



# ARCHDIOCESE *of* KINGSTON

23 December 2020  
*St. John of Kanty, Priest*

My Dear Faithful:

As we approach the Solemnity of Christmas in just two days, I wish to assure you of my prayers and blessings for the celebration of the birth of Christ.

On Monday, the Premier of Ontario announced that a province-wide shutdown will begin on Saturday, 26 December, and will continue until Saturday, 23 January 2021, bringing with it greater restrictions on how we gather as communities. I am thankful that we will be able to celebrate the Christmas Masses. However, our Christmas season will be greatly impacted.

Since March of this year, we have learned a lot about dealing with lockdowns and reduced numbers for public gatherings, and we are now better able to determine whether individual churches need to close under these new restrictions. I would ask that you consult your parish websites to learn what is happening in your parish. This may include the opportunity for private prayer and Adoration, the distribution of Holy Communion, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, live-streamed Masses and, in some places, the public celebration of Mass, with significantly reduced numbers. All of these activities will need to strictly adhere to these Provincial restrictions. Please be mindful that our pastors and staff will need time to adjust to these conditions and that our parish offices will be closed.

As we enter this Christmas season, I wish to express my thanks and appreciation for the patience, perseverance and zeal that you have demonstrated in these past ten months. Our faithful have been wonderfully cooperative. I pray that the suffering and anxiety which this pandemic has caused may recede with the passage of time. These tests, sent by the Lord, can be moments of great grace. The Lord will continue to bless us, and I pray that this Christmas may fill our hearts with the peace of the Christ child.

With my blessings,

+Michael Mulhall  
Archbishop of Kingston



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## Provincewide Shutdown

While the province is shutdown, the following directives will take effect on Saturday, 26 December 2020 until Saturday, 23 January 2021. The shutdown is scheduled to end on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of January; however, it could be extended.

- Parishes must restrict attendance inside the church to 10 people and with all other safety and cleaning protocols in place.
- Weddings and Baptisms may be celebrated under provincial occupancy restriction; a maximum of 10 people, including the priest, must be observed.
- Priests should continue to celebrate Mass privately, if they are not celebrating Mass publicly.
- Funeral wakes or services may also be held in the church with the same restrictions.
- Priests may hear Confessions, by appointment or in the church, provided gathering restrictions of a maximum of 10 people, including the priest, are observed.
- Parish offices are to close, and employees are asked to work from home. Employees may enter offices and churches to carry out essential duties only.
- Events in parish halls and meeting areas should be cancelled unless they are deemed an essential service (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous).
- Priests and Deacons may preside at outdoor burial services but must obey gathering restrictions of a maximum of 10 people including the clergy.
- All regular meetings and social activities in parishes are cancelled. Sacramental preparation can continue online.

+Michael Mulhall  
Archbishop of Kingston