

Sample Capacity Limit Announcement for parishes in “Lockdown” - Moving to 10 person capacity - December 2020

(may be used as a pulpit, website or email announcement – please edit as appropriate)

We want to thank all the parishioners of _____ for their ongoing support during this period of great uncertainty. It has been wonderful to see so many of you at Mass since we re-opened in June. We are especially grateful to the volunteers who have helped ensure our church is a safe place to gather – they have done incredible work!

As you know, the number of new COVID-19 cases in the Greater Toronto Area have increased significantly in recent days and, at present, Toronto and Peel Regions are in the “Lockdown Stage” as identified by the Province of Ontario. In addition, Premier Ford announced on December 11, 2020 special emergency measures that need to be taken in York region.

For this reason, as of Monday, December 14th, we must restrict attendance inside the church to 10 people, including priests hearing confessions or a staff member/volunteer to monitor capacity restrictions. Sadly, due to these measures, public Masses must be temporarily cancelled. Priests will continue to celebrate private Mass daily for the intentions of parishioners and for those suffering from Covid-19.

(USE APPROPRIATE PARAGRAPH BELOW)

Our church will remain open for private prayer and for the faithful to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation wherever possible. (LIST TIMES AS APPROPRIATE) Weddings, funerals and baptisms will now be restricted to 10 persons, including those who are involved in ministry (priest, cantor, etc.). First Holy Communions and Confirmations will need to be postponed at this time.

OR

Sadly, it is not possible for our parish to remain open at this time in a way that is safe and able to control the restricted number of people permitted in the building.

While I recognize it is not a substitute for attending Mass in person, I encourage you to view online/livestream/televised Masses. A full list is available at www.archtoronto.org.

Also, all non-essential meetings in the parish will move to virtual meetings or they may be postponed. Our staff will also be working remotely in large part wherever possible. *(may wish to mention revised office hours as appropriate)*

(parishes may wish to include a note about ongoing financial support/pre-authorized giving)

We recognize these measures are extremely challenging. I am also so incredibly grateful for the efforts of our heroic volunteers who have been faithfully welcoming parishioners and cleaning the church between services, ensuring that we can operate safely and responsibly. Your selflessness and generosity is inspiring!

So many of the faithful rely on the reception of the sacraments and our churches to find solace, peace and support during this period of pandemic. Despite these new restrictions, we will make every effort to continue our outreach to you. We also ask that you find opportunities to assist those who are vulnerable or alone among us.

We will continue to update you as the situation evolves. *(refer to parish website or social media channels if appropriate)* We pray that you and your loved ones remain safe and healthy. May God continue to bless you now and always!