

Note on reconfinement and curfew from January 9 to February 8

January 7, 2021

The government's announcement of stricter lockdown measures in Quebec, from January 9 to February 8, with a curfew from 8:00 p.m. to 5:00 a.m., has a direct impact on our parish communities. The government is calling on everyone to stay home to try to effectively contain the pandemic. During this period, we will not be allowed to hold face-to-face religious gatherings in our places of worship. Therefore, starting at midnight on Friday, January 8, we must comply with this directive and participate in the common effort to fight covid-19. However, it will be possible to celebrate the funeral with a maximum of 25 people.

Contrary to the confinement of March 2020, which caught us off guard, this time we have learned the lessons of the first confinement. Together, we have learned how to do Church differently during this health crisis.

We therefore urge the various leaders of the parish communities to exercise pastoral and missionary creativity to animate the life of their communities (for example: setting up online celebrations of the Word, broadcasting a celebration, time for common prayer, sharing the Word, supporting family celebrations, being attentive to welcoming and listening to people who are alone, etc). There is a saying which says: "To live is not to wait for the storm to pass, it is to learn to dance in the rain." It is therefore important to develop new pastoral and missionary resources.

We are aware that this situation is causing serious financial difficulties for some parishes. However, as Bishop Paul-André reminded us in his letter of October 5, 2020, we invite parishes not to lay off their pastoral personnel too quickly, since their appointment is the responsibility of the diocesan bishop. Moreover, before making a decision in this regard, we invite the chairperson of the Fabrique to communicate with the Episcopal Council in order to seek possible solutions.

The present health crisis is serious and has a considerable impact on the life and organization of our Christian communities. However, it should not prevent our Church from continuing its mission, ready to hear Christ's call to hope. We are therefore encouraged to show solidarity with the women and men of Quebec at this very special time and to show our evangelical charity by praying for the sick and for the nursing personnel, by showing our availability to support those who live alone and whose existence is particularly affected by the measures taken.

In the end, we must find ways to face the turbulence of this crisis. Let us remain united and confident in the Holy Spirit who accompanies us in these troubled times.

Rodhain Kasuba, v.g.

To sum up...

1. The government measures apply from midnight Friday, January 8. Saturday masses must therefore be cancelled.
2. Demonstrate pastoral and missionary innovation and creativity. If one chooses to broadcast closed-door celebrations, it is important to ensure that such an event is not associated with a gathering.
3. Outdoor gatherings are not permitted (even a "drive-through" celebration in a parking lot, like a drive-in theater).
4. For funerals, the limit is 25 people, but the minister and the volunteers required to hold the event are not included in this maximum number. The mask must be worn by everyone at all times.
5. It is possible to offer the Sacrament of the Sick in end-of-life situations. It is important to respect the sanitary protocol. Also, ensure adequate coordination with the nursing care directorate of the institution, if this is the case.
6. The celebration of Masses in religious houses is always possible, although the chapel remains closed to the public.
7. Telework is mandatory, unless the employer deems the work of an employee essential to the operation of the organization.
8. Fabrique meetings and other parish meetings in the presence of the public are prohibited and must be postponed after the period of confinement. It is preferable to use teleconferencing or videoconferencing to deal only with urgent matters.
9. Community organizations such as St. Vincent de Paul may continue their services. However, it is requested that the rules of distancing, wearing of masks and hand washing be strictly enforced.

Change about the funeral

The Quebec government has returned to a maximum of 25 for funerals. Here is the text from the public health website: "Prohibited, except for funerals (maximum of 25 people excluding funeral service workers and volunteers in or outside the building, and mandatory keeping of an attendance register). In addition, no food or alcohol may be served." This means that there are no longer 10, but 25 authorized persons.

Rodhain Kasuba, v.g.