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Archdiocese
of Toronto



April 16, 2021

To the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

Late this afternoon, the provincial government announced further restrictions to minimize the transmission of COVID-19, given the alarming increase in new cases over the past 10 days. The new measures have a direct impact on places of worship as part of an extended stay-at-home order, which will be in place until at least May 20, 2021.

As you are likely aware, the number of new cases, especially in Toronto, Peel and York, has increased dramatically. While I firmly believe we offer an essential service and have demonstrated our ability to welcome the faithful safely given our stringent WorshipSafe measures, we must also recognize the serious nature of the current situation and respond out of love for our neighbour.

Restrictions for All Parishes in the Archdiocese of Toronto as of Monday, April 19, 2021

- 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, are encouraged to remain open for private prayer and for the faithful to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Parishes may also proceed with Holy Communion services on Saturday afternoon/evening or Sunday as in the past, if desired. Weddings, funerals and baptisms are restricted to 10 persons, including those who are involved in ministry (priest, cantor, etc.). First Holy Communion, First Reconciliation and Confirmations should be postponed at this time. Please consult with your local parish as they develop their own plans in the coming days.
- Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible. Parish offices will be operating with essential staff only – many will have extremely limited operating hours or conducting administrative business remotely. Once again, please consult with your local parish.
- Given the alarming increase in new cases in recent days, people who are elderly, those with compromised immune systems or other health conditions are strongly encouraged to remain home. Livestreaming of services will continue where this practice is underway and the dispensation from the Sunday Eucharist remains. A full list of livestream services [can be accessed here](#).

I very much recognize the significant stress and anxiety that many people are feeling given the current situation and the frustration and spiritual pain inflicted by these restrictions over the past year. Be assured of my prayers as we face these challenging days. Please continue to pray for all those who are sick and those caring for them.

Saint Michael the Archangel, pray for us.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto

