

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 35 – April 1, 2021

INFORMATION

To pastors, pastoral teams and religious communities

Brothers and Sisters, as we approach the Holy Days and Easter, here are some instructions concerning the liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments:

1. Guidelines for the Liturgy of the Holy Days

Depending on the size of the place of worship, each celebration of the offices of the Easter Triduum in a parish may be attended by a maximum of 250 participants, not including liturgical servers and volunteers, and ensuring that a distance of 2 metres is maintained between individuals and any movement among the congregation is kept to a minimum.

a) Holy oils

The consecration of the Holy Chrism and the blessing of the other two holy oils, took place during the Chrism mass in the evening of March 31. The distribution of these three oils will be possible as of Monday, April 5, by appointment with the Cathedral team on presentation of a completed [authorization form](#). Those concerned should contact the Cathedral receptionist at (514) 866-1661.

b) Holy Thursday:

Mass in commemoration of the Lord's Supper may be celebrated as early as 6:00 p.m., omitting the foot-washing as well as the concluding procession with the Blessed Sacrament.

c) Good Friday:

i. Veneration of the Cross: The presentation of the Cross (the priest carrying the cross up the aisle) may take place. Singing should be avoided, however, as this would encourage the congregation to respond. Singing may be performed exclusively by the cantor, with no response from the congregation. Only the presiding priest makes his personal act of veneration of the Cross; a time for collective veneration may be suggested to the faithful.

ii. The Stations of the Cross may be held inside the church, with the faithful remaining in their places.

d) Holy Saturday:

The Easter Vigil may be celebrated from 6:00 p.m., thus allowing the faithful to return home before the curfew (9:30 p.m.). i. The candles are placed on a table at the back of the church beforehand. On arrival, participants disinfect their hands and take their own candles.

ii. For the blessing of the fire and lighting of the candles, members of the congregation are asked to remain in their seats. Only designated ministers are to go through the aisles.

iii. For the sprinkling of water at the renewal of baptismal promises, the priest will perform this from a distance at the front of the church, and not going through the aisles.

iv. For the participants in the congregation, it is requested that priority be given to the catechumens and the newly confirmed.

e) Easter Morning:

Pastors and chapel leaders are asked to ring the bells in their places of worship at 12:00 noon for five minutes.

2. Reminders concerning sanitary instructions and guidelines

a) Please remind your parishioners of the importance of observing all the sanitary rules contained in our protocol in order to ensure that our places of worship are safe: wearing a procedure mask at all times in the church, washing or disinfecting hands, maintaining a distance of two metres at all times, etc.

b) Encourage those who think they have symptoms to stay home and get tested.

c) Remind people that socializing (gatherings, prolonged conversations in small groups) remains a high-risk activity for the transmission of the virus and that it should be avoided.

3. Baptisms, First Reconciliations, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings and Funerals

a) The **maximum of 250 participants** applies only to Masses, whether held on Sundays or weekdays.

b) The **maximum of 25 participants** applies to the following celebrations: Baptisms, First Reconciliations, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings and Funerals.

i. After consultation with the pastoral agents throughout the diocese, the option of incorporating even partially First Communions or Confirmations into regular Masses **was not accepted**. Consequently, these sacramental celebrations, held with a maximum of 25 participants, **must take place separately** from Sunday or weekday Masses.

ii. Why a maximum of 25 participants for these specific celebrations? Essentially because, in the eyes of public-health authorities, and despite all the precautions taken by parish staff and families, this type of celebration more easily tends towards breaches of the instructions to maintain physical distancing through such actions as consoling, congratulating or discussing with loved ones inside the church itself, or through activities at the

periphery of the event: photo sessions, gatherings at home. In solidarity with the greater community and out of concern for the health of our brothers and sisters, we must therefore comply.

iii. We are all aware that First Communions and Confirmations held in small groups of 25 participants, with the resulting increase in the number of ceremonies, require increased availability on the part of pastors and pastoral staff. In some settings, given limited resources, this will not be possible. Therefore, depending on your team's discernment, you may be able to hold

these celebrations with a reduced number by the end of June, or postpone them until the fall of 2021.

iv. For First Reconciliations, we maintain the usual practice of a community celebration with individual absolution.

v. Please note that in light of the new health guidelines, an updated version of our "Health Protocol for Celebrating Confirmation" will be available shortly.

vi. REMINDER: It is mandatory to keep a register for each celebration of baptism, marriage, funerals, First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.

c) After consultation with the pastoral agents, we are for the time being keeping the catechesis in virtual mode. Face-to-face meetings (maximum 25 participants in the same room) are limited to exceptional cases (for example: meeting for last-minute preparations for the celebration of a sacrament). We encourage you to maintain hybrid pastoral activities.

4. Ecclesial life

a) Group activities that constitute a direct service to the population (e.g. Bible courses, support groups, sharing groups, catechesis, etc.) are possible, but must be limited to 25 people per group and per room.

b) Church meetings should ideally be held by telephone or video conference. In exceptional cases, they may be held in person, with a maximum of 12 people, in compliance with health regulations.

c) Team meetings, governed by the CNESST, must be held by teleconference. If it is really impossible to do otherwise, they may be held face-to-face, with a maximum of 12 people, in compliance with health regulations.

5. Various announcements

a) Diocesan microsite

Several diocesan offices and services have collaborated to help us enter Holy Week and the Easter season. A microsite on the diocesan website presents resources according to various age groups (adults, young adults,

teenagers, families and children) and four different "sections" (Looking, Praying, Listening and Acting) for a total of 12 to 20 resources per age group.

Here is the link:

<https://microsites.diocesemontreal.org/microsites/semaine-sainte-et-paques/en/home/>

b) Updating the Parish file

Using your access code, you are invited to update your weekly schedule of Masses in your parish file on the diocesan website. If you need help, please contact Laurie in the Communications Department at: lsiguide@diocesemontreal.org

Happy Easter!

In Jesus the Risen Saviour,



+ Alain Faubert, VG

Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal