



ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK YOUTH FAITH FORMATION

November 15, 2020

Dear Colleagues in Ministry,

As we entered into fall, we have seen an increase in the cases of COVID-19. It is anticipated that this trend may continue into the winter as people move indoors more. In light of this, the governor has enacted a cluster zone initiative to target areas with higher transmission rates.

The cluster initiative identifies areas as yellow, orange, and red zones. Those in the orange and red zones call for remote learning in schools. This will be the requirement for parish religious education and youth ministry. Those in yellow zones require all schools to conduct COVID testing of staff and students before holding in-person classes. In light of this restriction on schools, we anticipate that our religious education programs and youth ministry are likely to be held to the same restriction and we advise that no in-person religious education and youth ministry be held until we can implement a testing regimen for such programs. However, we are unsure if such a regimen is logistically and financially attainable for our parishes. Please know that we will make every effort to take all necessary measures to resume in-person religious education for those programs that find themselves in a cluster zone.

To summarize, if you parish is in any color level of a cluster zone, in-person parish religious education and youth ministry must be suspended and moved to a remote program.

Our staffs will be monitoring the changing situations, be it is important that you also stay aware of whether your parish has moved into a cluster zone. You can find the cluster zones at <https://forward.ny.gov/cluster-action-initiative>. We also recommend that if you are currently offering in-person religious education and/or youth ministry that you make a plan on how you can move to a remote program seamlessly if your parish becomes part of a cluster zone.

In Christ,

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