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Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan

La Corporation Épiscopale Catholique Romaine de Grouard

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March 1, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As a follow-up to the directives issued February 9, 2022 following the Provincial Government's announcement on the easing of COVID 19/PANDEMIC restrictions, I now add the following guidelines for the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan. I have consulted with the Archdiocese of Edmonton in preparation of this document.

NB: ***People are asked to exercise respect, charity, and kindness in responding to other person's level of comfort, especially during these steps of transition out of pandemic restrictions.***

STEP ONE: Changes to the guidelines provided on February 9th underlined.

1. *Physical distancing is lifted, however, some section(s) in the church can be reserved for physical distancing for persons with anxiety or concerns.*
2. *Continue to provide sanitizing stations, especially at all entrances of the church, in the sanctuary, near places where Communion is distributed.*
3. *Communion on the tongue is permitted. Please consult with your pastor. Please respect his guidance and decision on this matter at this time.*

STEP TWO: In effect as of March 1st 2022

1. Indoor masking is no longer required. Persons wishing to continue to wear a mask are to be respected for their choice.
2. Indoor and outdoor social gathering limits are lifted.
3. Congregational singing without masks is allowed.
4. The physical distribution of parish bulletins is allowed.

WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS

- 50% if facility has fire occupancy over 1,000.
- 500 attendees if facility has fire occupancy load between 500 and 999.

- No capacity limit if facility has fire occupancy load under 500.
- No capacity limit if the ceremony is at a place of worship.
- Funeral receptions or parish social gatherings are permitted; **however**, it is recommended that servers will place food items on plates rather than each person taking their own food. Servers are to be masked and gloved.

ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES FROM THE OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL

1. The collection basket may be past and carried in the offertory procession. Individual parishes may decide to continue with the current practice of having the collection basket/box near the entrance of the nave for parishioners to drop their envelop or donation.
2. The offertory procession may resume. No open ciboria or vessel is used for the procession. Hosts must be covered; wine carafe must have a cap or stopper.
3. Persons involved in the offertory procession are asked to sanitize their hands before and after the procession.
4. Only items proper to the offertory procession are to be presented.
5. The sign of peace will continue to be expressed by a show of recognition to the other rather than by a hand shake or embrace, except for persons of a same household.

LIVESTREAMING *(guidelines borrowed from the Archdiocese of Edmonton)*

Parishes that have been livestreaming Masses are encouraged to continue providing this service for two reasons:

1. Allowing the parishioners to decide for themselves whether to attend Mass in person or via livestream depending on their comfort level and/or health condition(s);
2. Maintaining this option in case the Province implements new restrictions during a resurgence of cases and/or another wave from a new variant of concern emerges.

The Sunday Obligation to attend Mass continues to be suspended.

OTHER NOTES FOR CONSIDERATION

- During Lent, it is not permitted to decorate the altar with flowers

Weddings: During Lent, the couple should be reminded that their wedding plans must respect the special nature of the Liturgical season. Matrimony is discouraged during Holy Week.

Funerals: May be celebrated on any day except:

- Solemnities that are Holydays of Obligation
- Thursday of Holy Week
- Paschal Triduum
- Sundays of Lent, and Easter

In-person Meetings: may resume in parish halls or parish facilities.

- Hand sanitizing products are to be available for use,
- Physical distancing is encouraged,
- Distribution of paper material should be limited,
- Meeting duration should be limited to 1 ½ hour.

Continue a regular cleaning and sanitizing of all public and worship space.

Msgr Charles Lavoie PH
Vicar General/Chancellor