



ROMAN CATHOLIC ARCHDIOCESE OF REGINA OFFICE OF THE ARCHBISHOP

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May 20, 2020

To all people in the Archdiocese of Regina

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

These directives have been prepared, in consultation with a working group of priests and pastoral centre staff, with the following principles in mind:

- 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 recommendations of the Saskatchewan Health Authority is mandatory.

The 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 the celebration of 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.

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. 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. All people need to be treated with respect, compassion and without judgement, as to whether they choose to physically go to church or not.

Consultation continues regarding the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation originally scheduled for Easter and late Spring, and for larger gatherings in churches. Information will be updated and communicated as soon as changes are made.

Phase I - Current

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:

- [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 10 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.
- 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 continue at this time with just the priest present. If the Mass is being livestreamed, one or two other people may be present to assist the priest. The only parishes with exceptions in the Archdiocese, where more than one or two people are present, have sought the permission of the Archbishop.

Local health directives:

1. No more than 10 people may gather in one place at a time.
2. Individuals who do not live in the same household must maintain 2m distancing between each other at all times.
3. Participants should limit their contact with surfaces near them, and all surfaces should be sanitized when the gathering ends.

[Cleaning instructions for public places](#) must strictly be followed. Parishes will need to ensure that they are using an approved disinfecting solution.

Phase II – beginning May 30th

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

Directives from Phase I continue to apply in Phase II.

Weekday and weekend Eucharistic Celebrations may expand to include up to 10 people (including the

priest and others providing ministry) following Archdiocesan directives. Local parishes have received detailed instructions with respect to liturgical celebrations and cleaning guidelines. Please follow the instructions provided at each parish.

Phase III - TBA

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

Directives from Phase I will continue to apply in Phase III unless otherwise noted when we reach that stage of reopening.

Following consultation with local health authorities, Eucharistic celebrations may expand to include more people. The Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan allows for gatherings of up to 15 in Phase Three. All guidelines and directives will be updated to reflect the number of people allowed to gather in churches.

Leaders of faith communities province-wide have expressed their desire to enter into conversation with government and health officials to address a wide range of questions, reflective of the various categories of activities that are hosted in our places of worship. Among other things, we will be enquiring whether large churches, which can safely accommodate many more than 10 people while safeguarding a 2 m. distance, might be able to bring more people together. The people of the Archdiocese will be informed as further steps are able to be taken.

Perseverance to you all. The Lord is with us. Trust in Him.

Yours in the Risen Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Don Bolen". The signature is stylized and cursive.

✠ Donald Bolen
Archbishop of Regina