



Archdiocese of Winnipeg

Office of the Archbishop

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Parishes

From: Archbishop Richard Gagnon *+ R. G.*

Date: November 5, 2021

Re: Archdiocesan Instruction on the Current Public Health Orders

As the People of God in our three Archdioceses of southern Manitoba, we are all struggling to work our way through the present coronavirus crisis. We strive to collaborate with our government and health officials who are surely as concerned as we are with the health and wellbeing of Manitobans. In this spirit, we undertake the challenge of seeking a balance that respects the public health orders while not compromising the mission and rights of the Churches that have been entrusted to our care.

The grace of the Lord flows to the People of God, especially through Liturgical Worship. For this reason, it is imperative that the Sacramental Mysteries of the Church be understood as public and open forms of prayer accessible to all, saints and sinners. The unprecedented coronavirus crisis that we are experiencing should encourage a more frequent access to sacramental worship, even within the restrictions brought about by the pandemic.

To ensure that worship/prayer experiences remain open to all with appropriate measures given to ensure a safe environment, we direct the following:

Faith Gatherings

Faith-based gatherings, including the Celebration of Mass, are permitted for up to 33% of the capacity of the space or twenty-five (25) people, whichever is greater. The presider, one (1) cantor, one (1) accompanist, one (1) lector, and the live-streaming team, do not count toward the restrictions.

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.

As before, all gatherings while in a motor vehicle (drive-in celebrations) remain permitted without limitation. In addition, physical distancing and the use of facemasks is required for all indoor gatherings.

According to the provincial government, the current public health orders are to remain in effect until 12:01 a.m. on November 16, 2021. Further announcements will be made should more information be made available by our local health officials.

Thank you very much.