



Mass Protocols with the Congregation Present

*Effective Monday, May 11, 2020, Bishop Gregory Parkes is giving permission for parishes to resume **Daily Masses** from Monday through Saturday morning, if they are able to do so. Thought should be given to providing Daily Mass opportunities at various times so that those who are working during typical Daily Mass times can attend (for example, in the evening or on a Saturday morning).*

These guidelines follow recommendations from health and government officials and are being provided to allow parishes within the Diocese of St. Petersburg to open gradually, as circumstances suggest, from May 11, 2020 onward.

*The resumption of Sunday Masses is anticipated **at a later date**. In the meantime, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass, granted by Bishop Parkes on March 13, 2020, remains in effect.*

1. General Provisions

- a. Inform all persons at greater risk that they are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass. The same should be told to those who are feeling sick or experiencing respiratory symptoms as well as those who may be fearful of gathering in large groups too soon.
- b. Parishes currently live streaming Masses for those who are at risk or sick should continue doing so.
- c. Place hand sanitizers near the entrances to the church. Those entering and exiting the building are to perform hand hygiene.
- d. Regularly clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the church (see Page 5).
- e. Face coverings are highly recommended.
- f. Parishioners should be encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer and face coverings.
- g. It is recommended that hymnals and missalettes be removed for the time being. The parish could provide one-time use service sheets with music, use projection screens or provide online worship aids to the parish webpage that are accessible by cellphones.

2. Limiting the Size of the Congregation & Social Distancing (25% of capacity)

- a. **Church or Parish Center?** Parish Centers may allow more flexibility for seating, the flow of the liturgy, and cleaning/disinfecting common surfaces after Mass as there may be fewer surfaces to maintain.
- b. **Distancing:** The faithful are to be reminded to maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times.
- c. **Delineating Areas:**
 - Seating within the worship space may be limited to every other pew or the spacing of chairs in a building with flexible seating.

- In areas where the faithful would normally stand (e.g. to receive Communion or waiting to go to confession), place tape on the floor to indicate proper spacing between persons.
 - Station ushers at the entrances to “direct traffic” and to remind people to keep 6 feet apart when entering and exiting the building.
 - If all available spaces are filled, do not admit additional people to the church building.
 - Encourage the people to maintain social distancing everywhere on the church property (on the steps, in the parking lot, etc.).
- d. **Families/Households:** Members of a single household do not need to practice social distancing and may sit together.
- e. **Restrooms:** Develop a plan for restroom use, i.e. limit the number of people who may enter at the same time and place tape on the floor to indicate where people should stand if waiting.

3. Specific Provisions for the Parts of Mass

- a. **Ministries**
- A priest or any minister (deacon, readers, sacristans, EMHC, cantor) with a respiratory infection of any kind should avoid participating in public Masses during this phase.
 - The priest celebrant and deacons should **not** wear masks or gloves during the celebration of Mass. They should maintain more than 6 feet distance from the congregation during the Mass.
 - Readers should not wear masks when speaking; other ministers may wear masks.
 - Choirs might be discouraged for the time being, as vigorous singing, especially in close proximity to others, may increase the risk of viral spread. However, a single cantor or a small choral ensemble could be arranged so long as a more generous physical distance is provided for their safety.
- b. **The Opening Rite.** The priest could place the missal on a stand at the chair or even on the altar when he recites the presidential prayers, rather than having a server hold the book.
- c. **The Weekly Collection:** When Sunday Masses resume, collection baskets should not be passed from person-to-person.
- Encourage online giving.
 - Long-handled baskets would be acceptable. Ushers should wear masks and gloves.
 - Collection baskets or boxes may be made available during Daily Mass until the time Sunday Mass resumes.
- d. **The Offertory Procession** (bringing up the gifts) should be omitted.
- e. **The Communion Rite.**
- The faithful should not hold hands during the Lord’s Prayer.
 - The invitation to exchange a Sign of Peace should be omitted.
 - The faithful are to be reminded to maintain the 6-foot physical distance while in the Communion line.
 - The faithful should remove face coverings before receiving Holy Communion.

- Holy Communion may **not** be distributed with gloves. **For the safety and well-being of others**, the priest, deacon or EMHC should strongly consider wearing a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion.
 - The faithful should consider receiving Holy Communion in the hand. (Pastors may need to designate a special Communion station for those who prefer Communion on the tongue.)
 - The Precious Blood is not to be distributed to the faithful, unless their celiac disease is so severe, then it is left to pastors to determine how to handle.
 - Intinction is only allowed to concelebrating priests and deacons.
 - **The priest, deacon or EMHC should sanitize their hands before and after distribution of Holy Communion. Hand sanitizers should be available for Communion ministers who have had contact with a communicant.**
 - NOTE: If a priest or deacon is in a high-risk category (age/pre-existing condition), then a designated Extraordinary Minister may be used.
- f. At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the altar/tabernacle and then perform hand hygiene (e.g. hand sanitizer).
- g. The Mass concludes as normal. To provide an orderly exit with proper social distancing, directions could be given by the priest or ushers (e.g. pew-by-pew).
- h. All Communion vessels are to be thoroughly cleaned after Mass with hot, soapy water after being purified according to the rubrics.

Parishes may also have concerns about the celebration of Mass and the following sacramental rites.

THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (RCIA)

1. On March 27, 2020, Bishop Parkes granted pastors permission to delay the celebration of the three Sacraments of Initiation to another time outside the usual Easter Vigil (cf. RCIA nos. 26-30) at which time they may use the abbreviated form of initiation found in the ritual book (cf. Part II: RITES FOR PARTICULAR CIRCUMSTANCES, 2. *Christian Initiation of Adults in Exceptional Circumstances*, nos. 340-369). This permission is still in place.
2. While observing social distancing and occupancy guidelines, parishes could consider breaking their Elect into smaller groups for initiation, perhaps even considering a weekday Mass.
3. Precautions should be taken so that water used for baptism is in separate vessels. Infusion should be the method used. The font should be drained and cleaned after the Mass.
4. For the time being, individual cotton balls could be used for the sacramental anointings. These are to be collected and either be burned or buried.

BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

1. Baptism of children may be celebrated as long as social distancing and occupancy guidelines are observed. The protocols contained within these guidelines are also to be followed.
2. Only the new revised *Order of Baptism of Children* (© 2020) is to be used.

3. Precautions should be taken so that the water for baptism is in separate vessels. Infusion should be the method used. The font should be drained and cleaned after the Mass.
4. For the time being, individual cotton balls could be used for the sacramental anointings. These are to be collected and either be burned or buried.
5. The candle and white garment should be prepositioned so that the parents or godparents can have them without someone else handling them.
6. The celebrant should not hold the child at any time.

CONFIRMATION

1. Confirmation of Catholic candidates may be celebrated as long as social distancing and occupancy guidelines are observed. The protocols contained within these guidelines are also to be followed.
2. Delegation for a pastor or priest to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation to Catholic candidates may be requested through the Office of the Bishop.
3. The *Order of Confirmation* (© 2016) is to be used. The rite may be obtain from the Bishop's Office (MBA@dosp.org) or the Office of Worship (DJR@dosp.org).
4. For the time being, individual cotton balls could be used for the sacramental anointing. These are to be collected and either burned or buried.

MATRIMONY

1. Weddings may be celebrated as long as social distancing and occupancy guidelines are observed. The protocols contained within these guidelines are also to be followed.
2. The revised *Order of Celebrating Matrimony* (© 2016) is to be used.

FUNERALS

1. Funerals may be celebrated as long as social distancing and occupancy guidelines are observed. The protocols contained within these guidelines are also to be followed.
2. In addition, it is important to respect any guidelines and/or restrictions that have been placed on funeral homes.
3. The rites within the *Order of Christians Funerals* (© 1989) are to be used.

Questions should be directed to:
Deacon Rick Wells, Chancellor (rwells@dosp.org) or Doug Reatini (DJR@dosp.org)
(727) 344-1611

Effective: May 5, 2020 / Revised: June 15, 2020

Daily Protocol for Cleaning and Sanitizing the Church

The Church should receive a thorough cleaning prior to opening for Daily Mass on Monday, May 11, 2020. Then the protocol for cleaning and sanitizing should happen at the close of the church building each day. There are many cleaning products that both clean and sanitize and many products that just sanitize. Contact your church and/or school cleaning supplier and make sure you are using a product that is EPA approved to kill the coronavirus. Visit <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2> to find the current list of products that meet the criteria for use against SARS-Cov2, the cause of COVID-19.

Cleaning Checklist

Daily Cleaning (should be completed after every Mass):

- Church doorknobs/handles (inside & outside)
- All light switches
- Chairs
- Pew backs
- Pew seats
- Kneelers
- Railings
- Microphones
- Sound Systems
- Ambo
- Lectionary
- Book of the Gospel
- Roman Missal
- Book stand
- Hymnal covers (if using hymnals)
- Music stands
- Bathroom fixtures
- Water fountains
- Baptismal fonts (should be left empty for the time being)