

COMMUNIQUÉ No. 14 — June 30, 2020
INFORMATION UPDATE
For Pastors, Pastoral Teams and Religious Communities

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Please find below additional information and guidelines to help you in the ongoing process of resuming the pastoral and liturgical life of the Church in Montreal.

1. “Restarting” together

As churches gradually reopen and pastoral teams face the numerous challenges associated with resuming their activities, so as to co-ordinate our efforts, we ask all parishes and missions to recall their pastoral personnel and support staff to coincide, **as much as possible**, with important dates currently set on the diocesan calendar for the coming months:

- Return to work before August 17, having already taken summer holidays, **if possible**;
- As of August 17, all personnel should have returned from vacation, **if applicable**, and continue the planning for the pastoral year, **according to the guidelines outlined** in Communiqué No.12 : <https://bit.ly/2Communique12ENG>

2. Clarifications on the “deconfinement” process

- a) At a press briefing held June 29, Quebec’s Public Health Director, Dr. Horacio Arruda, mentioned the possibility of **increasing the number of participants** per celebration in places of worship, to be determined on the basis of the venue’s capacity for physical distancing, **mask-wearing, and fully refraining from congregational singing** being the norm.
- b) As a result, the Archbishop encourages you:
 - i. To **determine the potential number of available seats** that can be safely accommodated in your place of worship, according to the physical-distancing rules in force, and to proceed with establishing a seating arrangement within your place of worship to conform to these guidelines.
 - ii. To **submit your request for permission to open** your church doors, once you are ready. (If you have already obtained permission, it is not necessary to request a second authorization.)
Online Form to Request Permission : <https://bit.ly/2YpufpE>
 - iii. Once authorization has been granted, please send your “deconfinement” plan to the Diocesan “Deconfinement” Committee.
- c) The “deconfinement” committee is available for consultation at: deconfinement@diocesemontreal.org
- d) Following some concerns that were raised regarding the “deconfinement” committee’s recommendation **to allot a three-hour interval between celebrations** in an effort to help reduce the risk of transmission, the committee wishes to clarify a few points:
 - i. Respiratory droplets can remain suspended in the air for long periods of time; the coronavirus can survive for up to three hours, with varying degrees of virulence.
 - ii. To reduce the risk of transmission:
 - iii. Keep the venue doors and windows open for ventilation;
 - iv. **Insist that masks be worn indoors;**

- v. Implementing these mitigating measures gives you a full measure of flexibility in **scheduling your liturgical celebrations** and developing your cleaning/disinfecting strategies.
- e) **A list of churches that have reopened** will be updated regularly and can be found on the diocesan website: <https://bit.ly/3dK8o0n>. We still encourage pastors and pastoral teams **to keep their parishioners informed** about the steps being taken toward **the reopening of their church** by using all means of communication at their disposal: i.e. parish voicemail, e-mails, Facebook page, website, **posters/signage on church doors**, etc.
- f) **Co-operation between neighbouring parishes** is needed. Please remember to inform your parishioners of the liturgical and pastoral initiatives taking place in neighbourhood parishes (i.e. Masses, confession, food distribution services, etc.).
- g) Are you a **priest and available to help** in a parish this summer? Or, do you need the help of a priest for your parish? If so, please write to: deconfinement@diocesemontreal.org.
- h) Feel free to consult the **Frequently Asked Questions** segment posted on the diocesan website: <https://diocesemontreal.org/en/covid-19/deconfinement>

3. The obligation to attend Sunday Mass has been suspended

Given that the gradual opening of our places of worship is restricted to a limited number of participants per Eucharistic celebration, many faithful have asked the question: **Am I obliged to participate in the Sunday Eucharist**, considering the limited number of places and the risk of transmission that remains present?

- Pending a significant expansion of “deconfinement” (i.e. most places of worship being open, without a limit on participants), the Archbishop relieves the faithful of his diocese of any obligation to be physically present for Sunday Mass on church premises, until further notice.
- Archbishop Lépine declares that the directive also applies to members of consecrated life with regards to their obligation to assist at daily Eucharist, as required by the Constitutions of their community.

4. The Archbishop issues new pastoral letter

Archbishop Lépine’s latest pastoral letter, *A Church reaching out with open arms and doors*, found here: <https://bit.ly/3PastoralLetter>

I thank you for your continued commitment to the mission of evangelization and assure you of my solidarity in prayer and action.

Yours in Jesus Christ, our Saviour,



+ Alain Faubert, VG
Auxiliary Bishop of Montreal