



Diocese of  
OWENSBORO

## GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC LITURGIES

**I.** Understandably, everyone is anxious to return to normalcy. But the threat of the coronavirus is still very much with us. This certainly has impacted the way we worship and the rituals which are a vital part of our faith. However, with over a year of scientific research and with increased access to vaccines, it seems prudent and timely to revise safety measures slowly when it has been proven safe to do so.

### **II. Eucharist**

- Public Masses have been permitted at a limited capacity since May 20, 2020. All the faithful continue to be dispensed from their Sunday obligation until further notice. Those who are sick must stay home.
- Live-streamed liturgies are of benefit to those who are homebound, sick, or otherwise vulnerable and they should be continued
- Consider the possibility of celebrating Mass in a larger space such as a parish hall or school gym where more people can participate while maintaining physical distance.
- Consider live streaming the Mass into the parish hall or school gym for people who cannot be accommodated in the worship space. Bring Holy Communion to those in the secondary space.

#### *Before Mass*

- Pastors and ushers should make every effort to ensure appropriate physical distancing before, during, and after liturgical celebrations. Methods will vary in light of the capacity of church buildings. Calculate your capacity for limited occupancy by multiplying ~~.33~~ 60(3360%) by the total occupancy available in your parish. For example, if you can ordinarily accommodate 300 people, 300 multiplied by ~~.6033~~ is 180 99 people that would be allowed in the building for a given Mass.

- <sup>5/6/21</sup>Other than family/household units, worshippers should be seated three feet apart in all directions. These principles also apply to chapels and other smaller rooms on the parish campus. Map it out to determine proper spacing. Pastors may choose to enforce more restrictive protocols (i.e., six foot distance).
- Consider placing a stand near the presider's chair to hold the Roman Missal. This eliminates the need for the server to stand so close to the presider.
- Consider that at limited capacity, it may not be necessary to have EMHC. This could cut down on those in contact with the vessels.
- <sup>4/29/21</sup>\*\*We are asking everyone attending Mass to wear a face mask; this includes children over the age of two. This age is based on CDC recommendations saying anyone two years of age or older should wear a mask when in public or around people who do not live in your household. Those children under the age of two are welcome to attend Mass unmasked, as recommended by the CDC guidelines. The pastor is *not* required to wear a face mask while celebrating Mass except for in procession and distributing Communion; at all other times, he will maintain a distance of <sup>5/6/21</sup>three feet between other ministers.
- If available, hand sanitizing stations should be set up.
- Baptismal fonts and holy water stoops should remain empty.
- Collection baskets should not be passed around. Consider setting up central boxes or collection points where the faithful can place their contributions. Remind parishioners about opportunities for online giving.
- Priests, deacons, and all liturgical ministers should model good hygienic practices before, during, and after Mass. Presiders, deacons, and EMHC's should continue to use hand sanitizer before Mass, before the Communion Procession, and after Mass.

#### *During Mass*

- Bread and wine should continue to be kept from public areas. Therefore, there will be no procession of gifts. The gifts of bread and wine may be brought to the altar simply from the credence table in the sanctuary.
- If hosts for the communion of the faithful are to be consecrated, they could be placed on a second corporal towards the side of the altar. This allows the priest to offer 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.
- The Sign of Peace should be given without physical contact, or may be omitted.
- During the Our Father, if the faithful choose to hold hands they should do so only with other members of their household.
- Ministers of Holy Communion are to use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after distributing Communion to the congregation (not in between communicants).

- Consider having a stand with a bowl of soapy water and a clean towel available in case physical contact is made. Pour water into ground after Mass.
- The practice of the faithful receiving the Precious Blood from the chalice is suspended.
- The practice of the faithful receiving Holy Communion on the tongue is suspended.
- Face masks are to be worn while in procession and removed only long enough to receive Holy Communion.
- Physical distancing is to be maintained in the Communion procession. Consider asking hospitality ministers to release each pew. Consider marking the floor with tape indicating ~~6~~<sup>5/6/21</sup> three feet of distance between persons in the communion line. There should be a single line for communion.
- Congregational singing is permitted, but not recommended. Spread of the virus via droplets in the air remains a threat, and thus singing is *only* safe when everyone is properly masked. The best practice is to allow sung acclamations, responses, and responsorial psalms, or otherwise songs that are call/response in nature rather than having the congregation sing for a prolonged period of time. Please see herefor more information regarding best practices.<sup>5/6/21</sup> Choirs may resume but must be masked and placed three feet apart. Cantors may be unmasked if at least 8-12 feet apart.

#### *After Mass*

- Consider placing a stand near the presider's chair to hold the Roman Missal. This eliminates the need for the server to stand so close to the presider.
- Consider dismissing by pew toward different exits with doors propped open or held open by hospitality ministers.
- ~~Bulletins may be set out (not passed out by hand) after Mass for people to pick up as they are leaving. Bulletins may be passed out by ushers utilizing physical distancing and wearing gloves or set out after Mass to be picked up by people as they are leaving.~~
- All hymnals and missalettes may be returned to the pews for communal use.
- Vessels should continue to be washed after each Mass in hot soapy water.
- <sup>5/6/21</sup> We recommend high use areas within the church be wiped down, especially door handles and push plates. Doors might be propped open to lessen contact or hospitality ministers should hold doors open. Where possible, hand disinfectant should be made available.
  - i. CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (CDC):  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>  
includes how to disinfect, where to disinfect.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html> (Answers to frequently-asked questions)

### **III. Weddings, Funerals, Baptisms, and First Communion**

- These liturgies are subject to all guidelines presented above. They are to take place at the pastor's discretion.
- Water for baptism is to be changed and blessed before each baptism. As always, blessed water should be properly disposed of in the ground.