



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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June 5, 2020

To all people in the Archdiocese of Regina

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As mentioned in my communication of May 29, 2020, faith leaders from across Saskatchewan gathered online to discuss the re-opening of places of worship. We drafted a letter asking the Saskatchewan government to work together with faith communities to develop responsible guidelines bringing places of worship within the Re-Open Saskatchewan plan.

The government responded to our request with the designation of two members of the COVID-19 Response Team to liaise with faith leaders. We are extremely thankful for the professionalism and commitment of these public servants. A robust and fruitful dialogue has produced guidelines for places of worship in the province. We have been assured that the limits on attendance - one-third of the defined occupancy rate of the facility to a maximum of 30 individuals, so long as physical distancing of 2m between people can be maintained - is a next step. The provincial faith leaders group continues to work with the Saskatchewan Health Authority on expanded directives. The people of the Archdiocese will be updated as those expansions occur.

Meanwhile, the policies and guidelines for the Archdiocese of Regina have now been adjusted to reflect the changes allowed in the Phase III [Guidelines for Places of Worship](#). If a parish is able to safely implement all of the policies and guidelines, they may open as soon as June 8th for daily Masses with the new allowable numbers. The suggested day for implementation is for the weekend Masses on June 13th/14th.

The following principles continue to guide us:

- Spiritual and sacramental life of all people is a vital part of our existence as church.
- The care for the physical health of all people is vital.
- Understanding how the Covid-19 virus spreads, and the timeline of the virus within an individual, is important for preventing and tracking the disease it causes. A person may have, and transmit, the virus without any symptoms.
- Following the directives and taking seriously the recommendations of the Saskatchewan Health Authority is mandatory.

The policies and guidelines provided must be met by every parish that wishes to open for Eucharistic gatherings, prayer, or any other form of devotions or sacramental ministry. Pastors and parish administrators have been provided with detailed guidelines for holding Mass with the Eucharist. Where there is more than one way of doing something, the local priest, along with his staff or liturgy volunteers, should determine the best way for them to proceed, and communicate

those directions clearly to their parishioners. All people need to be treated with respect, compassion and without judgement, as to whether they choose to physically go the church or not.

Places of worship should only return to gatherings once they are able to safely implement the controls identified in this policy. If, due to a lack of appropriate supplies and materials, a parish or pastor is not able to follow all of the guidelines, then this information must be clearly communicated to all parishioners.

As with other places around the province and country, the return to gatherings in churches will require new habits and new ways of being present in a church. Some of these new ways will feel onerous. All people can help provide confidence in moving our churches forward into future phases of reopening if we show kindness, patience, and charity towards each other.

People who would consider themselves to be vulnerable and more high-risk for contracting Covid-19 will likely choose not to attend Mass or go to a church at this time. Some people may feel that receiving communion is too high risk for them, even if they attend a Mass in person. All people need to be treated with respect, compassion and without judgement.

Phase III – as of June 8, 2020

Dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass remains in place as granted by Archbishop Don Bolen in [his letter dated March 18, 2020](#).

All of the following may be taking place in our churches at this time as long as guidelines linked with each one are met (*all of the links will be updated on the Archdiocese website by June 8th*):

- [Sacrament of Reconciliation](#), which may also be celebrated in an appropriate outdoor setting.
- [Private Prayer in Church](#) which may include Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.
- [Sacrament of Baptism](#)
- [Funerals](#)
- [Sacrament of Matrimony](#)
- [Care for the Dying in a Health Care Facility or Home](#)
- [Offices may open](#) in a limited way (determined by parish) and meetings of less than 15 people may be held as long as physical distancing can be maintained at all times. Where larger meetings are required, or the required physical distancing is not possible, meetings are to be held by conference call or online platform. See the [Saskatchewan Workplace Information](#).
- Gatherings for devotions and prayers may be held as indicated in the document [Private Prayer in Church](#). Prayers and devotions may also be carried out by telephone, conference call or online platforms.
- Contact with parishioners by phone or email should be made regularly.
- Daily Eucharistic celebrations may take place. The allowable occupancy is one-third of the defined occupancy rate of the facility to a maximum of 30 individuals. Physical distancing of 2m between people not living in the same household must be maintained.

[Cleaning instructions for public places](#) must strictly be followed. Parishes will need to ensure that they are using an approved disinfecting solution. Local parishes have received detailed instructions with respect to liturgical celebrations and cleaning guidelines. Please follow the instructions provided at each parish.

Consultation continues regarding the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation originally scheduled for Easter and late Spring. Information will be updated and communicated before June 15th.

Wishing you all a blessed Feast of the Holy Trinity.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Bolen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Don" and the last name "Bolen" clearly distinguishable.

✠ Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina