



CATHOLIC DIOCESE *of* RALEIGH

Guidance for Masses, Parish Ministries and Celebrations of the Sacraments

Provided parishes can meet appropriate social distancing requirements and/or logistical arrangements, indoor services can be conducted including Mass, the Sacrament of Penance, Adoration, and individual prayer.

As stated by Bishop Zarama, all of the faithful continue to be dispensed from their Sunday obligation. While this dispensation is applicable to all, the elderly, those sick, those with pre-existing health conditions or other vulnerable people should especially continue to stay at home.

Outdoor worship services in an unenclosed spaces may continue to be an option for many parishes as it allows more flexibility in following recommendations to promote social distancing and reduce transmission. Arrangements should be made by each parish to provide appropriate parking, spacing, sound systems, etc. The faithful are not to remain in vehicles during these services and should be encouraged to bring their own lawn chairs, blankets, etc., as necessary.

Additional precautions are to be taken when distributing Holy Communion including frequent use of hand sanitizer by Eucharistic Ministers.

No Communion from the chalice and/or shaking hands during the Sign of Peace.

Recommendations to Promote Social Distancing and Reduce Transmission:

- Maintain at least six (6) feet social distancing from other individuals, with the exception of family or household members.
- Wear a cloth Face Covering when leaving home and wear it inside all public settings such as grocery stores, pharmacies, or other retail or public-serving businesses. A Face Covering should also be worn outdoors when you cannot maintain at least six (6) feet distancing from other people with the exception of family or household members. These coverings function to protect other people more than the wearer.
- Carry hand sanitizer with you when leaving home, and use it frequently.
- Wash hands using soap and water for at least twenty (20) seconds as frequently as possible.
- Regularly clean high-touch surfaces such as steering wheels, wallets, and phones.
- Stay at home if sick.

Avoid Exceeding Emergency Maximum Occupancy:

The most recent guidance does not prohibit gatherings for worship services but still recommends against holding Mass Gatherings (defined as more than 10 people). Should parishes offer indoor Masses, they should adhere to Emergency Maximum Occupancy recommendations which is the lowest number produced by applying the following three tests:

- Limit the number of visitors in the space to fifty percent (50%) of stated fire capacity
- Or, for spaces without a stated fire capacity, no more than twelve (12) persons for every one thousand (1000) square feet of the location's total square footage, including the parts of the location that are not accessible to visitors.
- Limit the number of people in the space so that groups can stay six (6) feet apart.

For more information, please see the attached Executive Order and also note the following Exemption: *Worship, religious, and spiritual gatherings, funeral ceremonies, wedding ceremonies, and other activities constituting the exercise of First Amendment rights are exempt from all the requirements of this Executive Order and Executive Order Nos. 121 and 138, notwithstanding any other provision of this Executive Order or of Executive Order Nos. 121 and 138.*