



2775 Erin Centre Boulevard  
Mississauga, ON L5M 5W2  
Phone: (905) 812 0030  
Fax: (905) 812 0011  
[www.mercifulredeemer.org](http://www.mercifulredeemer.org)

## OFFICE HOURS

Appointment required

**Tuesday** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Thursday** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

**Saturday** 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

## MASS TIMES

**Monday** 12:15 PM

**Tuesday** 7:00 PM

**Wednesday** 12:15 PM

**Thursday** 7:00 PM

**Friday** 12:15 PM

**Saturday** 9:00 AM

3:00 PM (Sunday Vigil)

**Sunday** 9:00 AM

## CHURCH HOURS

**Mon., Wed., Fri.** 1:00 PM - 7:00 PM

**Tues., Thurs.** 11:00 AM - 7:00 PM

**Sat.** 10:00 AM - 2:30 PM

**Sun.** 2:00 PM - 4:30 PM

## ADORATION CHAPEL

*Closed until further notice*

## FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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## PARISH TEAM

**Msgr Owen Keenan, Pastor**  
[pastor@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:pastor@mercifulredeemer.org)

**Fr Suresh Xavier, Associate Pastor**  
[associate2@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:associate2@mercifulredeemer.org)

**Fr Tom Kluger, Associate Pastor**  
[associate@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:associate@mercifulredeemer.org)

**Patricia Pereira, Office Manager**  
[office@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:office@mercifulredeemer.org)

**Elizabeth Nogueira, Daytime Secretary**  
**Flavia Fernandes, Evening Secretary**  
[secretary@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:secretary@mercifulredeemer.org)

**Danielle Lape, Youth Ministry**  
[mercifulredeemerym@gmail.com](mailto:mercifulredeemerym@gmail.com)

**Jane Scamurra, Lay Pastoral Associate**  
[jane@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:jane@mercifulredeemer.org)

**Kielon Gerra, Communications Coordinator**  
[communications@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:communications@mercifulredeemer.org)

## PARISH SCHOOLS

**St. Aloysius Gonzaga** 2800 Erin Centre Blvd. | (905) 820 3900

**Divine Mercy** 2840 Duncairn Dr. | (905) 812 5445

**Our Lady of Mercy** 5820 Glen Erin Dr. | (905) 814 9216

**St. Rose of Lima School** 4590 The Gallops | (905) 828 4076

**St. Sebastian School** 3460 Aquinas Ave. | (905) 607 0107

## PARISH COMMUNITY

**Charismatic Prayer Group** Mondays, 7:00 - 8:00 PM

**St. JP II Theology of the Body Prayer Group** Wednesdays, 9:00 - 10:00 PM, by Zoom, [tob@bell.net](mailto:tob@bell.net)

**Knights of Columbus** Michael Fonseca, [gk16254@ontariokofc.ca](mailto:gk16254@ontariokofc.ca)

**Men's Fraternity** Saturdays, 8:00-10:00 AM, by Zoom

**Merciful Moms** Tuesdays, 9:30-11:30 AM

**Youth Ministry** <https://mercifulredeemer.org/youth-ministry>

**Forged Young Adult Ministry** [www.forgedministry.com](http://www.forgedministry.com)

**Society of St. Vincent de Paul** [www.mrcssvp.ca](http://www.mrcssvp.ca)

**Catholic Cemeteries & Funeral Services** [www.catholic-cemeteries.com](http://www.catholic-cemeteries.com)

**Bible Study Group** Wednesdays, 7:30-9:00 PM

## CONFESSION TIMES

**Tuesday** 6:00 - 7:00 PM

**Saturday** 4:00 PM - 5:00 PM

## TODAY'S MASS READINGS

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**First Reading:** Exodus 20:1-17

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 1:22-25

**Gospel:** John 2:13-25

## WEEKLY MASS INTENTIONS

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### **Monday, March 8, 12:15 PM**

+ John Hollick

Special Intention for Joshua McIntyre

Special Intention for Josie Gaffney

### **Tuesday, March 9, 7:00 PM**

+ Annie Dias

Thanksgiving for Carina Slim

Sp. Intention for Tenedero Family

### **Wednesday, March 10, 12:15 PM**

+ Bella D'Souza, + Martel Manalo

+ Julie Gurjao

### **Thursday, March 11, 7:00 PM**

+ Deceased Members of Laskowski Family

+ Deceased Members of Broderick Family

Special Intention for Broderick & Laskowski Families

### **Friday, March 12, 12:15 PM**

+ Andrew Barretto

Special Intention for Annie Barretto

Special Intention for Residents & Staff of The Village of Erin

### **Saturday, March 13, 9:00 AM**

+ Agnes Kwok-Sun

+ Leticia Canoy

+ Kenneth Philips

+ Maria Linda D'Souza

+ Chandra-Maria Bastiampillai

+ Renata Mirowska

+ Augusto Mortel

+ Holy Souls in Purgatory

Special Intention for Whiting Family

### **Saturday, March 13, 3:00 PM**

+ Joseph Leones-Gabua

+ Segundino Veloso

+ Annun & Leonardo Veloso

+ Picardo Perez

Special Intention for Ines Lombardi

### **Sunday, March 14, 9:00 AM**

+ Alan Lossing

+ Brian D'Costa

+ Adrian D'Souza

Thanksgiving by Nitrogen & Gil Castro

Thanksgiving for Moraes Family

## SUNDAY REFLECTION

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The Temple was built as a house where God's glory would dwell in the midst of his people. The buyers and sellers of offerings had compromise the sacredness of the Temple. Jesus' zeal to restore its sacredness leads him to clear the Temple. But this parable-in-action had a deeper meaning, as his disciples understood later.

When the Jews asked for a sign for why he had acted this way, Jesus responded: "Destroy this temple and in three days I will raise it up." The Jews thought he was talking foolishly. Later on, the disciples understood that Jesus was talking about the temple of his own body. Jesus is the sacred place where God's glory dwells in the midst of his people.

After the disciples experienced the tragic death of Jesus on the Cross and became witnesses to his resurrected body three days later, and the Holy Spirit had come upon them and filled their minds and hearts with light, they were able to look back at all they had experienced with Jesus in a new light. They began to understand that they were now part of the Body of Christ – the continuation of the sacred place where God's glory remained in the midst of his people. As they preached Jesus Christ crucified and raised, they experienced the power and wisdom of God at work in Jesus' name. Some people who heard them found a crucified Savior to be a stumbling block; others thought it utter foolishness. Still many others accepted it as saving grace.

You and I are among those who have accepted saving grace. We have been incorporated into the Body of Christ by our baptism. As Church community, we are to be the sacred dwelling place of God in our world. And each of us has been taught to reverence our body as a temple of the Holy Spirit.

Hearing the account of Jesus cleansing the Temple is a good Lenten reminder to us individually and as a community. Am I keeping the temple of my body sacred? What kind of effort do I make to keep the community (both Oblate and Church) sacred? Is Jesus inviting me to a cleansing in some way?

Lord Jesus, you are the power and wisdom of God. Open each of us to the cleansing you want to do in your temple during this Lent.

Gospel Reflection CF: <https://oblates.squarespace.com/sundays-salesian-feed/third-sunday-of-lent-march-7-2021>  
Article CF: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/2021/02/03/gods-race-for-us-is-the-answer/>

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Next Week's Readings

**First Reading:** Leviticus 13:1-2, 44-46

**Second Reading:** 1 Corinthians 10:31 - 11:1

**Gospel:** Mark 1:40-45

### Reading Our Way to God: A Webinar Featuring Dr. Tod Worner

**11 March, 2021 at 7:30 p.m. - 8:30p.m.**

**Online**

St. Jerome wrote, "When we pray, we speak to God; but when we read, God speaks to us." Join us as we interview Dr. Tod Worner (managing editor of Evangelization & Culture, the journal of the Word on Fire Institute) about the power of great literature for forming us into better Catholics, better servants of Christ — and more impactful Christian citizens. Whether you're an avid reader or want to become one, you'll leave our conversation feeling inspired to pursue reading as more than a hobby — you'll learn how reading can be a prayer and a method of spiritual formation.

**Register:** <http://bit.ly/ReadingOurWayToGod>

### Letters of Reference for Catholic Teacher Applicants

If you or one of your children are currently studying to become a teacher in our Catholic schools, part of the application process for the Board includes a letter of reference from your pastor. If you are from this parish and intend to ask for a reference letter, please note that you will have to be attending Mass here regularly and participating in a parish ministry before such a recommendation will be given. If you have a son or daughter currently in Teacher's College and they intend to use Merciful Redeemer as the parish from which they will request a letter of reference, but they do not attend this parish (because they are away at school), they will be required to obtain a letter from the pastor of the parish where they are attending while away at school. Please remember all our teachers — present and future — in your prayers!

### Change of Address

If your home address or telephone number has changed, please send us an email at [register@mercifulredeemer.org](mailto:register@mercifulredeemer.org).

## Communion Service

The Cardinal has extended the permission for Communion services in lieu of Mass for the duration of the current lockdown.

The Communion service schedule is as follows:

### SATURDAY

5:00 p.m. – 8:50 p.m in 10-minute intervals.

### SUNDAY

10:00 a.m. - 1:50 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. - 7:50 p.m. in 10-minute intervals

**NOTE:** Registration is mandatory, will open on a weekly basis (every Sunday at NOON) and will close ONE DAY before Communion service begins.

Visit [www.mercifulredeemer.org/communion-service](http://www.mercifulredeemer.org/communion-service) for more information and to register for Communion service.

### Invitation to learn and grow through Catholic Faith Outreach (CFO)

Do you wish you knew and understood Catholicism better? Do you struggle to express what the Church believes, with confidence, joy and peace? Are you living up to your Catholic Baptismal call to be a missionary disciple?

*"The disciple of Christ must not only keep the faith and live on it, but also profess it, confidently bear witness to it, and spread it: 'All however must be prepared to confess Christ before men and to follow him along the way of the Cross, amidst the persecutions which the Church never lacks.' Service of and witness to the faith are necessary for salvation: 'So everyone who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven.'" -CCC 1816*

Join the Catholic Faith Outreach (CFO): deepen your relationship with Jesus and learn how to share the message with others.

**For more information please contact:**

**Yvonne Kam** - [yvonne@webkam.ca](mailto:yvonne@webkam.ca)

**Adela Griffiths** - [adela.griffiths@rogers.com](mailto:adela.griffiths@rogers.com)

**Angela Sanguinetti** - [angelasanguinetti@hotmail.com](mailto:angelasanguinetti@hotmail.com)

**Nanette Sta. Cruz** - [nanette@live.ca](mailto:nanette@live.ca)

# LENT IS HERE!

## RESOURCES



### Living Lent as a Family

Have you ever wanted to live more liturgically but not known how? We want to help all families by providing these discussions on liturgical living during Lent to be a resource for the Domestic Church—the home. We pray that these discussions bless you and your family.

**Part 1** - John and Mary Sehorn

**Part 2** - Keenan and Bri Fitzpatrick

**Part 3/4** - (Airing March 11/18)

Access this series  
through



### Get Free Access to FORMED; The Faithful Alternative

FORMED is a revolutionary online platform that provides access to the best Catholic audio talks, movies, e-books, and video-based studies. To register for your free account:

1. Go to [formed.org/signup](https://formed.org/signup)
2. Select your parish
3. Register with your name and email address

## BIG NEWS

### Stations of the Cross

Friday evenings during Lent, 7:00 p.m.

Join us as we Livestream the Stations of the Cross each Friday at 7:00 p.m. When we reopen, we will be able to walk the Via Crucis together. In the meantime, let us accompany Christ as He takes up His Cross to bring us life. The livestream link can be found on our website under “Parish Life”.

## GET INVOLVED

### Yes, Lord! A Lenten Liturgy of the Word for Kids

Starting 19 February on Fridays at 9:30 a.m., Saturdays at 4:00 p.m. and Sundays at 7:00 a.m. and 2:30 p.m.

Tune into Salt + Light Television on Friday mornings during Lent for a kid-friendly approach to the Sunday Mass readings and homily. Whether you are worshipping at home due to the pandemic or are just looking for a way to boost your family’s faith life, you won’t want to miss this brand new series!

On demand: [www.slmedia.org/yeslord](http://www.slmedia.org/yeslord)

### The Holy Spirit and the Abandonment of the Saints

13 March from 9:30 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

#### Online Event

The transformation of Christian life is accomplished by the Holy Spirit and the saints conform to the Holy Spirit through abandonment or surrender. This retreat will explore the thought of Jean-Pierre de Caussade who unveils the secret of how saints encounter God by surrendering to His action in each present moment. This abandonment is at the heart of the Holy Family at Nazareth and far outstrips even the asceticism of John the Baptist in the desert. Registration is \$25. To register, please visit <http://bit.ly/RegisterLentenRetreat>

# SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION NEWS

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Even though the Covid-19 pandemic is still upon us, we must continue to move forward with preparing our children for the reception of various Sacraments this year. Because this pandemic will be with us for a while, we need be smart, but not fearful; prudent, not scared. We need God, perhaps especially now, and the Sacraments are privileged encounters with Him Who is our life and our salvation.

It is understood that some parents or children may wish to defer the reception and celebration of first Reconciliation, first Holy Communion, or Confirmation, for reasons of legitimate health concerns. Kindly note that we celebrated first Communions and Confirmations in the autumn of 2020 in a way that was reverent, safe, socially distanced and secure. We do everything we can to ensure that those who come are protected and can worship without fear. There have been NO CASES OF TRANSMISSION IN CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN THE ARCHDIOCESE OF TORONTO, thanks to our dedicated volunteers and the sanitizing and ushering we have in place. You are as safe in this church as you are anywhere, and more so than many other public places. That being said, we respect the rights and decisions of parents to defer, if they wish.

**For those who will be receiving Holy Communion for the first time, and for those who are to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation, note the following:**

**Reconciliation for Children receiving first Holy Communion:**

Wednesday 24 March: 4:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.

This date has been changed from 10 February. There will be a number of priests available and spread out throughout the Church.

*\*For those Gr 2 students who will not participate in the Confessions scheduled for 24 March, your child should still make their first Confession before they receive Holy Communion for the first time. Kindly bring your child to Confession at any other regularly scheduled time (Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.). This is a good opportunity for you also, as parents, to make a Lenten Confession, to lead by example and to be reconciled to God.*

**First Holy Communion Masses:**

Saturday May 8 at 12 noon

Sunday May 9 at 4:00 p.m.

Sunday May 16 at 2:00 p.m.

Sunday May 16 at 4:00 p.m.

**Confirmation Masses:**

Divine Mercy Catholic School  
Monday 26 April 2021, 7:00 p.m.

Our Lady of Mercy Catholic School  
Monday 26 April 2021, 7:00 p.m.

St Rose of Lima Catholic School  
Wednesday 28 April, 7:00 p.m.

Public/Private/Home-schooled  
Wednesday 28 April, 7:00 p.m.

St Sebastian Catholic School  
Friday 30 April, 7:00 p.m.

*\* For parents of Gr 7 students who were not present in their schools during the Confirmation student Confession days, your child should still make a good Confession before the celebration of Confirmation. Kindly bring your child to Confession at any other regularly scheduled time (Tuesday, 6:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.; Saturday 4:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.) and ensure that this happens. This is a good opportunity for you also, as parents, to make a Lenten Confession, to lead by example and to be reconciled to God.*

**"What great faith our  
Lord Jesus Christ asks of  
us - and how just that is.  
Do we not owe him such  
faith? It looks impossible  
to us but Jesus is Master  
of the impossible."**

*- Bl. Charles de Foucauld*



OUR MISSION IS TO

LOVE, WALK WITH & EMPOWER THE YOUTH OF OUR COMMUNITY

TO BE JOYFUL & FEARLESS

DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST

## MERCIFUL REDEEMER YOUTH MINISTRY

<https://mercifulredeemer.org/youth-ministry> • [mercifulredeemerym@gmail.com](mailto:mercifulredeemerym@gmail.com)

 @mryouthministry



For Middle School Students (Gr. 6-8)

Schedule and Time Slot: Every 1st and 3rd Saturday of the month, 4:30 PM - 6 PM

Next Edge Night: Saturday, March 20th, 2021

Edge is a middle-school ministry program that aims to offer a safe and fun environment where you can learn more about your faith. If interested, please register using the link found on the parish website at [www.mercifulredeemer.org/youth-ministry](http://www.mercifulredeemer.org/youth-ministry). Once you register your child with the link provided, you will automatically be sent the Zoom link before every Edge night. Join us at our next Edge night, where we will be talking about free-will and freedom.



For High School Students (Gr. 9-12)

Schedule and time Slot: Every 2nd and 4th Saturday of the month, 4:30pm-6 PM

Next Life Night: Saturday, March 13th, 2021

Lifeteen is a high-school youth ministry that strives to lead teens closer to Christ by strengthening our teens' Catholic identity, while also rooting them firmly in Christ and in His Church. If you are interested in joining the program in our parish, please register your child using the link found on the parish website at [www.mercifulredeemer.org/youth-ministry](http://www.mercifulredeemer.org/youth-ministry). Once you register your child with the link provided, you will automatically be sent the Zoom link before every Life night. Join us next time where we will be talking about family and the saint we are called to journey with this year, St. Joseph!

### *Save The Date!*

**March Prayer Time - Lectio and Visio Divina  
Every Tuesday of March from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

Come join us as we pray as one Youth Ministry every Tuesday this month from 4-5 PM. As we continue to journey with the Lord in this season of Lent, we will be reflecting on the Word of God and some inspiring pictures. This is an opportunity for us to dive deeper into Scripture and to spend some time together in prayer. For the Zoom link, please send us an email.

**Edge Friend-SHIP  
10 March, 2021 from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

A place to share, interact and connect with your peers from Edge.

**Lifeteen Games Night  
24 March from 4:00 - 5:00 p.m.**

**Edge Games Night  
11/25 March from 6:00 - 7:00 p.m.**

**Edge Movie Night  
24 March from 4:30 - 6:00 p.m.**

Bring your popcorn and favourite drink because we will be watching a movie together this month!

# Youth Ministry Summer Activities

As with everything else, the COVID-19 pandemic shut down all our summer events for 2020. Many of our youth were greatly saddened by this news as they look forward to events such as these that we host every year in the summertime. However, we are happy to announce two great opportunities for youth this summer:



## EDGE CAMP

Firstly, in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Youth, we are planning on attending the five-day summer Edge Camp.

Edge Camp is an experience unlike any other. In addition to Mass, Confession, Faith talks, sharing and prayer, there are also many outdoor activities you can participate in such as ziplining, mountain biking, and canoeing and various sports you can play in.

Edge Camp is for all those in Grades 5-8 and the price is \$425. This cost covers transportation to and from Camp White Pine, accommodations, meals, camp gear and activities.

Edge Camp is an amazing opportunity as it gives our young people a chance to learn about their faith in a fun setting, to meet new like-minded friends, and to pray and encounter our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. More information will be available at a future Parent's Info Night once we receive more updates.

## CAMP MERCIFUL

We are confident that, with vaccine roll-out and warmer weather, in addition to our own safety and sanitization protocols, that we can safely offer this great experience for kids once again.

Camp Merciful is a day-camp run out of our very own parish where children can grow in their faith, build Christ-centered relationships with their peers, and have fun! We offer entertaining games, prayer, exploration, and reflection for your young ones currently in grades 1-5.

Parents have the option of enrolling their children for 1 or 2 weeks of Camp. The dates are as follows:

**Week 1:** July 12-16 (9am-3:30pm, Monday-Friday)

**Week 2:** July 19-23 (9am-3:30pm, Monday-Friday)

The cost for one week of camp is \$150 and if your child wishes to attend both weeks, it will be a total of \$250. Please save the date as spots will be limited due to the possible restrictions we may have for the Main Hall.

We all know how valuable experiences like Camp Merciful and Edge Camp can be for our youth; the benefits of being outdoors and spending time with our peers contributes immeasurably to the well-being of children. We would love for all our young people to have the opportunity to attend Camp Merciful and/or Edge Camp this year.

Please note that no child will be denied the opportunity to attend either of these events because of financial constraints. Should there be financial pressures, please speak with Msgr Owen and arrangements will be made. If, on the other hand, you can financially assist us by sponsoring a child's, please also contact Msgr Owen. In all that you do, ask you kindly to support our youth by lifting a prayer for them and Youth ministry.

For registration and further information, please email Danielle, our Youth Ministry Coordinator, at [mercifulredeemerym@gmail.com](mailto:mercifulredeemerym@gmail.com) or call our Youth office at (905) 812-0030 ext. 7. God bless and we are praying for you!

## God's Race for Us Is the Answer

*"You were with me, but I was not with you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would not have been at all."* - St. Augustine

These inspiring words are from the Confessions of St. Augustine. They describe how, as a young man, Augustine looked for God in all the wrong places. It was not God who needed to be found but him—as it is with us.

In the whirlwind of the past ten months or so, we have seen the impossible become the mundane and the ridiculous become commonplace. Thousands have died, from both natural and manmade causes, and many have become numb to all the suffering, division, hatred, and violence we have been enduring. As if a perfect storm, these realities occurred during a presidential election year, which is tumultuous even in "normal" times. The past year, though, saw a radical escalation in seeing others as inferior and just plain wrong—and faith got placed on the back burner.

Many have come to believe that they are surrounded by enemies because God has been pushed to the background. Yet he continually proclaims out to the world he loves beyond comprehension: I am still with you. As if walking through the Garden of Eden after the Fall, he asks us: "Where are you?" (see Genesis 3:9). God does not become distracted by the various details of our lives or the labels we place on ourselves. God "races" towards us because he loves us.

In his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est*, Benedict XVI highlights this profound reality—God's love is at the root of his pursuit of us: "In the love-story recounted by the Bible, he comes towards us, he seeks to win our hearts, all the way to the Last Supper, to the piercing of his heart on the Cross, to his appearances after the Resurrection and to the great deeds by which, through the activity of the apostles, he guided the nascent Church along its path" (no. 17).

The manner in which God seeks to win our hearts is through the person of his Son Jesus, who has the most potent, necessary, and embracing message for all people who are living through these tumultuous times: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (John 10:10). In our current situation, we are faced with a real temptation to be physically alive but spiritually dead. We can walk, talk, and participate in society but not be truly alive with God's presence

with us. We must always fight this temptation. When the soul flees from God, the body follows.

When humanity caves in on itself and forgets God, we begin to see others as threatening, as enemies; we no longer see them as people who, like us, have been made in the image and likeness of God. Our world is broken and in need of healing; our country is wounded and in need of first aid; our families have been torn apart and in need of mending. All of these sad realities are present because many have run away from God. Like Augustine, we seek our fulfillment from anything and everything but the divine. We need a transcendent reorientation.

With God's grace, we can move towards seeing our neighbors—no matter who they are or what they represent—as people to be loved freely rather than as enemies to be opposed. Faith is the healer. As Benedict XVI says, God "encounters us ever anew, in the men and women who reflect his presence, in his word, in the sacraments, and especially in the Eucharist. In the Church's Liturgy, in her prayer, in the living community of believers, we experience the love of God, we perceive his presence and we thus learn to recognize that presence in our daily lives" (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 17).

The dignity of humanity is rooted in God himself, as we are his creation. He wills that we are in contact with his life and love. A vibrant connection to the sacramental life of the Church ought to impel Catholics to look at others in the light of the truth, rather than through the shallow lens of this fallen world. God literally runs towards us; he initiates faith and seeks to bring us into a relationship with his Son (see John 15:16).

"He has loved us first," Benedict says. "And he continues to do so; we too, then, can respond with love. God does not demand of us a feeling which we ourselves are incapable of producing. He loves us, he makes us see and experience his love, and since he has 'loved us first', love can also blossom as a response within us" (*Deus Caritas Est*, no. 17).

Let true love urge us on as a response to the race of God for our souls. No program, election, social media post, article, or theory will win the day—only a relationship with Jesus will. Let his pursuit of our hearts pave the road towards a better tomorrow for our families, neighbors, and country. Then the race will end with his embrace.



# A Call to Action from Cardinal Collins: End Covid-19 Restriction Inequities

**My dear friends,**

A few days ago, a movie scout contacted one of our churches to inquire whether the basement hall could be used to feed a crew of 50 people. “We have dispensation from the province and strict protocols will be enforced.” Later in the week, the priest presided at a funeral in the same church, limited to 10 people inside (including himself).

Which of these do we consider more essential?

I have been providing updates to you throughout this period of pandemic. We have also been working closely with the Government of Ontario to ensure that restrictions are respected as we collectively fight a virus that has, thus far, taken the lives of more than 22,000 Canadians.

I do not believe that our elected officials and medical officers of health consciously intend to suppress religious freedom; I realize that they are in an extremely difficult position. We do, however, ask to be treated equitably. In recent days, it is becoming more difficult to believe that is happening.

It is now appropriate for us to respectfully amplify our concerns. I am asking you to take two minutes to write to your Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). A copy of your letter will also be shared with Premier Ford.

The province has relaxed restrictions in Grey (Lockdown) regions, with retailers permitted to operate at 25 per cent capacity. Yet places of worship, regardless of whether they seat 100 or 1,000 people, must remain at a hard cap of 10 people. Next week, a funeral at St. Michael’s Cathedral (capacity 1,500) will be capped at 10 people, while around the corner dozens can enter the local liquor store and thousands will visit the Eaton Centre. This makes no sense.

I encourage all of you, whether you are in the Grey Zone (Toronto and Peel Regions as of March 8) or an area where churches can open at greater, but still greatly limited capacity, to respectfully request that any restrictions for places of worship use a percentage of capacity as opposed to an arbitrary number. This is an interfaith initiative with participation from many faith

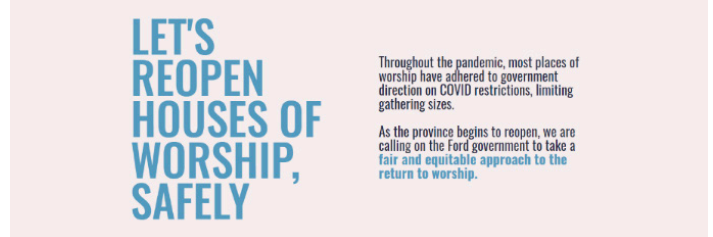
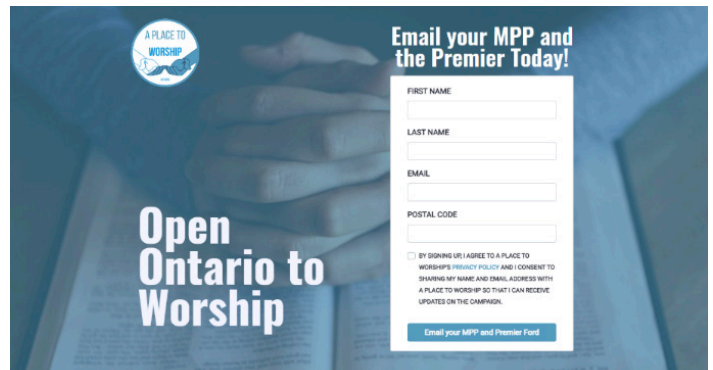
communities.

We are still in the midst of fighting a pandemic and we must be prudent in our actions. Our strict WorshipSafe protocols in our churches have proven to be effective. It’s time to address the growing inequities facing our faith communities. I hope you will take a moment to share your concerns with your MPP. I am grateful for your patience and perseverance during these most challenging days.

May God continue to bless you now and always.

**Sincerely in Christ,**

*Thomas Cardinal Collins*  
**Archbishop of Toronto**



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