



**Statement from Cardinal Thomas Collins, Archbishop of Toronto
regarding Re-opening of Places of Worship – June 8, 2020**

Earlier today, Premier Ford made an announcement regarding the re-opening of places of worship, in light of restrictions that have been in place for the last number of months relating to the coronavirus pandemic.

We thank Premier Ford and Minister Monte McNaughton (who coordinated and liaised with faith communities during this period of pandemic), for their efforts in recognizing the importance of places of worship for so many Ontarians. We also appreciate the opportunity for constructive dialogue over the last number of weeks regarding our concerns and suggestions for a path forward.

I am grateful to Catholics throughout the archdiocese for their patience and understanding as we worked collectively to minimize the potential spread of Covid-19 over the past several months. I am also keenly aware that closing our more than 200 Catholic churches in the Archdiocese of Toronto has been a painful and difficult period for all of us.

As announced by Premier Ford, there will be capacity restrictions (30%) as we move to an initial phase of re-opening our churches. We will also be employing measures to ensure the safety of all those who worship at Catholic churches throughout the archdiocese. Our full re-opening plan and timing of its implementation will be issued publicly later this week after we have the opportunity to consult our Council of Priests and provide in-service sessions for clergy and staff.

We very much look forward to returning to the celebration of the sacraments in our churches as we continue to pray for all those who are sick, those who have died and for all those front-line workers who are serving so faithfully.