

# The Art of Reopening our Churches for Public Worship

(This document was last updated on March 28, 2021.)

## Overarching Principles

- Every effort must be made at prioritizing the safety of all who enter our facilities.
- Recommendations from the CDC, MDH and the Governor's Office must be adhered to as closely as is possible.
- Upholding the dignity of the liturgy must remain a focus as we prepare our celebrations.
- The obligation to participate in the Mass remains dispensed until further notice.
- If individuals are feeling ill, they must remain at home.
- Live-streaming of the Mass is encouraged to continue.
- There is no percentage or capacity limit for the size of the assembly. However, all physical distancing and mask requirements are to be followed

## Indications

- ✓ A bullet point as shown here, is an indication of **required** practice.
- A bullet point as shown here, is an indication of **recommended** practice.

## Preparing our Space

### ❖ Entrances

- ✓ Use of hand sanitizer is to be encouraged upon entering and exiting the church.
- ✓ Gatherings of people in gathering spaces should be discouraged.
- ✓ Holy Water fonts and stoups must remain empty.
- All doors could be propped open.
- Hospitality Ministers could be stationed at the entrances to encourage the use of hand sanitizer upon entering the church.
- Hospitality Ministers could hold doors open.

### ❖ Assembly Seating

- ✓ Pews are to be marked for seating.
- ✓ Physical distancing of six (6) feet is to be maintained, except for members of the same household.
- ✓ Members of the liturgical assembly **MUST** wear face coverings. These must be removed before the reception of Holy Communion.
- ✓ Hymnals and books containing texts of the Mass may be placed in the pews for the assembly to use.

### ❖ Sanctuary Seating

- ✓ Presider's chair and Deacon's chair or Concelebrant chairs must be spaced six (6) feet apart.
- ✓ All other ministers (i.e. altar servers) should be separated by six feet.

## Ministers

### ❖ Priests

- ✓ A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind or any illness must avoid celebrating public Masses. The same holds true for other ministers who might serve at a Mass (deacon, servers, lectors, etc.).
- ✓ The celebrant and other ministers must **not** wear gloves during the celebration of the Mass.
- ✓ The celebrant and other ministers must wear face coverings during processions and recessional and the distribution of Holy Communion.
- ✓ Priests MAY choose to wear a face covering throughout the Mass, but are not required to do so. If you are following these current guidelines, you are in alignment with the Executive Order by Gov. Walz.
- ✓ Priests MUST wear a face covering when greeting people before and after Mass whether inside or outside.
- ✓ The celebrant must sanitize his hands before and after each Mass.

### ❖ Deacons

- ✓ A deacon with a respiratory infection of any kind or any illness must avoid assisting at public Masses.
- ✓ The deacon must sanitize his hands before and after each Mass.
- ✓ The deacon must wear face coverings during processions and recessional the distribution of Holy Communion.
- ✓ Deacons MAY choose to wear a face covering throughout the Mass, but are not required to do so. If you are following these current guidelines, you are in alignment with the Executive Order by Gov. Walz.
- ✓ Deacons MUST wear a face covering when greeting people before and after Mass whether inside or outside.

### ❖ Altar Servers

- ✓ Altar Servers are to wear masks at all times.
- ✓ Physical distance of 6 feet or more must be maintained between households at all times.
- ✓ They should wash their hands before Mass begins and again when it has concluded.
- ✓ Altar Servers may participate in the entrance procession and recessional.
- ✓ The presider should continue to hold the *Roman Missal* or use some other methods to pray the orations. Altar Servers are not to hold the *Roman Missal* or any other book/folder for the presider.
- ✓ Altar Servers may dress the altar.
- ✓ Altar Servers are not to assist with the *lavabo* (washing of hands).

❖ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

- ✓ May continue to be involved in the distribution of Holy Communion (see specifics below).
- ✓ All Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must sanitize hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
- ✓ Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must wear face coverings during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- ✓ Hand sanitizer could be placed on small tables near communion stations for ministers to cleanse hands in the event they come into contact with the communicant.

❖ Ushers

- ✓ Must not shake hands or offer an embrace to those gathering.
- ✓ All Ushers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
- ✓ All Ushers must wear face coverings during Mass.
  - Encourage the use of hand sanitizer when people enter or exit the church.
  - Help seat people or direct them to the available pews – must maintain physical distancing of six (6) feet.
  - Assist with indicating when people would enter the procession for the reception of Holy Communion.

❖ Lectors

- ✓ May continue to proclaim the Word of God from the ambo.
- ✓ All Lectors must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
- ✓ All Lectors must wear a face covering during processional and recessional and at all times when not proclaiming the Word of God or reading the Universal Prayers.
  - All books (i.e. *Lectionary*, binders, etc.) could be wiped down after each Mass.

❖ Music Ministers

- ✓ All Music Ministers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
- ✓ A determination must be made for each church as to how many singers can gather while maintaining physical distancing of six feet or more at all times. A distance of 12 feet between singers is recommended when singing indoors.
- ✓ Singers from one household may stand together, but physical distancing of 6 feet or more must be maintained between households.
- ✓ Singers should all face the same direction (no 'U' shaped or circular arrangements).
- ✓ Singers may temporarily remove face masks when singing or making announcements.
- ✓ If utilizing instrumentalists, if a face mask cannot be worn while playing, they may temporarily remove their face mask during Mass and rehearsals.

- ✓ Choirs and instrumentalists must be separated from the liturgical assembly by 12 feet at all times.
- ✓ Avoid sharing equipment (i.e. music stands, microphones, percussion, hymnals, folders, etc.) and clean all equipment between uses. Churches may want to consider disposable microphone covers. A simple search online will show many options.
- ✓ Congregational singing is to be limited to:
  - ✓ Dialogues and Acclamations/Litanies (Kyrie, Collects with Amen, Gospel Acclamation, Preface Dialogue, Sanctus, Memorial Acclamation, Amen, Agnus Dei)
  - ✓ Antiphons and Psalms (Entrance Antiphons, Responsorial Psalm Refrain, Communion Antiphon)
  - ✓ Gloria (although a hymn of praise, permission is granted)
  - ✓ The gathering, preparation of gifts, communion and recessional hymns or songs should be sung by choir or cantor alone. Sequences are to be recited by the congregation.
- Additional instrumentalists could be utilized if physical distancing is possible.
  
- ❖ Sacristans
  - Sacristans may set up for Mass as usual.
  - ✓ All Sacristans must sanitize their hands before and after handling any vessels, vestments, etc.
  
- ❖ Technology Ministers
  - ✓ All Technology Ministers must sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
  - ✓ If ministers are used to run projection systems or sound systems, the equipment must be wiped down after each liturgy.

## Order of Mass

### ❖ The Introductory Rites

- ✓ Appropriate physical distance must be maintained during entrance procession.
- ✓ All ministers in the procession must wear face coverings.
- ✓ As a part of the introduction of the Mass of the day (or at some other designated time) the celebrant offers instruction to the liturgical assembly regarding process during Mass.
  - ✓ 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 appropriate time, but that those who wish to remain in their places may do so. He may add that the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
- ✓ Use of the Sprinkling Rite is to be in accordance with the *Roman Missal*.
  - ✓ Done by priest alone.
  - ✓ Priest must wear a mask.
  - ✓ The most direct route is to be considered.
  - ✓ The Holy Water used must be used only for this purpose (i.e. it should not be taken from a font prepared for baptism).
- ✓ Altar Servers should not hold the *Roman Missal* for the Collect.

### ❖ The Liturgy of the Word

- ✓ If a deacon is to proclaim the Gospel, he must receive the blessing from the celebrant while maintaining physical distancing requirements.

### ❖ The Liturgy of the Eucharist

- ✓ Passing of offertory baskets is prohibited until further notice.
  - Baskets with long handles could be used by ushers. All attempts should be made to encourage online giving or placing contributions in a container in the gathering area before or after Mass.
- ✓ The gifts must not be processed to the altar but, instead, brought from the credence table.
- ✓ The elements which will be consumed by the celebrant must be placed in the usual way. Additional corporals must be placed on the altar as far from the celebrant as is possible. Any hosts to be consecrated and distributed to the liturgical assembly must be placed on these corporals.
- ✓ For the elevation of the sacred species at "*Through him, and with him, and in him,*" if a deacon is present, he may stand alongside the priest and elevate the chalice.
- ✓ The invitation for the liturgical assembly to exchange a sign of peace is to be omitted.
- ✓ The celebrant is the only one to consume the Precious Blood from the chalice. Concelebrants must receive by *intinction*.
- ✓ Deacons are to receive the Precious Body ONLY.
- ✓ Members of the liturgical assembly are not to receive the Precious Blood until further notice.

- ✓ Members of the liturgical assembly they must remove face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the liturgical assembly is wearing gloves.
  - ✓ All ministers, including the celebrant and deacon, must sanitize their hands (e.g. with hand sanitizer) immediately before distributing Holy Communion.
  - ✓ Holy Communion must be received in the hand only and is to be distributed at the prescribed time during Mass
    - Should someone come forward to receive a blessing, there should be no physical contact between individuals.
  - ✓ Physical distancing must be adhered to during the communion procession.
  - ✓ Ushers should assist with the communion procession.
    - Tape may be placed on aisles to indicate where people are to stand and move to during the communion procession.
  - ✓ At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the celebrant (and any other ministers) carefully combine any remaining Body of Christ into one ciborium and place it in the tabernacle, and then sanitize their hands (e.g. with hand sanitizer). *NOTE: One may want to sanitize hands before combining the Body of Christ into a ciborium.*
  - ✓ Altar Servers are not to hold the *Roman Missal* for the Prayer after Communion.
- ❖ **The Concluding Rites**
- ✓ The Mass concludes as usual.
  - ✓ Physical distancing requirements must be maintained during the recessional.
  - ✓ Ushers assist with dismissing the liturgical assembly so as to maintain physical distancing requirements.
  - ✓ Priests and Deacons **MUST** wear a face covering when greeting people before and after Mass whether inside or outside.

### **Additional Requirements/Recommendations**

- ✓ Because of the lower threat they pose to spreading the virus, hymnals and pews can be cleaned as established in your cleaning schedule but do not need to be sanitized more than once a day. However, high-contact surfaces such as door knobs, microphones and restroom facilities should be sanitized often.
- ✓ Congregating of people either before or after Mass is to be discouraged.
  - Consideration should be made for restroom use. A suggestion might be to place tape on the floor outside of the restroom to indicate where to stand in line to wait while maintaining physical distancing.

### **The Order of Celebrating Matrimony**

- ✓ All relevant requirements mentioned under “Order of the Mass” are to be adhered to until further notice.
- ✓ Outdoor celebrations may take place until further notice following *The Order for Christian Matrimony without Mass*.

### **The Order of Christian Funerals**

- ✓ All relevant requirements mentioned under “Order of the Mass” are to be adhered to until further notice.

### **The Order of Baptism of Children**

- ✓ All relevant requirements mentioned under “Order of the Mass” are to be adhered to until further notice.
- ✓ If multiple children, after each tracing of the sign of the cross and each anointing, the celebrant must sanitize his hands.
- ✓ Baptism by immersion must be suspended until further notice.
- ✓ If multiple baptisms of adults or children, water from different sources (e.g. separate bowls or pitchers) must be blessed and used.
- Any vessels used, including the Baptismal Font, should be sanitized after baptisms.

### **First Communion**

- ✓ All relevant requirements mentioned under “Order of the Mass” are to be adhered to until further notice.
- Consideration should be made for multiple Masses with fewer people participating.

### **Confirmation**

- ✓ There are updated guidelines available at: <http://stcdio.org/confirmation/>

### **Anointing of the Sick**

- It is recommended both the presiding ministers and the individual participating in the sacrament wear face covering.
- ✓ The presiding minister must sanitize his hands before and after the anointing.
- ✓ With any indication of laying hands, this must be done without physical touch.

### **Confession**

- It is recommended both the presiding ministers and the individuals participating in the sacrament wear face covering.
- ✓ Physical distancing must be maintained.
- ✓ The sacrament should be celebrated in a larger space with adequate ventilation.