



## MEMORANDUM

---

**2 pages via e-mail**

**To: All Clergy, All Parishes, All Staff**  
**From: Neil MacCarthy, Director, Public Relations & Communications**  
**Date: January 4, 2022**  
**Re: Provincial Announcement – January 4, 2022 - Latest Covid-19 Updates**

Yesterday, the provincial government announced that Ontario will be moving to a modified Step 2 of the Roadmap to Reopening. These changes will take effect as of Wednesday, January 5, 2022, with most restrictions lasting a minimum of 21 days.

Capacity restrictions for places of worship are set at 50% of pre-Covid capacity however distancing of 2 metres (6 feet) must be maintained by those not from the same family. We offer the following guidance given the latest announcement:

- **NEW – (Maximum number for indoor gatherings changes from 10 people to 5 people)** Virtual meetings should replace in-person meetings wherever possible. Exceptions include those gatherings that are deemed as essential services (e.g. Alcoholics Anonymous/Narcotics Anonymous Meetings, food bank, other programs to serve the poor and marginalized, etc.). These gatherings should be restricted to **5 people** and ensure that all appropriate health and safety measures are in place (use of masks, hand sanitizer, physical distancing, etc.).
- **NEW – Staff should work virtually wherever possible.** Please continue to take great care in implementing robust health and safety measures in the rectory and office. In addition to keeping our parishioners safe, every measure should be taken to protect our clergy, essential staff and any volunteers who are required to be on-site at this time. This includes regular sanitizing, mask use and other measures as appropriate. A reminder that masks should be worn in any situation where there is interaction with others. Parishes should also reduce public office hours and encourage parishioners to communicate with the office by telephone or e-mail instead of in-person wherever possible.
- **NEW – Self-isolation changes** – (from the [Province of Ontario](#)) “For anyone who tests positive for Covid-19, Ontario has also changed the required isolation period based on growing evidence that generally healthy people with Covid-19 are most infectious in the two days before and three days after symptoms develop. Individuals with Covid-19 who are vaccinated, as well as children under 12, will be required to isolate for five days following the onset of symptoms. Their household contacts are also required to isolate with them. These individuals can end isolation after five days if their symptoms are improved for at least 24 hours and all public health and safety measures, such as masking and physical distancing, are followed. Non-household contacts are required to self-monitor for ten days.



Individuals who are unvaccinated, partially vaccinated or immunocompromised will be required to isolate for 10 days.”

- In light of the highly contagious Omicron variant, the archdiocese strongly recommends against congregational singing at this time. A cantor or small choir remain acceptable – those singing in choirs should be at least three metres from one another and the congregation.
- Regular reminders for parishioners – those feeling unwell should not attend Mass at this time. Parishes should also remind those attending services that parishioners not congregate in large groups before or after Mass, wherever possible.
- Given the increased potential of positive cases for those who may have attended church, contact tracing remains a best practice (either online registration or self sign-in). Wherever possible, an e-mail address provides the fastest way to reach large number of attendees should notification be required following a positive case.

We recognize that the Christmas season posed significant challenges given the number of Masses as well as the need to adapt to the fluid nature of the Omicron situation. A special thank you to clergy, staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts to serve the faithful and foster a safe environment for all!

We will continue to provide relevant updates as appropriate.