



PREVENTIVE MEASURES AGAINST THE RISK OF COVID-19

Guidelines and procedures

Updated January 7, 2021¹

■ CLOSING OF PLACES OF WORSHIP

At the request of the Quebec government and for the period from January 9th to February 8th, 2021, all places of worship must remain closed to the public. No liturgical activity may be held there in the presence of a gathering of the faithful. **This applies as of midnight early Saturday morning.** This means that the masses planned for Saturday afternoon January 9th must be cancelled.

- There always remains the possibility of recording and broadcasting celebrations closed to the public on social media. However, care must be taken to ensure that the event is not linked to a gathering of the faithful. Therefore, the number of people present at the time of the recording should be restricted.
- The celebration of mass is still allowed in religious houses. The chapel must of course be closed to the public.

■ EXCEPTION FOR FUNERALS

For the same period from January 9th to February 8th, 2021, the government authorities are authorizing funerals to be held in a place of worship provided no more than **25 members** of the public are in attendance.

The ministers with a function in the liturgy (celebrant, readers, volunteers, etc.) are not counted in the maximum number allowed.

- **Funerals scheduled for Saturday, January 9th must meet this provision or be postponed to a later date.**
- In order to enable family members to view the funeral celebration, the presider should gladly allow it to be recorded and broadcasted on social networks.

¹ These measures either are in addition to, or clarify those already in force in the diocese.

- These liturgical activities must be carried out in accordance with the health regulations in force² and in line with the hours of the curfew³.
- It would be prudent to recommend that participants wear a mask for the entire duration of the celebration, and remove it only to receive communion.

■ PASTORAL PERSONNEL

As indicated by our Bishop since the beginning of the pandemic, **pastoral personnel have remained active**. They are therefore recognized by our Diocesan Church as a service essential to the mission and are being remunerated according to the working terms in effect.

- Working from home, providing support to community organizations, offering spiritual comfort and following up with telephone calls to people living alone will be among the preferred options.
- Bearing in mind the public health regulations, whether anyone should be present or not in the workplace will be assessed by the parish officials (parish priest, coordinator, Fabrique chairperson).
- No work meetings are permitted during the hours subject to the curfew.

■ SUPPORT STAFF

In all regions of Quebec, working from home is mandatory for people who were previously working in an office from December 17, 2020 to February 8, 2021 inclusively, with the exception of workers whose presence is deemed necessary by the employer for the continuation of an organization's activities. The presence or not of support staff in the workplace will be assessed by the parish officials (parish priest, coordinator, Fabrique chairperson).

■ FABRIQUE MEETINGS

Fabrique meetings must be postponed until after the lockdown period. In the event of an emergency, it is preferable for the churchwardens to meet via teleconferencing or videoconferencing to deal with the urgent matter only.

■ COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION RENTALS AND ACTIVITIES

² The **compulsory** health regulations in force are: access prohibited for people with symptoms related to COVID-19, physical distancing measures, wearing of face masks, hand washing and careful disinfection of the premises and keeping a register of those present.

³ From January 9th to February 8th, 2021 between 8 PM and 5 AM, it is forbidden for anyone to leave his or her place of residence except in the case of exceptions justifying travel.

While complying with current health regulations, charitable activities (e.g. soup kitchens, community counters, food distribution, etc.) are maintained.

Community organizations (AA, Al-Anon, etc.) that are renting parish premises may continue to use them for activities organized as part of their mission, **but not within the curfew hours set by the government.**

Any other rentals are forbidden.

REMINDER

- We salute the exceptional work of our pastoral personnel and volunteers in these times of adaptation and change. The teams will continue to be bold and creative in the services they provide to the public.
- Under the circumstances, it is important to pay particular attention to welcoming and supporting bereaved families.
- Those living alone who are forced to stay at home, especially the sick and family in need, will be the object of a high level of pastoral care. While respecting the instructions in force, particular attention will be paid to individual requests (e.g.: sacrament of the sick, sacrament of forgiveness, spiritual accompaniment, etc.).
- In end-of-life situations, it is still possible to offer the celebration of the last rites. In this case, adequate coordination must be ensured with the nursing care directorate of the institution (RPA, CHSLD, hospital centre, etc.).
- Attendance registers contain personal information that can only be disclosed to a public health authority or a person authorized to act on its behalf for the purposes of conducting an epidemiological investigation: they cannot be used by anyone for any other purpose. This information must be destroyed 30 days after it is recorded.
- If you receive a call with *Santé publique* displayed on your telephone, it is important to answer it and cooperate with the public health authorities. Only they can ask you to hand over an attendance register.
- It is suggested that pastoral personnel and those regularly attending liturgical celebrations download the **COVID Alert** application. (<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/coronavirus-disease-covid-19/covid-alert.html>)
- If you, a staff member, visitor or family member think you may have been exposed to COVID-19 or have symptoms, consult the self-assessment tool for a recommendation on

what to do, depending on your condition: (<https://www.quebec.ca/en/health/health-issues/a-z/2019-coronavirus/covid-19-symptom-self-assessment-tool/>)