



DIOCESE OF LONDON

OFFICE OF THE AUXILIARY BISHOP

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COVID-19 UPDATE FROM BISHOP DABROWSKI (UPDATE #22)

In light of the information released by the Province of Ontario on Monday, it is necessary to update our protocols. The changes are things we have seen before, but which need our attention in order to continue following proper procedures. In addition to those changes required by the government, we have added further requirements out of an abundance of caution. These changes are effective at 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, 5 January 2022, and apply for the next 21 days or until other notification is given.

1. The celebration of Mass, other liturgies or devotions

The directives released yesterday limit gatherings in worship spaces to 50% capacity. With the mandatory requirements of two-metre (six-foot) physical distancing that are still in place, this means no real change in the numbers we can allow at any one time. The use of masks, along with contact tracing and our other protocols for our worship spaces, are all still mandatory.

For the 21-day period, congregational singing is suspended. Concerns about aerosol transmission and the prevalent use of non-medical-grade masks in the general population make this a prudent move. Cantors may continue to lead singing without a mask from the choir loft, a stand or the ambo in the sanctuary, by which three-metre (ten-foot) distancing is observed.

The Windsor-Essex Health Unit requires active screening when people are entering worship spaces; i.e., asking the specific questions about symptoms. All other areas may simply continue to refer people to the posted signs for their self-monitoring.

2. Offices in the Diocese

All employees are to work remotely unless the nature of their work requires otherwise. Staff must have permission from their supervisor before entering an office or church building.

3. Meeting spaces / Parish halls

All meeting places, including parish halls, are to be closed. This does not apply to those groups meeting as “social services” such as Alcoholics Anonymous.

Volunteer groups, such as money-counters, would be allowed to meet in halls to a maximum of five people at a time.

With the closure of all restaurants and other indoor venues for eating, there can be no food or drink served in parish halls. Food preparation, limited to a team of five people maximum, may be done for service to the poor. Food preparation for fund-raising is deemed non-essential at this time, and is suspended for the 21-day period.

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These measures are being taken to slow down the spread of the Omicron variant. Continued vigilance in physical distancing and the use of masks are important means by which we can do our part to stop the spread of this and other variants.

In Bishop Fabbro's absence, I thank all you, along with the staff and the many volunteers who work with you. We continue to pray for an end to the pandemic, for all who have fallen ill because of it, and for all our health-care and front-line workers.

Most Rev. Joseph Dabrowski, C.S.M.A.
Auxiliary Bishop of London