



November 20, 2020

To all clergy, staff and the faithful of the Archdiocese of Toronto,

Before providing an update on the latest measures implemented by the province of Ontario regarding churches in the Archdiocese of Toronto, I wish to express my gratitude and admiration for the heroic work that has taken place following our June re-opening.

Since that time, more than 1.3 million Catholics have attended Mass in our archdiocese. Following our robust WorshipSafe protocols, clergy, staff and volunteers have created a safe and welcoming environment, ensured proper distancing, the use of masks, as well as sanitizing churches after every service. You have also reached out with creativity and love to care not only for the sick and bereaved, but also for the needs of those suffering in other ways, who are isolated, who are facing psychological and spiritual trauma. You have been there for them. I thank you for fostering a culture of compassion that is needed more than ever, in the midst of this pandemic.

Participation in the Mass and especially the opportunity to receive the Eucharist and other sacraments gives all of us the spiritual strength to not only endure the crisis, but also to reach out to serve, day after day, all of those who are suffering.

We also must recognize the gravity of the situation before us. The number of positive cases of Covid-19 continues to rise at an alarming rate in many areas of our own archdiocese and in other regions of the province and country. We are still in the midst of a pandemic, which has already taken the lives of more than 11,000 Canadians.

We are grateful to those who have been dedicated to fighting the virus – first responders and front line workers along with those working selflessly in our long-term care homes among others. In my conversations with political leaders and medical officers of health, I continue to assure them of our ongoing prayers as they make difficult decisions to protect all of us.

In view of all of the above, I am deeply disappointed that, in some regions of the archdiocese, we must restrict participation in the sacraments (details enclosed). This will inflict a great spiritual pain upon those who safely and with great dedication have been drawing spiritual strength to sustain them, and to help them to serve those suffering in this pandemic. As we have demonstrated our ability to safely worship together, I trust that we will soon be able fully to resume public worship.

Meanwhile, now is the time to go ever deeper in prayer, and with continued love and creative zeal, build up our community of faith and reach out even more to those who are suffering in these difficult days.

Sincerely in Christ,

† Thomas Card. Collins

Thomas Cardinal Collins
Archbishop of Toronto