



## Summary of COVID-19-Related Restrictions in the Archdiocese

Updated November 23, 2021

### Dispensation from Sunday Mass

Archbishop Gagnon has granted a general dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass to all the faithful through February 28, 2022. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated November 23, 2021.

### All Faith Gatherings, Including Mass

Effective Saturday, October 5, 2021, faith-based gatherings, including Mass, are permitted for up to 33% of a church's capacity or twenty-five (25) people, whichever is greater. For outdoor faith-based gatherings, the maximum is fifty (50) people. The presider, one (1) cantor, one (1) accompanist, one (1) lector, and the live-streaming team, do not count toward the restrictions. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated October 5, 2021.

These restrictions apply to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg excluding those in the Southern Health region of Manitoba.

#### Parishes in the Southern Health Region

On Friday, November 12, 2021, our provincial government announced tighter restrictions for faith gatherings in the Southern Health Region of Manitoba, affecting the following parishes:

- Assumption of Our Lady Church (Alonsa)
- Good Shepherd Church (Portage la Prairie)
- Our Lady of Angels Church (Amaranth)
- Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (Sandy Bay)
- St-Ambroise Church (St-Ambroise)

For these parishes, effective Saturday, November 13, 2021, faith-based gatherings, including Mass, are restricted to twenty-five (25) people. The presider, one (1) cantor, one (1) accompanist, one (1) lector, and the live-streaming team, do not count toward the restrictions.

The above limit may be increased to 25% of the capacity of the space, to a maximum of two hundred and fifty (250) people, by implementing a cohort system. Fully separated parts of the church building (e.g., worship space and parish hall) may be used for distinct groupings of twenty-five (25) people, provided each grouping has its own entrance and exit and there is no interaction between groupings during the gathering. Obviously, a given church's architecture would dictate whether this option is a possibility for the parish.

## Weddings, Funerals, and Baptisms

The Celebrations of Weddings, Funerals, and Baptisms are allowed up to a maximum of twenty-five (25) attendees or 25% of the capacity of the building, whichever is lower. The presider, one (1) cantor, one (1) accompanist, one (1) lector, and the live-streaming team, do not count toward the restrictions. In addition, in the case of weddings, one (1) photographer or videographer does not count toward the restrictions; and in the case of funerals, the funeral home staff do not count toward the restrictions.

### Additional Provisions

The above restrictions on the sacramental life of the faithful may prove burdensome. For **weddings, funerals and baptisms**, the Church wishes to *accompany* such families during these key and important moments in their lives. We, therefore, also provide for the following:

If a family requests to *extend* a wedding, funeral or baptism to a number that exceeds the regular participation limitations, up to the capacity of the space, by restricting attendance only to those *fully vaccinated*, this may be arranged in consultation with the parish pastoral leadership. In these cases, the family must take responsibility to manage the implementation of the most recent public health orders pertaining to verification of proof of vaccination. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated November 5, 2021.

These restrictions apply to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

## Use of Masks

The use of masks is required for all indoor gatherings. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated September 2, 2021.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

## Physical Distancing

Physical distancing remains a requirement for all faith gatherings, including Mass, with exceptions for those who reside at the same private residence. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated August 6, 2021.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

## Congregational Singing and Use of Hymnals

Congregational singing and the use of hymnals are permissible in parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg. All parishioners are required to wear facemasks while singing, and also be physically distanced from other people who do not belong to their household. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated October 28, 2021.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Communion Outside of Mass**

The celebration of the Eucharist is the centre of our life as Catholics. It is prudent, in this extraordinary time, to give permission to temporarily allow for the reception of Holy Communion outside of the celebration of Mass. Permission is therefore given for parishes to provide for the reception of Holy Communion, according to local needs, outside of Mass, during weekdays only, provided that it is done within the Word of God and prayer. A reference should be made that this practice, normally used in nursing homes and for shut-ins, is extraordinary due to the COVID- 19 pandemic. In other words, a reference should be made regarding the intimate and essential connection between the reception of Holy Communion and the celebration of the Eucharist. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Confirmation**

The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation will be determined by each parish according to the provincial guidelines relative to the number of persons allowed at any one celebration. Once the date is determined, pastors/administrators must request the faculty to celebrate Confirmation from the Archbishop's Office. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **First Communion**

The celebration of First Communion will be determined by each parish according to the provincial guidelines relative to the number of persons allowed at any one celebration. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Baptisms**

The celebration of Baptism should be held outside of the Eucharistic celebration so as to ensure minimal gatherings and social distancing. There should be only one baby to be baptized at each baptismal celebration. Due to the close proximity with the child, a face covering (mask) should be worn by the celebrant. Baptism by immersion is not allowed at this time. Hand sanitizing stations for the assembly must be provided. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Reconciliation**

For the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation two practices need to be considered: a) confessionals: the use of confessionals must ensure that physical distancing is maintained between the kneeling penitent and the confessor. The wearing of a face covering (mask) by the confessor is required. Kneelers and surfaces must be sanitized after each penitent; b) face to face confessions: the practice of face to face confessions must ensure

physical/social distancing is maintained. The wearing of a face covering (mask) by the confessor is required. Any surfaces, including door handles and chair arms, that may have been touched, must be sanitized. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Anointing of the Sick**

Communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick are not to be held during this time. Individual anointing must ensure physical/social distancing. The presider must wear a face covering (mask) and use a cotton or Q-Tip type swab to apply the sacred oil. Priests who are asked to anoint in hospital settings must abide by the hospital guidelines. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Visits at Healthcare Facilities**

Please be advised that with the loosening of COVID-19 restrictions, faith/spiritual leaders are now permitted to minister to hospital patients or residents of long-term care facilities. At this time, a minister can only visit with one patient/resident and is not permitted to go to more than one room. The minister is obliged to abide by facility protocols: screening, hand hygiene, PPE, physical distancing, etc. Distribution of Holy Communion is also a possibility if arranged with the facility. For more information, please visit the Shared Health Manitoba website: [sharedhealthmb.ca](http://sharedhealthmb.ca). For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated July 29, 2021.

These restrictions apply to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Sanitizing Worship Spaces**

The worship space and all public spaces must be thoroughly cleaned after use. A sanitizing disinfectant must be applied throughout all spaces and all surfaces wiped down after each use. Liquid hand sanitizing stations must be made available at the entrance to church buildings. It is advisable to have multiple stations to accommodate ministers and parishioners in an efficient manner so as to prevent crowding. All ministers and parishioners must be asked to sanitize their hands upon arrival at the church building. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Collection Procedures**

Collection baskets must not be passed through the assembly person to person. Collection baskets with long handles may be used, in which case only the usher passes the collection basket. If long handled collection baskets are not available, then the collection should be placed into free standing baskets as the assembly gathers for worship. The collection should not be processed to the altar but stored immediately in a place of safe keeping. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Offertory Procession**

The offertory procession is to be eliminated at this time. The gifts of bread and wine should be placed on a credence table in the sanctuary prior to the Liturgy. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Bread and Wine on the Altar**

It is important that the bread and wine placed on the altar for consecration be covered, by a pall or other covering, so as to ensure no contamination. The hosts to be consecrated for the faithful should be placed in a ciborium on a corporal towards the side of the altar. The presider should ensure not to speak over the elements or into the elements in such a way as to project possible contamination. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Communion Procession**

New patterns will need to be developed. Physical/social distancing must be maintained during the Communion procession. It is recommended that the assembly approaches the Communion Minister one row at a time. Markings on the floor will assist in establishing proper places to stand as well as help traffic flow. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Communion Distribution**

Communion from the cup is to be discontinued during this time. Those distributing communion should sanitize their hands thoroughly in a discreet location immediately after they have received Communion and before accepting a ciborium for distribution. Communion is to be distributed only on the hand of each communicant with great care not to make physical contact. Face coverings (masks) must be worn by those distributing Communion. These face coverings (masks) must be affixed and secured before sanitizing hands. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Exiting the Worship Space**

A plan for exiting the worship space is to be established to ensure physical/social distancing. Ensuring that aisles and pathways flow in only one direction may help to prevent congestion. Markings on the floor and/or clear signs will assist in this process. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Holy Water Fonts**

Holy Water Fonts are to be drained and kept clean. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated May 21, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Outdoor Gatherings While in a Vehicle**

Gatherings while in a motor vehicle (drive-in celebrations) are permitted without limitation. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated April 8, 2021.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **The Sacrament of Reconciliation and Counselling**

Provincial Government restrictions include provision for health care and social services for churches.

“16(5) This Order does not prevent the premises of a church, mosque, synagogue, temple or other place of worship from being used by a public or private school or for the delivery of health care, child care or social services.” – Public Health Orders, September 12, 2020

This means that appointments for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, as well as counselling, can be made available to parishioners. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated December 11, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Attendance at Catholic Centre and Parish Offices**

The Catholic Centre and all parish offices must remain closed to the public until further changes to provincial restrictions. However, staff may attend the offices in order provide services. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated January 22, 2021.

These restrictions apply throughout the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

### **Contact Tracing**

It is recommended that places of worship collect contact tracing information for a period of at least 21 days to ensure appropriate follow-up can take place if a member of the Assembly is exposed to COVID-19 during the celebration. Registration for attendance at in-person services also ensures that occupancy limits are followed. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated October 30, 2020.

This protocol applies to all parishes in the Archdiocese of Winnipeg.

## Questions and References

Please go to our Archdiocesan website for all COVID-19-related resources: [www.archwinnipeg.ca](http://www.archwinnipeg.ca). For questions or concerns, please contact the Communication Services Office (CSO) at [communications@archwinnipeg.ca](mailto:communications@archwinnipeg.ca), or through phone at (204) 452-2227 ext. 225.