdown) regions, with retailers permitted to operate at 25 per cent capacity. Yet places of worship, regardless of whether they seat 100 or 1,000 people, must remain at a hard cap of 10 people. Next week, a funeral at St. Michael’s Cathedral (capacity 1,500) will be capped at 10 people, while around the corner dozens can enter the local liquor store and thousands will visit the Eaton Centre. This makes no sense.

I encourage all of you, whether you are in the Grey Zone (Toronto and Peel Regions as of March 8) or an area where churches can open at greater, but still greatly limited capacity, to respectfully request that any restrictions for places of worship use a percentage of capacity as opposed to an arbitrary number. This is an interfaith initiative with participation from many faith communities.

We are still in the midst of fighting a pandemic and we must be prudent in our actions. Our strict WorshipSafe protocols in our churches have proven to be

effective. It's time to address the growing inequities facing our faith communities. I hope you will [take a moment to share your concerns](#) with your MPP. I am grateful for your patience and perseverance during these most challenging days.

May God continue to bless you now and always.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins

Archbishop of Toronto



Copyright © 2021 | Archdiocese of Toronto, All rights reserved.