



July 12, 2021

2 pages via e-mail

To all clergy and staff of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

On Friday, the provincial government announced that Ontario will be moving to Step 3 of the “Roadmap for Reopening” plan as of 12:01 a.m. Friday, July 16, 2021.

Please note the following guidelines for implementation as of July 16, 2021:

- **NEW** - For sacramental celebrations, in Step 3, there is no capacity limit for places of worship. However, physical distancing of 2 metres (6 ft.) is still required between parishioners attending Mass who are not from the same household. Due to the physical distancing requirement, most churches will not realize any significant increase in capacity. Parishes with larger halls may be able to accommodate increased capacity as an overflow space should the parish have technology to livestream Mass to the hall.
- **NEW** – For funerals, the Bereavement Authority of Ontario is no longer implementing a maximum capacity restriction for funerals. Similar to other sacramental celebrations, there are no capacity restrictions for funerals as long as 2 metres (6 ft.) of physical distancing can be maintained between attendees who are not from the same household.
- **NEW** - Meetings in parish halls or other indoor spaces are permitted in Step 3. Attendance may not exceed 50% of meeting space capacity. Participants must be masked and physically distanced – 2 metres (6 ft.) between those not from the same household. In addition, a sign-in sheet for meetings should be provided for the purposes of contact tracing. Meals or food service at meetings is discouraged at this time.
- **NEW** - Outdoor social gatherings and public events (non-religious services) are permitted with a maximum of 100 people.
- As previously noted, please ensure that WorshipSafe guidelines are followed. Please note, that in Step 3, local municipal by-laws remain in place - mask use indoors should continue at this time, even for those who are fully vaccinated.
- Congregational singing is not permitted at this time however a cantor or small choir may be utilized if participants are 3 metres from one another and any member of the congregation.
- Livestreaming of services should continue where this practice is underway and the dispensation from the Sunday obligation continues. The elderly and those with compromised immune systems or other health conditions should be encouraged to exercise caution about any outings, including attendance at church. Virtual meetings may still replace in-person meetings where appropriate.
- At present, parishes have a variety of operating hours, sacramental celebrations and activities. In light of Step 3 guidelines, some parishes may expand on-site efforts. Recognizing many employees already are working on-site, parishes should discern the need for an increased in-person presence. Parish offices may wish to adjust their office hours to open to the public at limited times each week. Those working remotely should continue to do so unless otherwise advised by the Pastor.



- Please continue to take great care in implementing robust health and safety measures in the rectory and office. In addition to keeping our parishioners safe, every measure should be taken to protect our clergy, essential staff and any volunteers who are required to assist at this time. As parishes begin to offer more public operating hours, where distancing is not possible, mask use should be employed in office settings or in dealing with the public.
- Outdoor Liturgies - a provision has been made by the provincial government for outdoor religious services. While we recommend indoor liturgies wherever possible, information shared previously provides guidance for those parishes where outdoor liturgies may be a possibility.

We are hopeful that in the weeks ahead, we will be able to remove additional restrictions that have been in place over the past year. The number of daily Covid-19 cases is declining and vaccination rates are increasing. We are most certainly moving in the right direction. Thank you once again for your patience and flexibility as we care for the faithful and one another.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto