



DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

P.O. Box 875
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada
L2R 6Z4

THE CHANCERY

905-684-0154
Fax: 905-684-2185

DIOCESAN PROTOCOLS EFFECTIVE APRIL 3, 2021

- The province-wide COVID-19 lockdown takes effect on Saturday, April 3, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. Churches are permitted to remain open with a maximum capacity of 15% for religious services including weddings and funerals. The 15% capacity includes all involved in ministry (priest, cantor, etc.), as well as the staff member/volunteer who manages contact tracing and disinfection protocols, if they remain during the church service.
- Since the allowed capacity has been reduced from 30% to 15%, pastors should post updated information and schedules on their outgoing voicemail message and on their websites, Facebook pages and other social media, advising parishioners if/which Masses and other services are accessible for in-person and/or virtual attendance.
- Since the allowed capacity has been reduced from 30% to 15%, parishioners who have reserved seating for Masses and services during the Triduum are advised to check with their parish before coming to the church to avoid disappointment.
- Parishioners are reminded that Bishop Bergie's dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and on Holy Days of Obligation, granted on March 16, 2020, is ongoing. All are encouraged to view online/livestream/televised Masses. A listing of diocesan parishes with livestreaming can be found at www.saintcd.com.
- Confirmations scheduled in April are postponed. Rescheduling will be discussed in May, at the end of the current lockdown.
- Permission may be granted to allow for Sunday wedding celebrations until the end of 2021 for weddings that have had to be rescheduled due to COVID-19. In this case, officiating clergy are to complete Form II, requesting a dispensation for "Other" noting Sunday wedding, providing the originally scheduled date and the new date, and citing "COVID-19 pandemic" as the grave reason for the request. Any dispensations already granted for postponed/cancelled weddings need to be amended and re-issued. Please forward these to the Chancery at the appropriate time.
- Funerals services in Grey-Lockdown zones are permitted to allow up to 15% of capacity for the entire facility with physical distancing to a maximum of 50 people for indoor services and 50 people for outdoor services.
- Diocesan offices and parish offices will be closed to the public for the duration of the lockdown. Only essential staff are to be present in the office. Employees should work remotely wherever possible.
- Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible. No meetings should take place in parish halls or other church spaces at this time. The only exception would be those deemed as essential services i.e. Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, restricted to 10 people.

Issued April 1, 2021

CATHOLIC CENTRE: 3400 Merrittville Highway, Thorold, Ontario

www.saintcd.com

email: chancery@saintcd.com