

## Frequently asked questions

### On adapting places of worship in the 'red zone' for the diocese of Montreal until January 11, 2021

#### **Q1: What about airing out our places of worship during the duration of COVID-19?**

In response to this question, a PowerPoint document can be found on the Diocese website. We invite you to read it at: [https://diocesemontreal.org/sites/default/files/ressources/ressources\\_paroisses/personnel\\_patoral/deconfinement-COVID-19/Aeration\\_eglises\\_13%20oct%202020\\_JCZ.pdf](https://diocesemontreal.org/sites/default/files/ressources/ressources_paroisses/personnel_patoral/deconfinement-COVID-19/Aeration_eglises_13%20oct%202020_JCZ.pdf)

The ventilation demanded depends on numerous factors including, for example, the number of participants proportionate to the size of the church. Our churches are large, so we can consider the ventilation sufficient to allay any worries about this issue for the time being. While awaiting any updates of a more precise nature or based on research data, here are the recommendations:

- ❖ Check everyone who arrives for risk factors: general condition of health, symptoms, having had contact with anyone ill or from another country, returning from a trip, etc. – a warm greeting is not enough: How are you doing this morning? In good health, etc.? while also avoiding any needless arguments or aggressiveness that this could instigate;
- ❖ Adopt an informative attitude when conveying instructions to people, helping them to understand the reasons behind the recommendations, etc., and not bullying them;
- ❖ Ensure that volunteers pay adequate attention to the recommendations and oversee the implementation of protective measures in the church at all times:
  - Wearing a mask the proper way at all times in the church;
  - Practising proper etiquette about coughing, sneezing, etc.;
  - Not handling the mask (removing it, putting it back on, removing it again, etc.);
  - Maintaining a distance of 2 metres from others at all times, outside the bubble of family members, especially when arriving, when leaving and when moving around inside;
  - Disinfecting hands when arriving and departing; if necessary before communion as well;
  - Not sharing things, such as prayer sheets, etc.



## Catholic Church of Montreal

**Q2: Physical distancing in places of worship: when to keep 2m distance?** For the safety of everyone, please maintain a distance of 2m from others at all times inside places of worship and minimize moving about inside.

**Q3: What to retain from the list of open churches?** As we indicated in Communiqué No. 20, keeping places of worship open in the 'red zone' constitutes an important gain in our dialogue with the public-health authorities. It has been acknowledged that our sacred spaces and the celebrations that we hold in them contribute not only to the spiritual, but also to the psychological well-being of a large number of our fellow citizens. Therefore, insofar as it is possible in your church, thank you for creating ways to permit your parishioners to gather, alone or in family groups, in the places of worship under your care. It may not be possible to envisage opening the church for the entire day, every day of the week. It is none the less desirable to have specific periods of time scheduled and to make these known in your area. Of course, the usual measures are likewise applicable at these times: questionnaire, hand-washing, masks, disinfection of the area, etc.

**Q4: How to take Communion with a mask? What about the distribution of Communion?** There is a video on the diocesan website showing how to take Communion with a mask: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nuKcsSkNByc&feature=youtu.be>. Concerning the distribution of Communion, it is also asked that the minister's finger not touch the palm of the person receiving Communion.

**Q5: Can Communion be taken to the sick, and how? Can we still offer spiritual support and the anointing of the sick?** Yes, visiting private homes and CHSLDs (with the consent of the person in charge) for the purpose of offering a service or support is permitted. We encourage you to be attentive to the spiritual needs of those living alone and of those who are sick or grieving.

**Q6: Can baptisms, first reconciliations, first Communions, confirmation and marriages be celebrated during the pandemic?** Until November 23, it is strongly advised to postpone these celebrations. This is one way to avoid occasions conducive to the propagation of the virus. A celebration that brings together a greater number of participants provides a better opportunity for the faithful to experience the communal dimension of the sacraments. Waiting until we return to the "orange zone" before celebrating a sacrament will also give families the opportunity to come together and provide a true festive ambience to these important moments.



## Catholic Church of Montreal

Nonetheless, if, after having exercised discernment and consulted the families involved, you consider that an exception is required for the sake of the faithful and that a celebration of baptism, marriage, first Communion or confirmation should go forward, be sure to comply with the instructions in force and remind the participants that, for the time being, it is still not possible to extend the celebration at the church following the liturgy or to gather the family together afterwards.

I would remind you that the maximum number of participants at a celebration in the “red zone” is set at 25 persons at the gathering, not including those leading the liturgical, and that each member of a family counts as an individual person.

### **Q7: What is the purpose of the virtual meetings every Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.?**

In these difficult times, with the greater Montreal area being designated a ‘red zone,’ the Diocesan De-confinement Committee invites the members of local de-confinement committees to participate in these virtual meetings every Tuesday from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m., held in French and in English. These provide a time to share experiences and innovative solutions in order to keep carrying out the activities that are permitted in our places of worship. To participate in the meeting and get the videoconference link, kindly send an email to: [deconfinement@diocesemontreal.org](mailto:deconfinement@diocesemontreal.org).

**Q8: Is the dispensation of the Sunday obligation still in effect?** Yes, for the period until November 23, 2020 and until further notice, Archbishop Lépine has renewed the dispensation which has been in effect during the pandemic regarding the Sunday obligation. The Archbishop encourages the faithful to observe a time of prayer this Sunday. (FAQ)

**Q9: Are the signs on places of worship still in effect?** The Government of Quebec and the CNESST jointly issued a poster for places of worship entitled: ‘CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)...’ and which announced preventive measures to maintain places of worship safe. The poster is available on the diocesan website in English: <https://bit.ly/Afficheplacesofworship>; French: <https://bit.ly/AfficheLieuxdeculte>; and Spanish: <https://bit.ly/Affichelugaresdeculto>. The poster must be posted at the entrance of every church. It bears the Government’s colours and was issued specifically for places of worship. By posting it, you are attesting to the fact that your place of worship is in compliance with Government requirements. This does not replace the poster issued by our diocese: <http://bit.ly/affichediocese>, since the latter contains more specific information concerning Communion. Both posters must therefore be easily visible. It is



## Catholic Church of Montreal

important to cross out the non-applicable items appearing on the poster issued by the Government and CNESST.

**Q10: What protocol is to be used for confirmation?** A model can be found on the diocesan website: [https://diocesemontreal.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Protocole%20confirmation\\_ANG\\_10sep2020.pdf](https://diocesemontreal.org/sites/default/files/2020-09/Protocole%20confirmation_ANG_10sep2020.pdf). It should be mentioned in this regard that the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, responding to a request for clarification concerning certain questions raised recently with respect to the administration of the sacrament of confirmation in the context of the current pandemic, states that the possible use by the minister of instruments (gloves, cotton swabs, etc.) does not affect the validity of the sacrament.

**Q11: Is there support for the hybrid pastoral approach in parish settings?** Yes. A team comprising members of diocesan offices and services (Youth Ministry, Office for Cultural and Ritual Communities, Office for Faith Education, Office for English Pastoral Services and the Responsible Pastoral Ministry Service) is offering training sessions using a hybrid pastoral approach. These sessions present a variety of practical tools to explore how to accompany others using a hybrid approach, and they explain how these tools can be employed in our work for the mission.

**Q12: Can social and community events be held?** Yes. Since the pandemic is causing great anxiety and isolation, where possible it is a good idea to mobilize, along with help from volunteers, networks of fellowship: visiting or calling more isolated parishioners; providing reception and listening services for requests coming in by email or telephone, etc. In addition, since community organizations may continue their activities in the 'red zone,' thank you for finding ways to keep food banks, bazaars and used clothing outlets open in parish halls, while observing public-health measures. With respect to annual food drives, we are awaiting the latest guidelines. Volunteers are increasingly in demand. Those members of our communities who can are also invited to contribute to the collective effort being made in every neighbourhood, whether directly linked to COVID or not.

**Q13: What about the participants' log? Is it compulsory to have a participants' log at every celebration?** In order to facilitate efforts on the part of Public Health in the event of an outbreak, a log of participants is required (name, email and telephone number) for every celebration, every visit to church, every burial, etc. Please retain these logs for 30 days.



## Catholic Church of Montreal

**Q14: What are the current health and safety guidelines with respect to catechetical sessions? Can in-person catechism sessions continue to be given?** No. Until November 23, 2020, the situation demands that in-person catechism sessions be cancelled. After November 23, we will issue new directives reflecting developments in the evolving public-health situation.

**Q15: What are the present measures concerning singing during the Mass? Is singing in church permitted?** There may only be one soloist during celebrations. The congregation is strictly prohibited from singing. The soloist must be at a distance greater than 2m from all other participants. No mask or visor is required while the singer is at his or her station (at greater than 2m distance). The soloist should not be singing from the railing in the choir loft.

**Q16: What are the measures at this time with respect to holding funerals? Also, can funerals be held on Sunday afternoons?** Yes, holding funerals is allowed, also on Sunday afternoons. Obviously, those in charge of the event must follow all prescribed measures in order to ensure the safety of the participants.

**Q17: How is the number of participants at a Mass calculated?** The maximum number of participants at a celebration in the 'red zone' is set at 25 persons at the gathering, not including those leading the liturgical celebration (priest, deacon, cantor, musician, altar server, lector, ushers). Each member of a family counts as an individual person, including the children.

**Q18: Can parallel celebrations be held simultaneously in more than one space?** Yes. Parish halls or chapels adjacent to the church with separate street access may be used for Liturgies of the Word, faith-sharing on the Gospel, with or without Communion, in small groups (the choir loft is not considered to be a separate space from the church).

**Q19: How are cases of infection to be handled?** We are glad to report that there has not, as yet, been any outbreak in our places of worship. The following directives outline how best to proceed when a person (parishioner, volunteer or anyone else) who has participated in a meeting or a pastoral activity in your place of worship (church, oratory, shrine, chapel, etc.) is found to have contracted the Coronavirus:

- a) The person infected with COVID-19 must go into quarantine: "confinement" for 14 days;
- b) The person in charge of implementing the public-health instructions must consult the attendance log of participants at the event where the infected person was present in the place of worship or in adjoining rooms;



## Catholic Church of Montreal

- c) The person responsible must call all the other people who were present at the gathering at the same time that the person diagnosed with COVID-19 was also present;
- d) All persons appearing in the log must be on the alert for any symptoms linked with COVID (for example, coughing, fever, loss of sense of taste or smell). These symptoms can appear within three to five days, sometimes taking as long as 14 days!
- e) If a person detects any of these symptoms, he or she must contact the appropriate local public-health authorities and comply with their instructions;
- f) If the test results are negative, the person must, nonetheless, remain in quarantine for 14 days.

**Q20: Can people have a conversation in church?** No. For the safety of everyone, it is not appropriate to have conversations in church.

**Q21: What is the present position on the proper interval of time to be left between two celebrations?** It is not necessary to leave three hours between celebrations. It is only necessary to allow people the time to leave the building, then disinfect the church and afterwards admit the people for the next celebration.