



Update on Reopening Churches from Bishop Colli's Office

Dear Friends:

I am grateful that the Premier has allow our churches to reopen for services in the province of Ontario with a 30% capacity as a limit. In order for this to take place, we must instruct all the churches to set in place the necessary conditions so that we follow health and provincial guidelines for the safety of all parishioners. In order to do this, a plan is being created for our diocese with the bishop and his council of priests.

As a time-line, I am hoping that the churches will be able to acquire the PPE they will need and mark all the necessary spots in our churches by the weekend of June 27-28th. Many churches have PPE on order and it has not arrived as yet. We cannot open without these products and all conditions met.

Once the churches are open, parishioners must also take precautionary steps to avoid the Covid-19 virus by washing their hands before coming to church, by follow the directions and signs indicating where to sit, entrance and exiting procedures etc. while in church, for the safety of all present. If parishioners wish to wear their protective masks, this will be optional for them. People who are frail and feeling ill of any kind, are not to attend Mass at this time.

We are all anxious to return to our churches but we must be patient for just two more weeks until the churches are prepared, the priests and ministers are instructed and everything is in place for a safe and holy celebration for all. With only 30% capacity allowed, some of our larger congregations might need to attend an additional scheduled mass if needed, at a different time.

I want to thank you for your patience and support to your parish community over the past 3 months. We must remember the pandemic is not over, and things cannot return to how they were before. Please do your part to work with your pastor and his team so this return will be a joyful and a safe experience for all. I will keep you informed as to any new developments.

Sincerely,

+Fred J. Colli

Bishop of Thunder Bay