



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

**Updated April 26, 2021**

### **Dispensation from Sunday Mass**

Archbishop Gagnon has granted a general dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass to all the faithful through May 23, 2021. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated February 24, 2021.

### **All Faith Gatherings, Including Mass**

Effective April 28, 2021, new health orders will take effect throughout Manitoba. They include provision for faith-based gatherings of up to 25% of a church's capacity or ten (10) people, whichever is lower. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated April 26, 2021.

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

### **A Note on Faith Gatherings**

We recently received a clarification from the official government liaison to communities of faith regarding retreats, youth group gatherings, pastoral meetings (Parish Council, Parish Finance Council, Knights of Columbus, Catholic Women's League, Couples for Christ, etc.), catechism classes, RCIA, and other religious gatherings. These events are still considered "Faith Gatherings" but must now be conducted in a church facility and must precede or follow a prayer service or Mass. The restriction to Faith Gatherings is currently 25% of the capacity of the building, or 10 people, whichever is fewer.

The reason for this change is to avoid confusion for Public Health Inspectors, and so to decrease any chance that a parish may be fined for contravening public health orders. Faith Gatherings are to be differentiated from meetings held purely for the purpose of administration, which continue to have a restriction of five (5) people. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated April 8, 2021.

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

### **Weddings, Funerals, and Baptisms**

As of April 20, 2021, the celebrations of weddings, funerals, and baptisms will be restricted to ten (10) people. This does not include the presider, one (1) cantor, one (1) accompanist, live-stream volunteers or staff, and in the case of funerals, the funeral home staff. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated April 19, 2021.

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

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

It is possible for Mass to be celebrated inside the church, in compliance with protocols, while other parishioners participate in the Liturgy while remaining in their vehicles. This is facilitated through live-stream, or in some cases, through FM transmitters which are a relatively inexpensive means of transmitting audio over short distances. Holy Communion is then distributed to those in each vehicle by the priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. These ministers are required to wear a mask and sanitize their hands prior to the distribution of the Eucharist.

Recent public health orders now allow those within a motor vehicle, while participating in a religious gathering, to leave their vehicle for a brief period of time. As before, only those belonging to the same household are allowed to be in a given vehicle. In addition, those who leave their vehicle must maintain physical distancing and sanitizing procedures at all times.

For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated April 8, 2021. These restrictions apply 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.” ([https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset\\_library/en/proactive/2020\\_2021/orders-soe12092020.pdf](https://www.gov.mb.ca/asset_library/en/proactive/2020_2021/orders-soe12092020.pdf))

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.

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

### **Cohorts**

Cohorts – or subgroups – are currently not allowed in celebrations of weddings, funerals, and baptisms. For reference, please see the Archbishop's memo dated November 13, 2020.

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

### **Use of Masks**

The use of masks is required in all indoor and outdoor gatherings, with exceptions for:

- children under five years of age; and
- persons with a medical condition unrelated to COVID-19 preventing them from safely wearing or removing a mask (e.g. a person with asthma, allergies, or a physical disability).

In addition to physical distancing of at least two (2) metres, the use of face masks is now required for all participants in any given liturgy or event, including those who belong to a household “bubble”. For reference, please see the Archbishop’s memo dated April 26, 2021.

These restrictions apply 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. Services and ministries may continue to be provided through phone, e-mail, or other digital means. According to the recent public health orders, staff may attend the office in order to provide remote services, but in-person gatherings or meetings are not allowed.

For reference, please see the Archbishop’s memo dated January 22, 2021.

These restrictions apply throughout 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.