

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 15 — July 9, 2020
INFORMATION UPDATE
For Pastors, Pastoral Teams and Religious Communities

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Please find below several updates and clarifications regarding the "deconfinement" process.

1. Number of congregants and logistics for celebrations

According to Dr. Horacio Arruda's June 29 press briefing, the 50-person limit does not strictly apply to places of worship. Despite questions recently raised in the media, we are moving forward based upon this recognition. Therefore, if your venue is large enough to comply safely with the required physical-distancing guidelines, you can increase the number of participants at liturgical celebrations accordingly. Please ensure: first, that the number of allotted places has been carefully determined according to the above criterion so to admit the correct number of people; and second, that throughout the celebration, volunteers ensure that everyone observes public-health regulations, especially the physical-distancing measures currently in effect, i.e. two metres between participants.

Individuals who reside in the same household need not be separated from one another by this distance. They can, therefore, sit next to one another as members of the same household "circle". However, a two-metre space must be maintained between each "circle." Be prepared to designate a particular area for this use and to ensure strict adherence to this instruction.

Should the media contact you in the coming days for comment, remain calm. It is entirely legitimate for us to rely on the particulars provided by Dr. Arruda. Emphasize all the health measures being implemented in your community, based on the protocol developed by the diocese and approved by public-health authorities. If you need support, the communications director, Erika Jacinto, is available to assist you: 514-709-8216, ejacinto@diocesemontreal.org.

2. Mask-wearing or face coverings

It is strongly recommended that those entering our churches wear a face mask. As of July 27, mask-wearing in enclosed public spaces will become mandatory in the City of Montreal. We ask everyone to co-operate as befitting good citizens. Parishes situated within the city must enforce mask-wearing as of that date, except in those particular cases identified by the government as listed here: [Quebec Health Mask-wearing Guidelines](#)

We recommend the distribution of masks, if possible, at the church entrance, for those who do not have any, inviting the faithful to obtain their own mask before their next visit to church.

For diocesan parishes located in cities other than Montreal, you are free, at this point, to decide whether to implement this rule or not. We ask, however, to insist that the faithful wear a mask for liturgical celebrations and that you keep abreast of the updates from health and government authorities, given that decisions on this matter can change from day to day.

3. Congregational singing during liturgical celebrations

Public-health authorities have requested that congregations refrain from singing during celebrations. This applies even if all congregants are wearing masks. For the time being, it is recommended that only one singer, or a strict minimum number of individuals, be designated to provide singing and liturgical accompaniment; they must observe the required physical-distancing and hygienic measures.

4. Cleaning and disinfecting of the church premises

Observing the previously recommended three-hour interval between celebrations is now left up to your wise discernment. Meeting the following conditions, however, remains critical:

- Allow sufficient time to disinfect and clean the frequently used surfaces after each gathering.
- Keep the venue well-ventilated.
- Ensure that mask-wearing is fully observed at all times, where and when required.

5. Signage depicting safety rules

All health-and-safety rules to be observed upon entering the premises, while inside the church, and during Communion have been clearly indicated on a poster (prepared by the diocese for your use) and can be downloaded directly from the diocesan website here: [Poster \(downloadable pdf\)](#). In addition, these rules must be effectively communicated on an ongoing basis.

For those Fabriques who have not yet ordered the sanitation starter kit for parishes, we remind you that the Archdiocese has negotiated with two suppliers, offering an affordable service and prices, who provide signage and/or floor decals: [Suppliers](#)

For complete details, please consult the diocesan [website](#), where you will find the latest news releases, as well as an updated list of local churches now open, a segment dedicated to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs), several examples of "deconfinement" plans developed by local parishes, and a selection of demonstration videos, including a guide on the steps to take when bringing Communion to the sick during the pandemic and on the reception of Communion when wearing a mask.

The diocesan "deconfinement" committee remains available for consultation at: deconfinement@diocesemontreal.org

Wishing you some restful time in the Lord in the coming weeks! May his Peace and Joy be with you!



+ Alain Faubert, VG
Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal