

**BY MANDATE
OF THE
BISHOP OF PATERSON**



PROTOCOLS FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

I. PREFACE

In an extraordinary moment of prayer, on March 27, 2020, Pope Francis stood alone on the *Sagrato* of Saint Peter's Basilica and challenged the world to live in hope even as the coronavirus pandemic darkened. The Holy Father spoke these words:

The Lord asks us from his cross to rediscover the life that awaits us, to look towards those who look to us, to strengthen, recognize and foster the grace that lives within us. Let us not quench the wavering flame (cf. *Is* 42:3) that never falters, and let us allow hope to be rekindled.¹

Since those words were spoken by the Holy Father, the world has passed through critical challenges. Thankfully, by God's grace, in our diocese and in New Jersey the light has begun to lengthen and we can safely restore liturgical life to its fullness. We continue to pray for all of those who suffer from the coronavirus, and for caregivers and first-responders, and we remember those regions where significant concerns remain.

¹ Pope Francis, *Extraordinary Moment of Prayer* (March 27, 2020)

On May 20, 2021, the Bishops of the Province of Newark approved lifting the general dispensation from the obligation of Mass effective on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, *Corpus Christi*, with the following proviso:

This obligation does not apply to those who are ill; those who have reason to believe that they were recently exposed to the coronavirus or another serious or contagious illness; those who are confined to their home, a hospital, or nursing facility; or those with serious underlying health conditions. One should consult the local pastor if questions arise about the obligation to attend Mass (canon 87).²

At this new moment of grace, I encourage pastors, pastoral staffs, and parishes generally to welcome and encourage in-person Mass attendance for which there is no substitute. Vatican Council II taught: “In the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and His members.”³ Gathered together in person we are united with the Eucharistic Sacrifice and we receive the Body and Blood of Christ as members of the Body of Christ worshipping as a family of faith.

II. THE PRECEPT OF MASS ATTENDANCE

1. The dispensation from the obligation to participate in Sunday Eucharist is lifted effective on the Vigil of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, June 5, 2021 for all of those in good health.
2. Livestream participation may continue at the discretion of the pastor.
3. Those who are particularly vulnerable to the coronavirus who are not vaccinated, and especially those with one or several underlying medical conditions, may follow Mass at home via livestream or television.
4. A person with a cough or fever of any kind should not take part in Mass in-person.

² New Jersey Catholic Conference, *Statement of the Bishops of New Jersey on Reinstating the General Obligation to Attend Mass* (May 20, 2021).

³ Second Vatican Ecumenical Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, *Sacrosanctum Concilium* (December 4, 1963) 7.

5. All who are healthy and who do not regularly come in contact with those who have serious underlying medical conditions are encouraged to take part in Mass in-person.

III. OCCUPANCY OF CHURCHES AND ACCESS TO CHURCHES

1. Occupancy restrictions for social distancing purposes are lifted (Executive Order of the Governor, 242 – May 24, 2021). Masks are not required for those who are vaccinated.
2. Mask and sanitizing stations should be available for all churches and public parish buildings. Disinfection between Masses is not required but church buildings should be cleaned regularly.

IV. OTHER LITURGICAL MATTERS

A.) *GENERAL*

1. Holy Water fonts and the baptismal fonts may be filled but the water and fonts must always be clean.
2. Altar servers may return to assist at liturgical celebrations.
3. Offertory processions may return.
4. The ushers may take the collection in the normal way.
5. Electronic giving should continue to be encouraged.
6. It is not required that the assisting deacons receive from the chalice at Holy Communion but they may do so through intinction from a chalice apart from the celebrant's. Concelebrating priests must receive the Precious Blood and it is highly recommended that the concelebrants receive by intinction from a chalice separate from the principal celebrant's.
7. Communion under both kinds for the faithful should not be resumed at this time. The Precious Blood in the chalice should not be made available to the faithful.

8. The faithful should be encouraged to bring hand sanitizer to use before the reception of Holy Communion.
9. The priest, deacon, or Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist should use hand sanitizer before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
10. The Body of Christ should be placed in the hands of the communicant. The faithful are encouraged to receive Holy Communion in the hand.
11. Those who wish to receive Holy Communion on the tongue may be asked to receive at the conclusion of the Communion Procession or following Mass at the discretion of the pastor.
12. The priest and other ministers of Holy Communion should have hand sanitizer nearby during the distribution of Holy Communion for use if necessary.

B.) LITURGICAL MUSIC

1. Congregational singing and choirs may be resumed at the discretion of the pastor.
2. All hymnals and *Missalettes* may be returned to the church and pews at the discretion of the pastor.
3. The implementation of the guidelines relating to liturgical music is left to the discretion of the pastor in light of the pastoral situation of the community.

C.) BAPTISM

The Baptism of infants may be carried out as prescribed by the *Roman Ritual*.

D.) THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

For those who are vaccinated, masks are not required for the celebration of the sacrament. Confessors may wear a mask if they believe it is necessary.

E.) ANOINTING OF THE SICK

1. Communal celebrations of the Anointing of the Sick are discouraged for the time-being.
2. The celebration of the Sacrament of the Anointing is to take place in hospitals and nursing homes following consultation with the administration and policies of the aforementioned institutions.
3. The priest is to wear a mask when administering the Sacrament and he may wear gloves.
4. The anointing of the faithful may be made with cotton, a cotton swab, or with gloves. In case of necessity, anointing on the forehead alone or on the hands alone if necessary suffices (*Code of Canon Law*, c. 1000 §§1, 2).

F.) CONFIRMATION

A recent response from the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (June 2, 2020) indicated that the anointing with Sacred Chrism at Confirmation may be administered with cotton or with gloves and is valid. The cotton or gloves must be reverently disposed of following the celebration through burning. Individual cotton swabs or gloves must be used in anointing each candidate if this option is employed.

G.) FUNERALS AND WEDDINGS

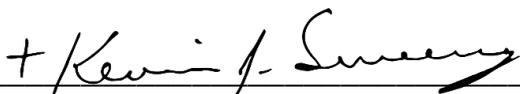
The norms for the celebration of Mass, now restored to ordinary usage, are applicable to the celebration of Funerals and Weddings.

V. PROMULGATION

THESE PROTOCOLS ARE PROMULGATED FOR THE DIOCESE OF PATERSON AND EFFECTIVE MAY 28, 2021.

ALL TO THE CONTRARY NOTWITHSTANDING.

GIVEN AT THE CHANCERY THIS 27TH DAY OF MAY, 2021, THE MEMORIAL OF SAINT AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY, BISHOP.



MOST REVEREND KEVIN J. SWEENEY, D.D
BISHOP OF PATERSON



SISTER JOAN DANIEL HEALY, S.C.C.
CHANCELLOR