

Roman Catholic Diocese  
of Sault Ste. Marie



Diocèse catholique romain  
de Sault Ste-Marie

December 22, 2020

**Ontario Announces Province-Wide Shutdown to Stop Spread of COVID-19 and Save Lives.**

Opening Comments

The province announced today that hospitalizations for COVID-19 have increased by 74 per cent over the last four weeks and are more than 15 times higher than they were at the beginning of September.

As a result of these changing conditions, the Premier announced that the **entire Province** will move into shutdown status (grey zone) effective December 26, 2020.

COVID-19 Response Framework

As a result of the impacts of these changing conditions, time-limited measures will be implemented and evaluated throughout **14 days in Northern Ontario** and **28 days in Southern Ontario** beginning December 26, 2020. The government, through its assessment, will determine if it is safe to lift any restrictions or if they are to be extended.

The Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie will adopt the directives.

**DIOCESAN DIRECTIVES**

**Current Practices implemented until Dec 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 11:59pm**

The current Diocesan COVID-19 standard practices in parishes will remain in place until Dec 25<sup>th</sup>, 2020 at 11:59pm. Bishop Dowd wishes that the celebration of Christmas masses continue as previously planned by each parish.

**Practices as of December 26<sup>th</sup>**

There are new limits for attendees at religious services, rites or ceremonies, including weddings and funeral services. Instead of 30% capacity, the *newly* allowed number of attendees for religious services is **10 people** (including clergy, support staff and volunteers, both indoors and outdoors). Virtual religious services, (livestreaming Mass) are strongly encouraged.

Wishing you a Very Merry Christmas and a Blessed New Year.

Yours in Christ,

Fr. Jean Vezina, Chancellor  
On behalf of the COVID-19 Team