



## Diocese of Covington

### Protocols for Celebrating the Liturgy amid COVID-19

12 May 2020

- I. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass for all the faithful of the Diocese of Covington is extended until further notice. Additionally, those who are sick should refrain from coming to church for fourteen (14) days from when they first began to experience symptoms.
  
- II. Eucharist
  1. Beginning 20 May, 2020, public celebration of the Eucharist will resume. The first weekend Mass will be 23/24 May, 2020.
  2. At this time, no additional Masses are to be added.
  3. The following precautions are to be observed:

#### Before Mass

- Parishioners are to sit six feet apart, with an exception made for members of the same household.
  - Seating in the churches will be limited to allow for this social distancing. Every other pew will be blocked off to ensure six feet distancing in every direction.
  - All open pews will have markers every six feet to assist parishioners in spacing themselves within the pews.
  - Once pastors determine the seating capacity, efforts should be made to inform the parishioners of the new restrictions in order to limit the number attending a single liturgy.
- Parishioners should be encouraged to wear face coverings.
- Pews, ambos, door handles, railings (indoor and outdoor), and bathrooms are to be wiped down after every Mass. Pastors should consider recruiting volunteers to help with this process. Only one person at a time should be allowed in the bathroom.

- Everything is to be removed from the pews including but not limited to hymnals, missalettes, response cards, guest envelopes, etc. Parishes might consider using disposable worship aids.
  - Ministers:
    - Only one lector is to be used at each Mass.
    - If servers are to be utilized they are required to wear white gloves and face masks. All server vesture (including gloves) is to be washed weekly.
    - Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are limited to two (2) only for each Mass.
    - Sacristans should wash/sanitize their hands before and after setting up for Mass and should also wear face coverings during that time.
    - Ushers/Greeters are to wear face coverings.
  - Musicians
    - Organist/pianist are to sanitize their instrument after every liturgy.
    - All microphones should also be sanitized after each Mass.
    - A single cantor is permitted in addition to the organist/pianist.
    - Choirs are not to gather and sing together.
    - Singing during Mass creates a higher risk of spreading infectious particles. Alternatives to congregational singing such as instrumental music or antiphonal singing should be considered.
  - Consider having volunteers hold the doors open for parishioners or propping doors as parishioners enter the church to reduce the touching of door handles.
  - Holy water fonts are not to be used and baptismal fonts are to be covered.

#### During Mass

- Processions should be avoided to maintain safe, social distancing. If possible, the ministers should enter the sanctuary via the sacristy.
- Consider other methods for the collection if you pass a basket from one person to another. Note: maintain all security protocols as it relates to the collection.
- There is to be no procession of the gifts (offertory procession).
- The Sign of Peace is to be omitted.
- Distribution of Holy Communion
  - Only the priest(s), vested deacon(s) and two Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may distribute Holy Communion.

- They must wear face masks and sanitize their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- When there is more than one minister of communion, bread is to be separated into separate ciboria prior to Mass.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful is to be omitted. Note: When concelebration occurs, priests and deacons should receive via intinction.
- Place markers in aisles six feet apart to facilitate safe, social distancing in the communion procession.
- One way communion lines should be utilized; for example, distribution could occur in side aisles rather than the center aisle.
- Communion is to be received by the faithful in the hand and standing.
- It is the decision of the pastor whether or not to allow reception of Communion on the tongue. If this practice is allowed the person distributing Holy Communion must sanitize his/her hands after distributing to each individual communicant.
- Those with gluten intolerance should make arrangements with the pastor.

#### After Mass

- Consider having volunteers hold the doors open for parishioners or propping doors as parishioners leave the church to reduce the touching of door handles
- The priest and deacon should not greet the people for the safety and wellbeing of both the clergy and the people.
- Until Further Notice, ancillary gatherings connected to Mass are suspended; for example, Children's Liturgy of the Word or coffee and donuts following Mass.

### III. Weddings, Funerals, and Baptisms

1. Beginning on 20 May, 2020, public weddings, funerals, and baptisms are permitted.
2. The above guidelines must be followed.

- IV. Reception of Catechumens and Candidates Into the Church
  - 1. Depending on the number of candidates, pastors should receive the candidates and catechumens at a Mass distinct from the scheduled liturgies in order to reduce the number of people in the church.
  - 2. The above guidelines must be followed.
  
- V. Anointing of the Sick
  - 1. Priests are to follow current guidelines as it relates to the Anointing of the Sick.
  - 2. As a reminder, priests are permitted to use an instrument, such as a cotton ball or a cotton-swab, for the actual anointing.
  
- VI. Sacrament of Reconciliation
  - 1. Regularly scheduled confessions can resume.
  - 2. Lines for confessionals should have markers on the ground every six feet to encourage safe, social distancing.
  - 3. Both the penitent and the confessor should wear masks.
  - 4. Pastors are to take every possible precaution to ensure that the sacrament is celebrated safely, for example, removing kneelers and offering a chair without arms, offering a means for the penitent to sanitize the kneeler before and after confession, or offering sanitizer for those entering and exiting the confessional.
  
- VII. Other liturgies and devotions are permitted but are required to follow the above guidelines.

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