



**THE ROMAN CATHOLIC  
ARCHDIOCESE OF PORT OF SPAIN**

Health, Safety and Environment Team  
c/o Archbishop's House, 27 Maraval Road, Port of Spain

**UPDATED GUIDELINES  
FOR OPERATING  
DURING THE  
COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

**BULLETIN #22**

**Effective 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Supreme vigilance to personal, respiratory and hand hygiene is paramount at this time of community spread of the highly transmissible Delta variant of the SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 virus.**

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| <b>INFECTION PREVENTION &amp; CONTROL</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Any individual with flu-like symptoms must not attend in-person worship</li> <li>Any individual AND/OR any member of a household under quarantine orders or in self-isolation must not attend in-person worship</li> <li>Face masks covering the nose and mouth which fit snugly against the side of the face must be worn by all worshipers over the age of eight (8) years, for the duration of the service</li> <li>Hand washing or sanitizing is required immediately prior to entry into the church, chapel or parish hall</li> <li>Body temperature screening must be performed at the entrance of the church, chapel or hall. Any person with a temperature &gt;37.5C cannot be admitted</li> <li>Seating must be such that persons not from the same household can be positioned at a safe, physical distance apart of 2metres</li> <li>Natural air ventilation over air condition is preferable during in-person services. Windows and doors on opposite sides of the church, chapel or hall should remain open during services</li> <li>There must be a regular schedule for cleaning and sanitizing of the furniture after each service</li> </ul> |
| <b>DOCUMENTATION/ REGISTRATION</b>        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A real-time, analog or digital record of each person in physical attendance at every service or meeting is required for the purpose of contact tracing</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>COVID-19 VACCINATION</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Serving members of the parish e.g. ordained and commissioned ministers, sacristans, altar servers, choir members, lectors and hospitality committee members must all be fully vaccinated against SARS-CoV-2 i.e. two weeks have passed since the 2<sup>nd</sup> dose of a two-dose regimen or two weeks have passed after the single-dose Johnson &amp; Johnson vaccine</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>HOLY MASS / BAPTISM/ WEDDING</b>       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Services may last up to 90 minutes and <b>accommodate up to 50% of the capacity of the church, chapel or hall</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

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| <b>FUNERALS</b>                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services may last up to 90 minutes and <b>accommodate up to 50% of the capacity of the church, chapel or hall</b></li> <li>• The casket is to remain closed at all times, whether the deceased died from COVID-19 or not. This applies from the time of arrival at the church until departure upon conclusion of the service. This to discourage crowding by mourners.</li> </ul> <p><b><i>NB If the death is from COVID-19, as stated on the death certificate, the funeral service must be conducted exclusively at the funeral home. Live streaming or video recording of the service is now routinely offered by the funeral agency to facilitate a wider audience.</i></b></p> |
| <b>BURIAL &amp; CREMATION</b>         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Twenty-five (25) persons are now permitted at the graveside during a burial</b></li> <li>• The burial of COVID-19 positive corpses is not permitted in cemeteries with a high water-table. The Ministry of Health has established a list of public cemeteries for the burial of COVID-19 positive deceased. In the case of private or church-owned cemeteries, the determination of suitable burial plots is made by the County Medical Officer of Health (CMOH) for that district. The parish priest or senior church administrator should liaise with the local Public Health official as required</li> <li>• Cremation of COVID-19 corpses is permitted</li> </ul>            |
| <b>MEETINGS OF THE LAITY</b>          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where possible, virtual gatherings are encouraged</li> <li>• <b>In person gatherings, when necessary, may last 90mins and accommodate 50% of the capacity of the church, chapel or hall</b></li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY EUCHARIST</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distribution of the Precious Blood is strictly prohibited at this time</li> <li>• Until further notice, Holy Eucharist must not be administered onto the tongue but onto the palm of the hand only</li> </ul> <p><b><i>NB Ministers are reminded that there must not be any physical contact between the minister and the congregant. If inadvertently there is contact, it is the responsibility of the serving minister to pause and perform hand hygiene with an alcohol-based, sanitizing solution before resuming distribution</i></b></p>                                                                                                                                     |

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