
COVID-19 Coronavirus: responses from Churches in Sweden, Finland and Estonia. Diocese of Stockholm suspending liturgies and catechesis

With the virus spreading fast and infections spiking, governments take measures and the Churches follow suit, even in northern Europe. In Tallin, Estonia, for example, an additional Sunday Mass will be celebrated in the cathedral at 14.30, besides the 11 a.m. service and the live broadcast. Also, as of today, Archbishop Philipp Jourdan's weekly adult catechesis will be online (while youth catechesis will continue in person). In Estonia, there have been just over 8,300 confirmed cases and 85 deaths since the start of the pandemic. In this second wave, the average number of daily infections over the past week has been about 200. In Finland, which recorded less than 20,000 cases in total and just over 370 deaths (in this country, too, the average daily infection rate was about 200 last week), the diocesan administrator, Marco Pasi, announced in a statement that "the time limit for the fulfilment of the Easter duty, previously extended until the Feast of Christ the King (22 November), is now again postponed to a date to be confirmed" due to the pandemic.

In Sweden, following the government's announcement on 16 November that the maximum number of people permitted at a public gathering or event will be 8 as of 24 November, the Diocese of Stockholm was "forced to cancel all public services from 24 November until further notice". Churches, however, will continue to be open for individual prayer. It is clear that the maximum number of people also applies to "catechism, choir activities, conferences and all other parish activities", the statement reads, adding that: "The government announced that the measures would apply for four weeks, but if required, they would be extended until Christmas and New Year's Eve".

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