



Response to Coronavirus

Public Celebrations of Mass

DIOCESE of ARLINGTON

FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS

May 14, 2020

Recommendations for Planning & Preparing

- Dispensation** | *Pastoral Note* · During the time that the dispensation from the Sunday/holiday obligation is in effect, no member of the faithful is obliged to attend Mass. The allowance for the public celebration of Mass in no way intends to place an undue burden on the conscience of those who, out of concern for their own safety &/or the safety of others whom they regularly encounter, choose not to attend Mass while the dispensation is in effect.
- Coordinating In-Participation Participation** | Sufficient time should be scheduled between Masses to ensure proper ventilation of the space. It is to be recognized that the size of the church building, the capability of disinfecting the space, the effectiveness of air ventilation/circulation, & other factors will impact the particular situation of each church. Parishes are asked to consider these factors when making decisions. In addition, consider a designated Mass for the elderly, especially the first Mass of the day.
- Bination & Trination (Communion outside Mass)** | When parish Masses are limited because of the laws of bination & trination, yet an unmet pastoral need of the faithful is observed, consider arranging for the “Rite of Holy Communion outside of Mass” (the rite can be obtained from the Office of Divine Worship).
- Social Distancing** | To reduce contact among ministers, consider placing the Missal, sacred vessels, & other requisites on the side of the altar before Mass (see “Mass at which Only One Minister Participates,” GIRM, nos. 255-256).
- Social Distancing** | Consider placing signs &/or markers on pews, walls, &/or floors to ensure proper distancing is maintained. Such signs & markers should be reverent in appearance, to the extent possible. When making determinations, keep in mind the routes of liturgical processions so that social distancing is maintained between ministers in procession & members of the assembly.
- Social Distancing** | With due respect for the reverent enactment of the ritual & the solemn nature of the liturgy, consider how ritual elements can be enacted while reducing the number of ministers & reducing the contact among ministers. Required ritual elements should never be omitted.
- Disinfection & Ventilation** | Consider keeping interior doors and exterior doors open as much as possible, weather permitting. This will help ensure effective ventilation. It will also help reduce contact points (namely, doorknobs).
- Holy Water** | For baptismal fonts that cannot be emptied, consider assigning porters & ushers, as well as placing stanchions &/or signs, to ensure that fonts are reserved for Baptism only.
- Hymnals** | In place of hymnals/missalettes, disposable aids may be used. Disposable aids should not be reused but can be recycled.
- Ministers (Training & Practice)** | Consider special trainings for porters, ushers, & other ministers on how to carry out their ministries effectively, reverently, & above all charitably. Also consider a practice walk-through with ministers & other volunteers prior to opening public celebrations of Mass in order to clarify details & resolve challenges.
- Signage** | When posting required signage, consider using existing resources to save time & ensure accuracy of content. For example, the U.S.-CDC provides fliers in multiple languages on various topics, such as fliers on prevention & on symptoms available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.

Recommendations for Celebrating

- Singing** | When determining whether & how to limit singing, consider the ranking of sung elements according to the principle of “progressive solemnity,” as found in *Sing to the Lord*, chap. 4.
- Singing (Choirs)** | Carefully consider the use of choirs, their size, the placement of members with respect to one another, & the placement of the choir with respect to the assembly & other ministers. In addition, the size of choirs should be carefully considered in view of person-per-gathering limits.

Recommendations for Celebrating *(continued)*

Introductory Rites | Consider placing the Missal on the altar & leading the Introductory Rites from there, rather than using a book bearer. The Missal may be placed prior to Mass or after the veneration of the altar.

Liturgy of the Word | Advise ministers to maintain social distancing as they approach & leave the ambo.

Liturgy of the Word, Gospel | Advise the deacon to social distance when asking for the blessing from the priest.

Liturgy of the Word, Gospel | Advise that when the minister & those present sign their forehead, lips, & chest, they do so without physically touching their fingers to their forehead, lips, or chest.

Liturgy of the Word, Prayer of the Faithful | The Prayer of the Faithful may fittingly include petitions for those impacted by the coronavirus & those who cannot be present at the Mass. Therefore, the Prayer of the Faithful is encouraged, especially on Sundays & in livestreamed Masses.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Preparation | If you elect not to wear a face covering during Mass, then place the ciboria for the congregation on a corporal away from the celebrant's paten & cover them with lids or palls. Also place chalices for concelebrating priests & deacons away from the celebrant & cover them with palls until the reception of Communion.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Preparation | Ask the server or other minister to place cruets & other vessels on the side of the altar, rather than handing them directly to the priest or deacon. Similarly, the server, another minister, or the priest-celebrant himself may take the cruets & similar vessels from the side of the altar to the credence table once preparation is complete. If necessary, the vessels may remain on the side of the altar, having been neatly arranged by the priest.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Preparation | Consider enacting the lavabo by yourself at the side of the altar, using the requisites placed there during preparation or prior to the start of Mass.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Fraction | Prior to Mass, consider distributing unconsecrated bread among ciboria according to the needs of the gathering assembly. At the time of the ritual fractioning, minimize touching consecrated Hosts that will be distributed to members of the assembly.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion | Consider placing a table next to each station for distribution. On the table, place a corporal, a purificator, hand sanitizer &/or an ablution cup with a food-grade bleach water solution.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Communion | SAMPLE procedure for Communion:

Encourage communicants to disinfect hands immediately before & after Communion.

The communicant remains six feet away from the minister as the minister shows the Host & says, "The Body of Christ." Still six feet away, the communicant responds, "Amen." Face coverings remain in place over the mouth & nose.

When receiving in the hand, the communicant approaches the minister & receives the Host. Reverently holding the Host, he/she then steps aside, lowers the face covering, consumes the Host, & immediately returns the face covering.

If you accidentally touch a communicant's hand, place the ciborium on the corporal of the nearby table, without touching the ciborium with the hand used for distribution. Then, remove any particles from your fingers with the purificator &/or ablution cup & thoroughly disinfect before continuing.

When receiving on the tongue, the communicant approaches the minister, lowers the face covering, receives & consumes the Host, & immediately returns the face covering.

After each & every communicant who receives on the tongue, place the ciborium on the corporal of the nearby table, without touching the ciborium with the hand used for distribution. Then, remove any particles from your fingers with the purificator &/or ablution cup & thoroughly disinfect before continuing.

Liturgy of the Eucharist, Prayer after Communion | Prior to the Prayer after Communion, according to the needs of the gathered assembly &/or if livestreaming is taking place, consider leading an Act of Spiritual Communion for those who are present but, out of concern for their safety, did not receive sacramental Communion &/or for those who are watching via livestream. The Act of Spiritual Communion may also be led prior to the distribution of Communion.