



## Catholic Diocese of Evansville

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Date: 7 May 2020

To: Priests, PLCs

From: Matt Miller, Office of Worship

RE: Guidelines for the Resumption of Public Masses

Per Bishop Siegel's letter dated May 6 regarding the resumption of public liturgies, below are the guidelines for resuming Masses and for disinfecting the church building. Guidelines for other areas of sacramental/devotional life will be forthcoming.

As the bishop stated, if you have any questions on the directives, please do not hesitate to be in touch. Thank you for all you are doing to maintain the liturgical life of your parishes.

### **Broadcast/Livestream Masses**

1. Parishes with the capability should continue to broadcast Masses whenever possible.
  - a. Social distancing protocols as applicable below should be followed.

### **For the Public Celebration of Mass**

1. Individuals 65 and over, as well as those of any age in high risk categories, should stay home.
  - a. This includes deacons and other lay liturgical ministers.
  - b. Per the CDC, "at-risk" health conditions include but not limited to: high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, severe obesity, asthma, those whose immune system is compromised such as by chemotherapy for cancer and other conditions requiring such therapy.
  - c. Signage at the doors should instruct people to not enter if they are symptomatic or if they have tested positive for COVID-19, as well as signage for hygiene practices inside the building.
2. The faithful are encouraged to bring their own facemasks and wear them inside the church.
  - a. Facemasks should be removed only for the reception of Communion.
  - b. Parishes may ask volunteers (e.g., quilters) to sew masks that could be provided at church doors for those who do not have their masks to use and take home.
3. Depending on the layout of a church, parishioners should be seated in every other (or every third) pew.
  - a. It will be necessary to delineate space between and within pews (for example by marking with tape/ribbon).
  - b. It may be prudent to avoid seating immediately next to the main aisle and/or the front cross aisle to maintain proper spacing during the Communion procession.

- c. Family units (those who live under the same roof) should be permitted to sit together.
4. The number of ministers who assist at Mass should be limited.
  - a. For example, the priest could be assisted by one deacon, or an altar server can be used at the presider's discretion.
  - b. Priests are still permitted to concelebrate.
  - c. Only one reader should be used.
  - d. Depending on the size and layout of the church and other factors as addressed in "Protocols for the Distribution of Holy Communion," no. 12, extraordinary minister(s) of Holy Communion may be utilized.
    - i. Any EMHCs used must follow the same protocols for ordinary ministers listed below (see "Protocols for the Distribution of Holy Communion," nos. 4, 8, 9, & 11).
5. The priest celebrant and other ministers should not wear gloves during the celebration of Mass.
  - a. Instead, they should remain more than six feet from the congregation during the entirety of the Mass (aside from the distribution of Holy Communion – see "Protocols for the Distribution of Holy Communion," no. 4)
  - b. Masks may be worn during the distribution of Communion.
6. To the extent possible, the other ministers (deacon, servers, reader) should maintain a 6-foot distance from the priest and from each other.
  - a. The priest could place the Missal on a stand at the chair when he recites the presidential prayers, rather than having a minister hold the book.
7. The use of music should be limited to one cantor and one musician, who must remain more than six feet from one-another and others.
  - a. The cantor should, as much as possible, sing from one place in the church, at least six feet from anyone else. The Responsorial Psalm may be sung from the cantor stand rather than the ambo.
  - b. The use of sung antiphons from the *Roman Gradual* or the *Roman Missal*, music with refrains, as well as hymns well known to the congregation, along with instrumental accompaniment without singing all should be considered.
  - c. Hymnals should not be used due to the difficulty in sanitizing between uses.
    - i. If hymnals are in the pews, they should be removed.
  - d. Recorded music or "virtual choirs" should be avoided.
8. If necessary given the configuration of the church, consider modifying the route of the Entrance and Recessional in order to maintain a 6-foot distance from members of the congregation.
  - a. The procession at the Preparation of the Gifts should be omitted.
9. Special provision should be made for the collection
  - a. Baskets should not be passed from person to person
  - b. Baskets could be placed at the entrance for the faithful to use.
10. The Sign of Peace continues to be omitted.
11. Parishes may consider dismissing the faithful one pew at a time after Mass to ensure there is proper spacing when leaving the church.
12. There should not be any social gatherings inside or outside of the church before or after the Mass.
  - a. This would include the priest greeting people at the door of the church before or after Mass.

## **Protocols for the Distribution of Holy Communion**

1. The person responsible for the preparation of Eucharistic elements must wear a mask and non-latex gloves.
  - a. It would be prudent for concelebrants to either have their own patens/chalices or for priests to receive by intinction.
  - b. All vessels should be washed/sanitized after each use.
  - c. Once prepared they should be placed on the credence table or other space and covered until needed.
2. Holy Communion from the chalice for the faithful remains suspended until further notice.
3. There is no need for ministers of Holy Communion to wear gloves.
4. Ministers of Communion may wear face masks while distributing if they prefer.
  - a. Masks should be put on before sanitizing their hands before Communion, and removed before sanitizing after Communion.
5. Before the Mass, or at least before the distribution of Holy Communion, hand sanitizer should be placed within easy reach of the place(s) from where Communion will be distributed.
6. All social distancing protocols must be maintained.
  - a. At least six feet (approximately two pews) between communicants in procession to and from.
  - b. Parishes may wish to mark the aisles with tape to indicate the necessary distance.
7. Before the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain the basic protocols for Communion (“Suitable point” means either before Penitential Act or before the Preface of the Eucharistic Prayer).
  - a. Remind the faithful that those concerned with receiving Holy Communion are not obligated to do so, and they can choose not to receive until they are more comfortable.
  - b. That, for those who desire to receive Holy Communion, they may do so at the normal time.
  - c. Those who are not receiving Holy Communion for whatever reason should not come forward for a blessing.
  - d. Those who wish to remain in their places may do so. They should step out of pew a safe distance to allow those who are approaching for Communion to pass by.
  - e. Maintain the six foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
  - f. Holy Communion in the hand is highly encouraged during this time.
    - i. Those who do not wish to receive in the hand could be asked to receive last or to make a spiritual communion.
  - g. While distributing the hosts, the minister’s declaration of “The Body of Christ” should be said softly, as should the communicant’s “Amen” response.
8. The hosts for the Communion of the faithful should be placed on the altar where they are not directly in front of the priest (perhaps on a second corporal towards the side of the altar).

- a. This allows the priest to pray the words of consecration directly over the host he will consume, with the other hosts on the altar but not directly in front of the priest as he speaks the Eucharistic prayer.
9. Priests and deacons should wash hands or use hand sanitizer both after making their own Communion and after distributing Communion to the faithful.
10. The faithful who receive Communion should, as best as possible, sanitize their hands before and after receiving.
  - a. People are encouraged to bring their own bottles of hand sanitizer to use.
11. Any person-to-person contact must be completely avoided.
  - a. Hosts could be lightly and carefully dropped in well-cupped hands.
  - b. If the minister was to make physical contact with the communicant or to give Communion on the tongue, they should stop distribution immediately and sanitize their hands (using the sanitizer placed prior to the Mass – see no. 5 above).
  - c. If someone not receiving Holy Communion does come forward, the minister should not physically touch them.
12. Extraordinary minister(s) of Holy Communion may be utilized under the following conditions:
  - a. If the size and layout of the church and number of people present require their use for the timely distribution of Communion.
  - b. If the priest celebrant is the only ordinary minister of Holy Communion present, and he is unable to distribute Communion due to age or health concerns.
  - c. Any EMHCs must follow the same protocols as priests/deacons in the prep before, during and after the distribution of Communion.
13. Each ordinary minister should purify his own vessels after distributing Communion.
  - a. This may be done after Mass.
14. If there is a need to consecrate additional hosts to be reserved for viaticum, those should be placed in their own vessel from the beginning of Mass and not used for the Communion of the faithful present.
15. Any hosts that remain from the distribution of Communion should be immediately consumed and not mixed with the reserved Blessed Sacrament.

## **Protocols for Disinfecting/Sanitizing Places, Spaces, and Items**

### *Intensify cleaning and disinfection efforts*

1. From the CDC - Routinely (at least once per day, if possible) clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not ordinarily cleaned daily (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, countertops). Clean with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label. For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective. A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
2. Ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection supplies.
  - a. This includes the supplies and any PPE needed by those tasked with disinfecting/sanitizing the church after use.
3. Before resuming public Masses, parishes must demonstrate the ability to sanitize churches and items with the CDC properly approved sanitizer immediately after each Mass. This includes but is not limited to:
  - a. Door handles/crash bars
  - b. Pew/seating surfaces, especially where hands are regularly placed (arm rests, top of back of pews)
    - i. Includes sanctuary seating
  - c. Restroom handles/surfaces
  - d. Liturgical vessels and books
  - e. Those doing the sanitizing must wear masks and gloves
4. Only one entrance should be used for entry.
  - a. Emergency exits should be left unimpeded.
5. Place hand sanitizer near the entrance to the church. Encourage those entering and exiting to perform hand hygiene.
6. Hymnals should be removed for pews as they would be difficult to sanitize after each use.
7. All pamphlets/handouts should be removed from the church.
8. Bulletins may be placed out after Mass to be taken home.
9. Water fountains should be shut off.
10. If parishes need assistance in obtaining cleaning/sanitizing supplies, please contact Andy Reckelhoff, Director of Facilities, at the Catholic Center.

CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19

<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>