



DIOCESE OF VENICE
Ongoing Guidelines for Parish Life
In the Context of Covid-19

Updated: October 9, 2020

Guidelines for the Celebration of Mass

- The dispensation from the Obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains in force until November 27, 2020 and, depending upon conditions, perhaps longer.
- Those defined as more vulnerable may be encouraged to continue to stay at home.
- With the dispensation remaining until November 27, Parishes should continue to offer Live-Stream Masses in all of the languages in which Masses are offered.
- If they have not already done so, Parishes should resume their pre-pandemic schedule. It may be necessary to schedule additional Masses or plan for an overflow space as the Faithful are being invited to return to Mass.
- Distancing should be respected. A face mask or other face covering is to be worn by all in attendance at Masses or Parish functions.¹
- Parishes may resume utilizing Deacons, Readers, Servers, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion in the celebration of Mass, if they have not already done so.
- A cantor is permitted, but choirs should not resume.
- Weekday Masses should continue to be held in the main Church, rather than in a chapel.
- Hospitality ministers and ushers should wear masks and should not make physical contact when greeting Parishioners.
- Priests, Deacons, Readers, Servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, Ushers, and Sacristans are to wash/sanitize their hands before and after Mass, as well as before and after engaging in their ministry or service (i.e. Distributing Communion, Greeting Parishioners).
- Sacristans and those who prepare communion elements are to wear a mask and gloves.
- There is to be no presentation of Gifts/Offertory Procession. All vessels containing the bread and wine are to remain covered on the credence table until placed on the altar.
- Collection baskets are not to be passed person-to-person. Large baskets should be placed at church exits for people to drop envelopes or donations. Alternatively, baskets with long handles are allowed. Ushers involved in the collection should wear masks and gloves.
- It continues to be necessary that there be no physical contact during the Sign of Peace. The Deacon should NOT request that a Sign of Peace be offered. Recall that the Sign of Peace is an optional part of the Mass. Further, there should be no hand holding during

¹ It should be understood that all liturgical functions and Parish events are subject to the requirements to follow spacing and wear a face covering.

the recitation of the Lord's Prayer.

- If a Priest is in a higher-risk category (age/pre-existing condition), he may be seated for the distribution of Communion if he so wishes. This may also apply to the Deacon. Other Priests, Deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion can distribute the Eucharist.
- Communion for Concelebrants should be done by intinction. A Deacon does not self-intinct and thus receives only the Body of Christ. This will require that only Priests receive the Precious Blood at this time.
- Priests, Deacons, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should not wear disposable gloves during the distribution of Communion.
- If inadvertent contact is made during the distribution of Communion, the Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is to stop and sanitize his/her hands before continuing to distribute Communion. It may be prudent to have a small table nearby with the proper items for sanitizing. The Communion Minister's face covering should be put on prior to sanitizing.
- It may be helpful to distribute Communion to Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion after they have distributed Communion to the Congregation.
- Ushers should assist in directing the Communion procession as regards distancing.
- Communion is to be received in the hand. Should someone wish to receive Communion on the tongue, it may be distributed in this manner at the discretion of the Priest. Parishes should consider designating a separate Communion station or line for this purpose.
- The Precious Blood should not be distributed to the Faithful.
- Directions for dismissal after Mass may be provided by the celebrant so that an orderly exit with proper spacing can be observed (for example: pew-by-pew starting in the front or back of the Church).
- Paper bulletins may be distributed only as people exit the Church. They may not be distributed prior to Mass. Those tasked with the distribution of bulletins should wear gloves and a mask. Parish Bulletins could also be posted to the Parish website or emailed to Parishioners.

Guidelines Related to the Church Building and Related Liturgical Objects

- All communion vessels are to be thoroughly and properly cleansed after Mass with hot, soapy water after being purified according to the rubrics.
- Signage should be placed at the entrance advising anyone with fever or flu-like symptoms to not enter the Church. Entrance doors should be propped open to limit contact with door handles or hospitality ministers may hold the doors open both before and after Mass.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at all church entrances.
- Holy Water fonts (stoups) should remain emptied at this time. If possible, baptismal fonts should remain empty when not celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism. If it is not possible to drain, the font should be frequently sanitized.
- Parishes may wish to place floor markings to assist in spacing during the Communion procession.
- Missals, Bibles, prayer cards or other paper resources should NOT be returned to pews

at this time.

- Frequently touched surfaces in the church (pews/pew tops, door handles, microphones, etc.) should be cleaned and sanitized after every liturgy and Parish function.
- In-pew worship aids are discouraged. It is preferred that Parishes utilize familiar hymns or provide electronic worship aids. If paper worship aids are used, they should be limited to one page and people should be directed to take them with them after Mass. If worship aids are left in pew, they must be collected and destroyed after each Mass. They cannot be reused for the next Mass.
- Restrooms should be cleaned between Masses.

Sacramental and Parish Life

- Weddings and funerals should be held. It is permissible for the Bride and Groom to receive Communion under Both Species, provided they receive from a different Chalice than the Presider.
- Baptisms should also continue. Clean water must be used for each individual Baptism.
- If First Communion has not already taken place, Parishes should proceed to schedule it.
- Parishes should hold regular Confession. If confessionals have insufficient space or ventilation, another location within the Church may be used, respecting both privacy and necessary health precautions.
- Outdoor confessions, particularly those celebrated in vehicles, should be discontinued except in exceptional cases. As a reminder, the Sacrament may not be celebrated via telephone, video conference, or related means of electronic communications.
- Those taking part in the RCIA who were scheduled to be initiated on Easter 2020 should receive the Sacraments as soon as possible. As a reminder, Priests may not Confirm baptized Catholics who may have not received Confirmation.
- Anointing of the Sick should be done with the utmost care upon request. Communal celebrations of the Sacrament should not be held at this time. Anointing of the Sick must be administered by a Priest.
- Visits to the homebound for Communion may likewise proceed with great caution. Further, Parishes should seek to visit sick Parishioners in hospitals and Parishioners in Nursing Homes.
- Parishes are encouraged to continue to offer Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. Churches should also be open for visitation at other times.
- Parish group activities may resume. This includes, but is not limited to: Bible Studies, Bereavement Ministry, CCW, Youth Group, Knights of Columbus, and Rosary Groups. Food and beverages should NOT be served at this time.
- All Parish Offices should be open, following guidelines for masks, sanitizing, and spacing.
- Parish charitable activities should resume.
- Religious Education should have resumed. If the Parish has not already begun classes, please do so. Adult Faith Formation may also return.
- All Catholic Schools have resumed instruction.
- Volunteers may resume serving in Parishes.