

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF ALBANY

Guidelines for the Gradual Reintroduction of Public Liturgies and Worship, Initial Stage

(5/21/20)

PART ONE: GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND REQUIREMENTS

INTRODUCTION:

These guidelines address specifically what might be termed the practical issues connected with the relaxation of governmental/health restrictions and therefore the adaptations that we need to make in any decision regarding the public celebration of the sacraments. This document is therefore very much a foundation or modular text; that is, a text that will be adapted and edited as and when conditions change, as we move through the various stages of a relaxation of restriction.

There is a further, and extremely important issue, namely that of accompanying and encouraging those who have in some way rediscovered their faith during the pandemic (often through social media and the internet) to take further steps in reconnecting with the Church. In a similar way, we too have discovered new ways of connecting with people and building relationships, and these good practices need to be continued and developed. These matters would be dealt with in other documents, that will give guidelines and suggestions for best practices.

Any decision made by a parish leader/administrator on a local/parish level regarding whether or not to recommence the public celebration of the sacraments in a particular church building, especially the Mass, needs to consider very carefully the following points contained in this document. It is recommended that the parish leader should also consult with the Episcopal Vicar in their Vicariate and/or one of the Vicars General of the Diocese.

If, after consideration and consultation a decision is made NOT to reopen a church building, particularly for the celebration of the Mass publically, then further action will be required. The parish leader/administrator would then need to assign parishioners in his/her parish to another local parish that is open, so as to afford them the opportunity to attend Mass. The Episcopal Vicar for that Vicariate would act as a channel of communication in this process of assigning. The parish leader/administrator also needs to set a time period and limit for the continuation of closure. This would then be reviewed towards the end of that time period. As indicated, these points have in mind the celebration of the Mass in particular. It may be possible that a church is closed for the celebration of regular Masses, but might be open for other liturgies such as funerals or baptisms.

If the church is to be reopened for public liturgies, a clear and detailed local plan must be in place. As mentioned in the memo of 5/14/20, a Reopening Coordinating Committee with a chairperson (Pandemic Safety Officer) must also be in place. Members would include those with useful skills and experience, such as include healthcare/medical professionals, parishioners who are in law enforcement, maintenance staff, the liturgical coordinator and others such as the sacristan, the head of the ushers and/or greeting teams, etc. The reopening plan for the parish should reflect the various provisions of health and governmental directives, as applied to the local parish situation. The plan should pay particular attention to key areas of concern or action, such as arriving and leaving the church, Holy Communion procedures, sanitizing before and after liturgies, seating, the training of ushers and other liturgical ministers etc. The plan must be communicated to parishioners before the church is reopened for public liturgies.

PRINCIPLES:

1. All arrangements must comply with the various and current governmental/health guidelines and directives, as well as general/universal liturgical norms and laws.
2. [Many of the draft guidelines below anticipate possible requirements that might be in place in the first stage of relaxation of NY Pause.]
3. The Diocese has produced an important document on church cleaning and sanitizing: "Addendum A" to these guidelines. There are useful links to CDC Guidelines and other sources regarding church cleaning and general points to consider. For example: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html> (especially p. 7 and following)
4. Practices and guidelines are subject to constant review. As with the gradual process of tightening restrictions and practices, the process of relaxing these will also be in stages. The requirements of each stage must be adhered to strictly.
5. Useful and very detailed resources regarding sacramental practice and practical matters, recommended by the USCCB, have been produced by members of the Thomistic Institute at the Pontifical Faculty of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. These can be found following this link: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>. Additionally, the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) has also put together a document "A Synopsis of Pastoral Considerations for the Reopening of Churches for Public Masses." This can be found on the FDLC website: <https://FDLC.ORG/COVID>
6. Due to variations in resources, church design, etc., it is not possible to produce a detailed, "one size fits all" policy. Whatever local arrangements are made, they must be in accord with the basic principles given above.

HEALTH AND THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND MASS:

In the light of ongoing health risks to the most vulnerable among us, the **temporary suspension** of the **obligation** to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days during the pandemic **remains in force** (cf. CIC, canon 1247) until otherwise indicated. Therefore, Catholics should use their **prudential judgment** as to whether or not to attend Mass.

Furthermore:

Please assure and remind the faithful that:

- if they are sick, for example, if they are experiencing cold or flu like symptoms,
- if they are experiencing symptoms of a serious illness,
- or if they are in a "vulnerable" category (the elderly, people with weakened immune systems, people with long term conditions such as cancer, diabetes, heart conditions, respiratory conditions, etc.)

that they are NOT obliged to attend Sunday Mass, and, out of concern for others, ought not to attend. It would be good, therefore, to maintain live-stream/recorded Masses.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS:

1. Assess the seating capacity and layout of the church/worship site, so that social distancing etc. will be maintained at all times (not only in the church, but in areas such as the sacristy, vestibule, etc.). Inevitably, this would need to be a local decision, based upon the expected size of a congregation for any Mass, the

capacity of the church etc. A detailed checklist is given in Addendum C. Whatever the local conditions, there are common and crucial factors, namely:

- a. Some reconfiguration of the space in the church will be needed in most churches (some suggestions are given in the section below on the Eucharist/Mass).
 - b. REMINDER: A clear plan (following health and other directives as given) on how to seat parishioners as they arrive for the Mass or other liturgies must be in place. Similarly, there must be a clear plan in place for people leaving church at the conclusion of the Mass/liturgy.
 - c. Controlling carefully the numbers present at any Mass. For example, by allocating Mass times in various ways (for example, by age, or by last name/alphabetically, or by street address)
 - d. It is difficult to give a general figure regarding the seating capacity of a church to fulfill social distancing and other conditions due to the diverse size and internal layout of our churches. A rough percentage figure is probably in the range of 25-30% of total capacity
 - e. A plan needs to be in place if numbers arriving for a given Mass exceed the capacity of the church. For example, they could be asked to wait outside and be admitted during Holy Communion, or they could receive after Mass as an exception in this circumstance (and therefore not as a norm).
2. Hand sanitizers must be available at all entrances and exits for people to sanitize their hands as they arrive for Mass or other liturgies and as they leave.
 3. Parishioners should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer and to wash their hands (in the manner recommended by the CDC) before coming to the Mass or other liturgies.
 4. The wearing of face masks is required for all persons over the age of two.
 5. Holy water fonts must remain empty. A person may bring a container with water to be blessed and this can then be blessed by the priest or deacon.
 6. All congregational hymn books, missalettes etc. should be removed from the church.
 7. Paper copies of worship aids may be provided, but these should be removed and destroyed after each liturgy.
 8. Ushers or greeters will verify that attendees are properly wearing masks, direct people where to sit, control the movement of people, etc.
 9. Ushers will need some form of local training given their various additional responsibilities.
 10. Where possible (given local testing availability and provision) any minister ought to be tested for the coronavirus and for antibodies before ministering publically.
 11. There should be a designated person who can help with contact tracing by appropriate authorities should an attendee then fall sick with the virus after attending a Mass or liturgy.
 12. Suitable volunteers (once finalized, see Addendum A and Addendum C) must be available to clean and to sanitize the church before and after liturgies. Volunteers are to be provided with masks and gloves for their protection.
 13. All ministers should thoroughly wash and sanitize their hands before and after each liturgy (cf. CDC recommendations and instructions on hand washing, etc.)
 14. There needs to be a clear plan in place if church restrooms are to be open (sanitizing, etc.)
 15. A music ministry is possible for liturgies, using a minimum number of musicians (cantor, organist etc.) Social distancing must be maintained. For this reason, a choir is NOT permitted at this stage. The FDLC document provides some helpful suggestions concerning music ministry (cf. <https://FDLC.ORG/COVID>).
 16. Hospitality before or after Mass (coffee, food etc.) continues to be prohibited.

A REMINDER: detailed and helpful instructions on many of these liturgical matters in the time of a phased reopening of churches for the public celebration of the sacraments, can be found using the following link... <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>

PART TWO: SPECIFIC PROVISIONS FOR THE SACRAMENTS, LITURGIES AND MINISTRIES

(Please also consult Addendum C Checklist)

EUCCHARIST: Specific Measures in the Church and for the celebration of the MASS:

1. An important reminder (cf. Part One, General requirements, n. 1): the seating capacity of the church must be assessed carefully, so that social distancing etc. can be maintained for the celebration of the Mass. This will entail the reconfiguring of seating, signage and planning. The layout of each church varies, but, as a general rule and guide, the church would probably be able to seat 25-30% of total seating capacity.
2. Cordon off every other pew or re-arrange chairs so as to maintain social distancing; clearly designate/mark a seating plan (signage)
3. Families or those living in the same, single household may sit together. Caregivers, or those who have frequent close contact with others (for example, with a disabled person), may also sit together.
4. Determine directional walking lanes of the aisles, if/as needed
5. Markers should be placed on the ground in the area where Holy Communion is to be given, in order to maintain the maximum possible social distance between the communicant and those distributing Holy Communion
6. It is highly recommended that the priest has a lectern at his chair with the Missal (to avoid a server coming to him at the relevant parts of the Mass)
7. The priest (and deacon) should NOT wear gloves or a mask during the Mass. The exception could be to wear a mask during the distribution of Holy Communion, wherever possible.
8. The entrance procession and recessional should take place only where social distancing from the congregation (and between ministers) can be maintained.
9. The offertory plate should not be passed from person to person. Ushers should take the collection of gifts (using, for example, long-handled baskets), maintaining a social distance as far as possible. They should sanitize their hands before and after handling any money or envelopes (for example, when placing these in the tamper proof bags)
10. At the preparation of gifts, the deacon or servers may bring the gifts to the altar while the priest waits at the chair. A separate paten(s) with hosts for everyone except the main celebrant are to be placed at one end of the altar
11. There should be NO procession of the gifts. The lavabo should be done by the priest alone (for example: a bowl, towel and cruet can be ready at the lavabo table for this)
12. There continues to be a Diocesan-wide suspension of the physical sign of peace. People may still turn to one another and say "peace be with you."

Distribution of the Eucharist during the Mass:

1. Given the layout of many of our churches and the various requirements (social distancing etc.), it is highly likely that only one Holy Communion station with one minister will be possible.
2. Priest or deacon sanitizes his hands before and after distribution
3. A small table with a corporal and a bottle of hand sanitizer should be placed near each point of distributing Holy Communion (see bullet point further below)
4. Priest or deacon should wear a mask, wherever possible, during the distribution of Holy Communion (but NOT wear a mask otherwise during the Mass)
5. Only the priest and deacon distribute the Eucharist. This should be done ONLY in the form of the Body of Christ (that is, NOT from the chalice/cup, NOR by intinction). However, if further ministers are needed, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may also distribute Holy Communion. This can occur,

- provided that they have been properly trained and instructed and that, where possible, they have been tested for antibodies (cf. Part One, General Requirements, n. 10)
6. It is helpful to remind people that "Christ is present whole and entire in each of the species and whole and entire in each of their parts (Cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church* n. 1377).
 7. Congregants are strongly advised and urged to receive Holy Communion in the hand only.
 8. Congregants would come forward, as directed, to receive the Eucharist maintaining social distancing and wearing a face mask. At the Holy Communion station, the priest/deacon would present the host and the communicant would respond in the usual way. The communicant would then step comfortably away from the priest/deacon, remove their face mask to receive the sacred host, consume the host, replace their face mask and return to their seat, following the given directions on how to do so.
 9. A reminder that receiving Holy Communion on the tongue is a matter of universal law and therefore cannot be forbidden, except by a change in the law by the Pope. However, the celebrant is asked to urge those who wish to receive on the tongue to consider the health of the minister distributing Holy Communion. If the communicant still wishes to receive on the tongue, they are to be asked, respectfully, to come forward for Holy Communion last.
 10. When giving Holy Communion in the hand, seek to ensure that you place the host in the hand of the recipient in such a way that you do not touch their hands and that you maintain the maximum possible social distance from the faithful.
 11. If the priest or deacon senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hands or mouth, he should pause, place the ciborium on the corporal, and use hand sanitizer. (He may also arrange for an ablution cup to be on the table, and may purify his fingers in the ablution cup before using hand sanitizer.) He may repeat this process as often as he judges necessary during the distribution of Holy Communion. It is not necessary, however, for him to use hand sanitizer between each communicant, unless he makes actual contact.
 12. Provision should be made for those who are unable to receive even a low gluten host, following liturgical norms
 13. Social distancing must be maintained in the communion lines
 14. At the end of the Mass the priest (deacon or other ministers) should not go to the church exit to greet the people.
 15. A clear system should be in place for the orderly exit of the congregation (so as to maintain social distancing). This may be done, for example, by row.
 16. Ushers should not hand out bulletins etc. before or after the Mass

To maintain the integrity of the Mass and the Rite of Communion, Holy Communion should be distributed at the normal point during the Mass.

Optional Process for the distribution of Holy Communion:

However, where it is not possible to follow the above protocols for the distribution of Holy Communion during the celebration of Mass, it is possible to distribute Holy Communion after the conclusion of the Mass. The relevant guidelines above for the distribution of Holy Communion should be followed and in addition:

1. At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the conclusion of the Mass. Those who do not wish to receive may leave as their particular row in the church moves forward for Holy Communion at the conclusion of the Mass. The priest may also remind the faithful that they

- should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion, follow any given instructions or directions etc.
2. A sufficient quantity of hosts for distribution to the faithful should be consecrated at the Mass in the normal way.
 3. The priest (and, if present, the deacon) would consume the Eucharist in the normal way, but would not immediately proceed to distribute Communion to the servers or the faithful. Rather, the newly-consecrated hosts would be briefly placed in the tabernacle awaiting the conclusion of the Mass by the priest.
 4. After the concluding blessing and the dismissal, the priest (and deacon, if present) remain in the sanctuary. At the chair, the priest removes his chasuble and the deacon removes his dalmatic.
 5. As with Holy Communion during the Mass, a small table should be placed at each communion station, with an unfolded corporal and a bottle of hand sanitizer.
 6. The priest should use hand sanitizer immediately before approaching the tabernacle. He may also don a surgical mask or cloth face covering.
 7. Now vested in alb and stole, the priest retrieves the newly-consecrated hosts from the tabernacle and returns to the altar.
 8. Holding up a single host, he says: "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him..." He then leads the people in saying: "Lord, I am not worthy..."
 9. The priest (and deacon, if assisting with distributing Holy Communion) proceed(s) to the place prepared for distribution of Communion. He/they stands next to a table with corporal and hand sanitizer in order to distribute Communion.
 10. The faithful should remove any face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion and approach, as indicated in the protocol for receiving the Eucharist during Mass (see above).
 11. The faithful then receive Holy Communion in the normal way. If the priest senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hands or mouth, he should pause, place the ciborium on the corporal, and use hand sanitizer. (He may also arrange for an ablution cup to be on the table, and may purify his fingers in the ablution cup before using hand sanitizer.) He may repeat this process as often as he judges necessary during the distribution of Holy Communion. It is not necessary, however, for him to use hand sanitizer between each communicant, unless he makes actual contact.
 12. At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle.
 13. The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving. Alternatively, the priest may say the concluding prayer, blessing, and dismissal from the Rite for Holy Communion Outside of Mass, as follows: "Let us pray. O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption. Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever." He then gives a blessing in the normal way and the people are dismissed in the normal way.

NOTE: This optional process may also be followed if the church has reached its capacity for numbers at a given Mass and congregants have had to remain outside the church during that Mass.

Where it is possible to celebrate Mass outside (for example in a parking lot, church grounds, or on the church steps) a dais or platform may be set up for the altar. Some helpful guidelines can be found in the document recommended by the USCCB and produced by the Thomistic Institute (cf. <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>, document on the phased restoration of public Masses, page 11). As always, social distancing must be

maintained whenever possible. Holy Communion should be given in an orderly fashion. This should be done by the communicants getting out of their cars to receive, one car at a time.

INITIATION IN GENERAL

1. For the celebration of the baptism/initiation/reception for adults who have been preparing for initiation at the Easter Vigil or other times, this would be a local decision by the pastor, due to the many factors that would need to be considered in setting a time and date. The RCIA, Introduction, n. 26, allows for other times for the celebration of initiation. The pastor may wish to consult with one of the Vicars General about the decision. Please also see the recent letter issued by Bishop Scharfenberger (5/12/20) regarding the celebration of the Sacraments of initiation.
2. Regarding the completion of the Scrutinies, parishes would have celebrated the First Scrutiny (the Third Sunday of Lent) a few days before shelter in place order. The Scrutinies "should be celebrated." However, Bishop Scharfenberger has dispensed from the other two Scrutinies, due to extraordinary circumstances (cf. RCIA, Intro. N. 14., and Bishop Scharfenberger's letter).
3. A reminder that the usual provisions of canon law, faculties and delegation still apply, especially regarding the sacrament of Confirmation (cf. Code of Canon Law, in particular, canons 883 and 887). Details can also be found on the Diocesan portal, Office of Prayer & Worship, Guidelines for Lent, Holy Week and Easter. In brief, the faculty for a priest to confirm (post adult baptism) is a general one (if the priest has been involved in the preparation), or if a person is baptized and coming from another Christian denomination, (cf. CIC, canon 883). A specific delegation from the Bishop is still needed with regard to Catholics completing their initiation.
4. Some further guidelines for initiation (assuming initiation is taking place on a Sunday; cf. RCIA, Introduction, n. 27):

The books needed are the Roman Missal and the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA).

1. *For the Roman Missal:*
 - a. The presidential prayers, readings etc. that are to be chosen should follow liturgical norms. On a Sunday during Ordinary Time, the prayers, readings etc. are chosen from one of the Ritual Masses for "Christian Initiation" (cf. RCIA, Introduction, n. 23 and 208)
 - b. For the Eucharistic Prayer, add the proper intercessions from the Ritual Mass for the Conferral of Baptism.
 - c. Note: be cautious about consulting Part III of the Easter Vigil in the missal. It incorporates much of the RCIA, but it includes some items that pertain only to the Vigil, such as carrying the paschal candle in procession during the Litany of the Saints, or the faithful having lighted candles during the renewal of baptismal promises. The missal has a revised translation and some helpful notes about the role of the deacon and the incorporation of infants among those to be baptized. But otherwise, the entire section has been written specifically for the Easter Vigil.
 - d. The faithful should renew their baptism promises at this Mass because the initiation takes place on a Sunday and the liturgy has to account for the Creed.
2. *For the RCIA:*
 - a. Use the appropriate section of the book. If you have only elect, start at RCIA 218. If you have only candidates for reception into the full communion of the Catholic Church, start at RCIA 487. If you have both, then start at 566.

- b. Please note RCIA 218 carries a heading that assigns the ritual to the Easter Vigil. That is an erroneous insertion into the English translation. The *editio typica* treats it as the ceremony you follow for adult initiation, no matter what day you do it.

BAPTISM

The following relates mainly to the baptism of infants or children; that is, those under the age of discretion (cf. Order of Baptism of Children, Introduction, 1). Additionally, some elements apply to adults where there is a grave necessity, such as the danger of death.

Given health and governmental directives (especially social distancing, hygiene/sanitizing, etc.) and the need to protect the most vulnerable medically, the baptism of infants in our current situation presents some particular factors and difficulties:

- On the one hand, the Church requires that the sacrament should be celebrated within the first few weeks of an infant being born (cf. CIC, can. 867). Any liturgical directives cannot contradict universal Church or liturgical law(s).
- However, in practice, we know that there is often a much longer period than this before a baptism takes place.
- Particular factors impacting a pastoral decision that wishes to respect Canon Law as well as governmental directives relate to the liturgical dynamics of baptism. Such factors are, of course, issues such as maintaining social distance and sanitizing.

Therefore:

As is happening already, pastors and parish leaders should discuss the situation with the family and assure them that, if the need should arise, anyone may baptize in the case of necessity (see #3 below).

1. During this exceptional time, if there is a pastoral need for the baptism of an infant to take place, only the necessary rites for a valid Baptism should be celebrated, (CIC, can. 850). Details can be found in the Order of Baptism of Children. Only the minister, infant, parents and godparents should be present (again, social distance, hygiene etc. should be followed as far as possible within the liturgy).
2. At this stage of reopening, baptisms during Mass should NOT take place.
3. In the case of an emergency, anyone may baptize as long as the pouring of water and the valid Trinitarian formula: "N. I baptize you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" is used (CIC, can. 861, section 2, and *Order for the Baptism of Children*).
4. In whatever way and wherever the sacrament is celebrated, please remember that a proper record should be kept and it must be recorded in the appropriate place (the parish within which the baptism took place: CIC, can. 877)
5. If a baptism is celebrated without the pastor being present, he should be notified so that the necessary record can be made in the parish register (CIC, can. 878).

CONFIRMATION

1. All Spring 2020 Confirmations were postponed until the autumn. A reminder that the Bishop's Office has asked that parishes affected by this postponement to request a new date for the Fall.

RECONCILIATION

1. Confessions at scheduled times may be celebrated, provided that current governmental restrictions are observed, especially regarding social distancing and sanitizing.
2. A temporary space within the church may need to be set up so that the governmental/health guidelines and directives are fulfilled. Furthermore, if it is likely that people may congregate or queue for confession, measures must be taken to maintain hygiene and social distancing (again, in accord with governmental/health guidelines and directives).
3. So called “drive by” confessions are permitted, provided that all liturgical norms and governmental/health directives are followed.
4. For more details see the link to the Thomistic Institute document: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments> (click tab on confession/reconciliation)

ANOINTING OF THE SICK & VISITS WITH THE EUCHARIST

1. Where an anointing is given to a person in isolation (in a hospital, for example) all physical contact precautions should be taken and governmental/medical regulations followed. Hospitals and nursing homes will allow those in danger of death to be anointed, but protective gear must be worn by the priest and the visit kept short.
2. In such cases as above or where there is some danger of infection, do not bring in any items (such as books, bags etc.). Photocopy any necessary prayers and leave the photocopies behind in the room. Avoid touching any objects in the room. It is not necessary to lay on hands directly during the anointing and a Q-tip or swab may be used to anoint the forehead (only). The Q-tip or swab, since it has blessed oil, should be disposed of appropriately. For more details, see the Thomistic Institute document (link below).
3. Visits to people in care homes or hospitals are permitted by clergy or designated ministers. These visits should follow the current protocols and advice of the care home or hospital (this may involve ministers being tested for the coronavirus or antibodies). Again, strict protocols of hygiene/sanitizing before, during and after visits must be observed.
4. For further details and guidelines see Addendum B.
5. Detailed instructions on anointing and pastoral care of the sick may be found in the following link (click on the tab for the anointing of the sick document): <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>

WEDDINGS

1. The public celebration of weddings is permitted, provided that the current governmental/health guidelines and directives are observed. In particular, this relates to the numbers present and social distancing.
2. For further, general liturgical details and protocols, please refer to the section of this document on the Eucharist.
3. The wedding liturgy has particular elements that will require attention, namely:
 - a. The bride and groom would not be required to wear a face mask (they are the ministers of the sacrament)
 - b. The procession takes place in the usual way
 - c. The usual parts of the Rite itself should be observed
 - d. Avoid any unnecessary touching of objects such as the wedding rings
 - e. Programs/worship aids are not advised

FUNERALS

1. A public Funeral Mass may be celebrated, provided that all governmental/health directives and guidelines are followed. For general liturgical details and protocols, please refer to the section of this document on the Eucharist
2. There are some elements particular to the Funeral Mass
 - a. The usual entrance rites and other rites (Final Commendation, sprinkling with holy water, incensing etc.) should be observed, but the optional placing of the pall should be omitted
 - b. Pall bearers may accompany the casket into the church and as the casket is taken from the church.

SACRAMENTALS & DEVOTIONS

(Stations of the cross, Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, Communal Adoration, etc.)

1. As with public Masses, it can be difficult to maintain governmental/health guidelines and directives. However, COMMUNAL devotions are permitted, provided that these guidelines/directives can be maintained (numbers, social distancing, sanitizing etc.)
2. As with the celebration of Mass, prayer books or worship aids should not be used. Paper (sheet(s) of paper) worship/prayer aids may be prepared. These should be disposed of immediately after the devotion/liturgy.
3. Individual/private devotions continue to be strongly encouraged, whether in a church or at home.
4. Perpetual Adoration Chapels may be open where possible, provided that all governmental/health guidelines and directives are followed (numbers, social distancing, capacity, sanitizing etc.)

With the express approval of Bishop Scharfenberger, given at the Chancery: May 21, 2020



ADDENDUM A

GUIDELINES FOR THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF PARISHES AND PARISHIONERS

The following guidelines are recommended by the CDC and NYS for the re-opening of your parish to keep everyone safe and healthy (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>):

- Clean and disinfect all “touchable” areas
- Use a single entry and exit
- Rope off unused areas and re-open those areas as needed
- Mark pews with 6’ spacing and stagger seating accordingly
- Provide hand sanitizer at the entrance and other traffic locations
- Consider pre-registration of parishioners to manage the number of attendees to maintain social distancing and safety.
- Disinfect all doors, door handles, pews, and commonly touched surfaces frequently
- Stock up on cleaning and disinfecting supplies
- Manage *able bodied volunteers so they adhere to safety guidelines
- Communicate, communicate, communicate-any new policy or change of policy to staff and parishioners when appropriate
- Re-think how to greet people back into your church building

* suggest the least vulnerable, typically under 60 years old, in good health, not immuno-compromised, willing to wear mask and gloves, capable of moving quickly and efficiently through prescribed tasks.

ADDENDUM B

PROTOCOLS FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION IN MAKING PASTORAL VISITS

(To shut-ins, nursing homes, hospitals etc.)

GENERAL PROTOCOLS:

1. All visits must be in compliance with the various and current governmental/health guidelines and directives (health, sanitizing, social distancing etc.), as well as general/universal liturgical norms and laws.
2. [Many of the draft guidelines below anticipate possible requirements that might be in place in the first stage of relaxation of NY Pause.]
3. There are useful links to CDC Guidelines and other sources regarding sanitizing and general health points to consider. For example: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html> (especially p. 7 following).
4. Useful and very detailed resources regarding sacramental practice and practical matters, recommended by the USCCB, have been produced by members of the Thomistic Institute at the Pontifical Faculty of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. These can be found following this link: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>
5. As is always the case, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (hereafter designated “minister(s)”) should NOT make any pastoral visits if they are feeling sick and/or experiencing flu or cold-like symptoms.
6. At this stage, visits by ministers who fall into the category of being “vulnerable” (due to their health conditions, age etc.) are strongly discouraged.
7. Where possible (given local testing availability and provision) any minister ought to be tested for the coronavirus and for antibodies before ministering publically.
8. At the present time, visits to people in any form of quarantine or who have tested positive for the coronavirus or who have Covid-19 must NOT be made.
9. Visits to shut-ins, as well as people in care homes or hospitals are permitted by clergy or designated ministers.
10. Before any pastoral visits are made, the ministers need to check with the pastor/parish leader to ensure that such a visit is possible.
11. These visits should follow the current protocols and advice of the care home or hospital (NOTE: this may involve ministers being tested for the coronavirus or antibodies). Again, strict protocols of hygiene/sanitizing before, during and after visits must be observed.
12. Protocols and guidelines are subject to constant review. As with the gradual process of tightening restrictions and practices, the process of relaxing these will also be in stages. The requirements of each stage must be adhered to strictly.

Some form of training based upon these protocols should be given to all ministers before they begin or resume their ministry of pastoral visitation. This may be done via media such as zoom, or by a training session in the church. If the latter is chosen, current health and governmental guidelines (numbers, social distancing etc.) must be followed during the training.

HEALTH PROTOCOLS FOR ANY VISIT

1. Before the visit or service, make sure that you thoroughly wash your hands (following the practice recommended by the CDC). This also should be done before going to the tabernacle to retrieve the Blessed Sacrament and also once you return to the church, before replacing the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle.
2. After any visit(s) or service, vessels (such as a pyx) that have been used during the service/visit(s) should be purified in the usual way and then sanitized
3. Make sure that you carry a hand sanitizer with you for all visits/services. The sanitizer should, of course, be used before and after each visit/service. Where practical, hands should be washed (following the CDC recommended practice of how to wash your hands) after each visit or before and after any service.
4. A face mask should be worn (in accordance with current NYS regulations) during any visit or service.
5. Social distancing should be observed wherever possible during the visit/service.
6. During any visit or service, avoid touching surfaces or objects wherever this is possible
7. The minister should urge and strongly advise all those who are receiving Holy Communion to do so in the hand only.
8. A reminder that receiving Holy Communion on the tongue is a matter of universal law and therefore cannot be forbidden, except by a change in the law by the Pope. However, the minister is asked to urge those who wish to receive on the tongue to consider, in charity, the health of the minister distributing Holy Communion.
9. When giving Holy Communion in the hand, seek to ensure that you place the host in the hand of the recipient in such a way that you do not touch their hands and that you maintain the maximum possible social distance from them.

ADDENDUM C

GENERAL CHECKLIST FOR THE REOPENING OF CHURCHES FOR PUBLIC LITURGIES

(With special thanks to the Diocese of Scranton for their material on this matter)

Please remember that the checklist needs to be in place and operative **BEFORE** a church or facility can reopen.

Pandemic Safety Officer and Committee

- ☐ All facilities will need to have a **Reopening Coordinating Committee** along with a staff member or volunteer who will be the **Pandemic Safety Officer**. The Pandemic Safety Officer will oversee and coordinate the enforcement of all safety, and security protocols and procedures. The Pandemic Safety Officer will also support all staff and volunteers in their roles to maintain a safe, secure, and healthy facility.
- ☐ Assign a Pandemic Safety Officer and put together the Coordinating Committee (members might include healthcare/medical professionals, parishioners who are in law enforcement, maintenance staff, liturgical coordinator and others such as the sacristan, the head of the ushers and/or greeting teams etc.)
- ☐ Determine who will be working to maintain the cleanliness and sanitization of the facility (cf. remarks on “suitable volunteers” in Addendum A)
- ☐ Set up a cleaning/sanitization check list/log (see below)
- ☐ Provide training to all staff and volunteers who will be cleaning and sanitizing the facility, greeting and screening attendees, and securing the facility.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- ☐ Staff/volunteers wear disposable gloves and face covering when cleaning. Staff/volunteers will also wash their hands – 20 seconds with soap and water. Where soap and water are unavailable, hand sanitizer can be used
- ☐ Create checklist of items that were cleaned with staff/volunteer initials, timestamp, and date of completion. To be checked by Pandemic Safety Officer prior to opening the facility
- ☐ Cleaning and disinfecting high touch point and traffic areas and restrooms.
- ☐ Cleaning of pews, kneelers, railings, doorknobs, restrooms, etc. after each mass
- ☐ Making sure that there is enough of a gap between Mass times in order to allow for air circulation and disinfectant to work
- ☐ Maintain CDC guidelines for use and types of required disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>
Also re: the RCDA Guidelines in Addendum A.

Preventative Measures

- ☐ Continue to provide Mass online
- ☐ Limit the number of Masses per day to allow for proper cleaning, sanitation
- ☐ Provide marking on floor/benches/seats to indicate social distancing spacing of 6 feet between attendees upon entering from the parking lot, seating in the facility, and upon exiting the facility
- ☐ Where possible, use of one door for entry to the facility and different door(s) for exiting facility
- ☐ Provide hand sanitizer stations upon entry
- ☐ Provide accessible tissues
- ☐ Provide no touch trash bins
- ☐ Provide stationary donation box – must be monitored and secured
- ☐ Do not permit the use of communal water coolers, promote attendees to bring their own water, if needed
- ☐ Open doors for screened attendees
- ☐ Roster all attendees for use of potential contact tracing (for example, use a printout of the parish registration list from PDS database and add any non-registered attendees to the list)
- ☐ Instruct attendee to available seat, or to their designated/assigned seat (if a system of assigning seats is being used)
- ☐ Exit protocol – spaced out exit to parking lot (for example, by each bench or row)
- ☐ No congregating in the communal spaces after Mass
- ☐ Parking lot monitored for cars to leave promptly after mass – staggering of parking spots?
- ☐ Should someone get ill during Mass, provide a space separate for the ill person and procedures for all attendees to dismiss



Training for Ushers and/or Greeters

- ☐ Must know how to visually screen attendees to determine if they are permitted to attend Mass.
- ☐ Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- ☐ Screen for physical sign of illness (coughing, sneezing, runny nose, etc.)
- ☐ Instruct attendee where to sit based on the system in use in the parish and the assigned social distance measures set by state and federal guidelines
- ☐ Ensure all attendees have a facial mask
- ☐ Instruct attendees of protocols in place: hand sanitizer, use of restrooms, enforcement of CDC guidelines, as posted (again, remember to use signage too)
- ☐ Do not provide reading material (books, flyers, newsletters, bulletin, and/or missalettes) in the pews/seats or the vestibule
- ☐ Do not shake hands, hug, or kiss when greeting others

Personal Protective Equipment for Employees/Volunteers

- ☐ Must wear disposable gloves when cleaning
- ☐ Must wear face mask at all times
- ☐ Use tissues/paper towels and discard after use.
- ☐ Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Personal Protective Equipment for Attendees

- ☐ Must wear face mask at all times
- ☐ Gloves are optional
- ☐ Use tissues and discard after use.
- ☐ Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Signage

- ☐ Signage about health guidelines posted outside of entrance to the facility
- ☐ Examples from CDC:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs-sp.pdf>

- ☐ Signage for parking lot (possible need for parking lot attendants?)
- ☐ Signage for seating to maintain social distancing
- ☐ Signage for entrance and exit doors

Requirements for Attendees

- ☐ Number of attendees at Mass will be designated by state and federal guidelines and church capacity
- ☐ Follow all CDC guidelines as posted and stay home when sick
- ☐ Must follow set facility protocol in order to enter and remain in facility
- ☐ Wear facial covering/mask
- ☐ Complete health survey
- ☐ Visual screening for illness,
- ☐ Rostering of attendees – if there is an instance when an attendee becomes ill with COVID-19, attendees will be contacted to be alerted of the potential risk and symptoms of COVID-19
- ☐ Most vulnerable encouraged to stay home
- ☐ Prohibited from bringing personal items (books, flyers, newsletters, bulletin, and/or missalettes)
- ☐ Prohibited from shaking hands, hugging, or kissing when greeting others

Training and Responsibilities for Staff

- ☐ Training for cleaning and disinfecting high touch point and traffic areas and restrooms
- ☐ Maintaining social distancing guidance
- ☐ Maintaining CDC recommendations for safe and health guidelines