



**Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough**

April 1, 2021

To all clergy and staff of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Peterborough,

This afternoon, Premier Doug Ford announced restrictions throughout Ontario to curtail the transmission of COVID-19. These changes will impact the churches and missions in our Diocese and will take effect as of Saturday morning, April 3, 2021 at 12:01 a.m.

As of Saturday, all churches throughout the province are restricted to 15% capacity for the next 28 days. I recognize this will impact preparations for the Easter Vigil and Easter Sunday.

I offer the following guidance to parishes and missions:

- Parish churches will remain open for Sunday and Daily Masses at 15% capacity during the 28-day lockdown.
- The pastor may decide to close a Mission church if health precautions cannot be maintained or if the 15% capacity limit makes opening unfeasible.
- For most parishes, we know that given the physical distancing restrictions, “true” capacity is closer to 15% than it is to 30%. We also know that some people with reservations do not present themselves for a particular service.
- We recommend that if you have existing reservations, you review them so that you can strive to ensure the capacity limit of 15% is maintained.
- Due to these extraordinary circumstances, the parish hall may be used for overflow, ensuring physical distancing at all times and still maintaining the 15% capacity. This applies only to Easter Weekend – moving forward, the hall should not be used during the “shutdown” period.
- If feasible, additional Masses may be added to those already scheduled on Easter Sunday. To this end, I extend my permission for priests to add and celebrate Masses as needed for Easter Sunday.

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- The number of COVID-19 cases in the province has risen significantly in recent days. For the safety of all, it is imperative that each parish ensure all *WorshipSafe* guidelines and the *COVID-19 Safety Plan* are clearly followed to protect parishioners, clergy and staff; and that parishes make every effort to maintain the 15% capacity limit.
- Funerals and visitations 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 (not including funeral home staff). Parishes are asked to liaise with funeral homes prior to making arrangements with families for additional clarity.

### **Reminders for all Parishes**

- Arrival and dismissal should be co-ordinated in such a fashion to ensure large groups do not congregate.
- Livestreaming of services will continue and the dispensation from the Sunday Eucharist continues. The elderly, those with compromised immune systems or other health conditions should be encouraged to exercise extreme caution about any outings, including attendance at church. The Diocese is livestreaming the Masses from the Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains on our YouTube channel. [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC\\_Cd0rFPwUxMtMRhS\\_UtCcg](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC_Cd0rFPwUxMtMRhS_UtCcg)

I appreciate your efforts to implement these late-breaking changes and to pastorally communicate with parishioners impacted by these restrictions.

We pray that, even in the midst of these logistical challenges, we will enter into a prayerful spirit of reflection and meditation on the death and resurrection of our Lord during these holy days. As always, be assured of my prayers and my gratitude for your pastoral ministry.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Daniel Miehm".

†Most Reverend Daniel J. Miehm  
Bishop of Peterborough

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