



Moving Forward Together



CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF
PITTSBURGH

Support for Pastors and Parish Teams with
the Return to On-Site Ministry and Worship

REOPENING GUIDE

Moving Forward Together



My Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Thank you for all your hard work and patience during this unprecedented time. We are joyful with the thought of returning to worship together and to once again receive the Holy Eucharist. But, it is also a time for caution and vigilance as we begin a gradual return to the celebrations of our faith.

We will be learning together how to best provide for the safety and wellbeing of our parishioners along with, most importantly, nourishing their spiritual health.

Please know that my diocesan staff will be available to support you as you navigate through reopening considerations specific to your parish setting.

The enclosed information is intended to provide guidance and support as we work to move forward together to welcome people back to parish life.

Grateful for our belief that "Nothing is Impossible with God," I am

Your brother in Christ,

+ David A. Zubik

Most Reverend David A. Zubik
Bishop of Pittsburgh

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GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

Lifting Stay-at-Home Orders

As counties move into the yellow phase of Governor Wolf's reopening plan, parishes and other entities of the Diocese of Pittsburgh will need to be prepared to adopt the new guidelines.

As this chart shows, some current sheltering restrictions will be lifted, but additional requirements will be in place for public spaces.

As such, our reopening process will be gradual, and in continued alignment with public health and safety guidelines, so that we may respect life, and the well-being of all.

In this guide, you will see how our phased reopening strategy works with this color-coded plan.

Due to the nature of the virus, these guidelines are fluid and may change with little advance notice.

COVID-19 REOPENING PHASES		
	WORK & CONGREGATE SETTINGS	SOCIAL SETTINGS
RED PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIFE-SUSTAINING BUSINESSES ONLY • RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE • SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION • MOST CHILD CARE CLOSED 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY AT HOME ORDERED • LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED • RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY • ONLY TRAVEL FOR LIFE-SUSTAINING PURPOSES
YELLOW PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TELEWORK MUST CONTINUE WHERE FEASIBLE • BUSINESSES WITH IN-PERSON OPERATIONS MUST FOLLOW SAFETY ORDERS • CHILD CARE OPEN WITH WORKER + BUILDING SAFETY ORDERS • RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE • SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY AT HOME RESTRICTIONS LIFTED IN FAVOR OF AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION • LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED • IN-PERSON RETAIL ALLOWED CURBSIDE/DELIVERY PREFERRED • INDOOR RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES (SUCH AS GYMS, SPAS), AND ALL ENTERTAINMENT (SUCH AS CASINOS, THEATERS) REMAIN CLOSED • RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY
GREEN PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL BUSINESSES MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION ORDERS LIFTED • INDIVIDUALS MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES

Please Note

Even though parishes will be following recommended safety guidelines, including cleaning and sanitizing, and practicing social distancing, the risk of infection in church buildings will still exist as restrictions ease, as it does in all other public spaces. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will evaluate the reopening process and make necessary adjustments county-by-county. This means, our parishes may be in different phases of reopening at any given time. We will continue to offer guidance to fit the needs of our entire diocese.



PHASED REOPENING PLAN

IN ALIGNMENT AND ON MISSION

Our Diocese of Pittsburgh strategic reopening plan includes phases based on comprehensive recommendations from the diocesan COVID-19 Task Force in coordination and consultation with state and regional healthcare leaders. The phases give definition to how we can work with the Commonwealth's guidelines to restart our in-person liturgical celebrations.

We have, and will continue to be vigilant in doing our part to help "flatten the curve" of the spread of COVID-19. Through all of this we have seen, in so many ways, that Christ is with us always.

Churches will be permitted to reopen after meeting cleaning and sanitizing guidelines, and informing visitors they must follow public health directives including wearing masks, and honoring social distancing requirements.

Phase One (Red)

CHURCHES CLOSED

SMALL FUNERAL MASSES AT PASTOR'S APPROVAL (NO MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE)

SMALL WEDDINGS AT PASTOR'S APPROVAL (NO MORE THAN 10 PEOPLE)

OUTDOOR CONFESSIONS ARE PERMITTED WITH SAFETY GUIDELINES IN PLACE

LIVE STREAM MASSES

Phase Two (Yellow)

MAY 15 - 31

CHURCHES MAY OPEN FOR PRIVATE PRAYER AND INDOOR CONFESSIONS WITH SAFETY GUIDELINES IN PLACE

BAPTISMS, SMALL WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS ARE PERMITTED (NO MORE THAN 25 PEOPLE)

LIVE STREAM MASSES

Phase Three (Yellow)

JUNE 1

CHURCHES MAY OPEN FOR DAILY MASS, (NO MORE THAN 25 PEOPLE) PRIVATE PRAYER, AND CONFESSIONS WITH SAFETY GUIDELINES IN PLACE

JUNE 6 - 7

WEEKEND MASSES PROPOSED TO BEGIN. (NOT TO EXCEED 25% OF CHURCH SEATING CAPACITY, INCLUDING SOCIAL DISTANCING OF SIX-FEET, AND ALL SAFETY GUIDELINES IN PLACE.)

JUNE 8 UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE

DAILY MASS ATTENDANCE IS ALLOWED TO INCREASE TO 25% OF CHURCH SEATING CAPACITY, WITH SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES IN PLACE.

LIVE STREAM MASSES

The PA Dept. of Health re-evaluates public health county-by-county on a regular basis.

There is the potential for counties within our diocese to move between the color-coded reopening levels at different times. We need to be prepared to adapt to changing directives.



REOPENING BASICS

Immediate Preparation to Open Your Church

- Review guidelines and evaluate your church space. Keep in mind that social distancing of 6-feet is required and must be maintained for all services.
- Clean and sanitize a designated space before opening as well as **before and after each use** following the Cleaning and Sanitizing guidelines in Appendix A.
- Designate one entrance and a separate single exit in each church building, and clearly mark them as such.
- Make hand sanitizer stations available at key locations within the church including at the entrance.
- Mark off pews, floors, open church areas, and any guidance needed regarding access to bathrooms to fulfill 6-foot social distancing requirements.
- Communicate necessary guidelines and requirements to parishioners so they know what to expect.

Moving Forward: Next Steps

- Identify a COVID-19 Safety Team ideally comprised of clergy, staff, volunteers, and a health care professional, for the purpose of implementing and monitoring these guidelines.
- Review diocesan guidelines for reopening and assess your own readiness to meet the guidelines.
- Designate a cleaning and sanitizing team able to meet safety recommendations as noted by the CDC and EPA (See Appendix A: Cleaning and Sanitizing)
- The team should create procedures that create a safe and welcoming space.
- A toolkit will be provided from members of the Diocese of Pittsburgh COVID-19 Task Force team, including a cleaning check-list template, seating chart, and a vendor listing for products, supplies and commercial cleaning services.
- The COVID-19 Safety Team focuses on areas of concern, such as a training of ushers and greeters, securing cleaning and sanitizing staff and other volunteers, identifying a system for no-touch offertory collections, managing seating arrangements, and designate a single entrance and separate single exit to the building.
- The COVID-19 Safety Team should establish a system of accountability and reporting of cleaning and sanitizing schedules according to use of the building.



MAINTAINING OUR MISSION

Stay Connected

- Create bulletin/website areas to spotlight members: high school and college graduates, catechumens, First Communion students, family resources, Mass Intentions, etc.
- Update parish website: include a COVID-19 Response section, and/or link to www.diopitt.org for regular updates, spiritual resources, and more.
- Expand your use of technology: identify experts (students and adults) in the parish who can provide technical assistance and support.
- Organize pastoral outreach to those who may be isolated, homebound and experiencing loss.
- Create a new "Care Team" to reach out to parishioners through phone calls, text messaging, email, or cards and notes.
- Consider asking families to "adopt" some of the homebound and nursing home members for caring outreach.
- Assess and anticipate emotional wellness needs – in the face of collective trauma, what will be the parish community's needs for healing, grief counseling, and story-sharing?

Engage in Service

- Collaborate with other churches and local agencies. Who can you support and assist?
- Share resources, expertise, space.
- Help other parishes as they come into the "yellow" phase.
- Link parishioners to volunteer and outreach opportunities available at diopitt.org
- Stewardship - Parishes will continue to depend on the financial and human resources of the parish. How can you identify and train for the new volunteer roles needed at this time? What are the most effective ways you are continuing to invite parish contributions? If needed, do you have ideas for replacing traditional parish summer events which provide both fund-raising and community building?



MAINTAINING OUR MISSION

Faith Formation

GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE RITES OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

- The Elect who did not receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist at the Easter Vigil may be initiated by their pastor if they are comfortable returning to church.
- As a parish determines how to establish its process for the faithful to return to Mass, the Elect and Candidates should be prioritized as among the first to attend Sunday Mass.
- Special consideration should be given to offer these sacraments during a Sunday live stream Mass so that members of the parish community can participate virtually.
- Due to reduced church capacity, consider breaking the Elect and Candidates into smaller groups and limiting their guests to immediate family.
- The Elect must celebrate at least one scrutiny. The bishop can dispense the Elect from two of the scrutinies but not all three (RCIA, 20). If your Elect have not celebrated a scrutiny, they will need to do so before the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation.
- For directives on celebrating the scrutinies, please refer to RCIA, paragraphs 141– 146.
- The Elect are to participate in the Preparation Rites (RCIA, 185) Initiation which should always be celebrated on a Sunday. If the Sunday chosen is a feast or solemnity, the readings cannot be changed. If the Sunday chosen is in Ordinary Time, you have the option to change the readings to those from the ritual Masses for Christian Initiation (RCIA, 27).
- The readings from the Easter Vigil are not to be used. The Combined Rite, “Celebration at the Easter Vigil of the Sacraments of Initiation and of the Rite of Reception into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church” is not to be used.
- The rite of initiation of the Elect is to follow “Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation” beginning after the homily with the Celebration of Baptism RCIA, 218.
- Follow the rubrics for outside of the Easter Vigil. The newly baptized are the only members of the assembly to receive Holy Communion during Mass. All others receive Communion at the end of Mass.
- The Candidates are to be received using the “Reception of Baptized Christians into the Full Communion of the Catholic Church”, RCIA, 487 at a liturgy separate from the Elect (no combined rite). The newly received are the only members of the assembly to receive Holy Communion during Mass. Once again, all others receive Communion at the end of Mass.



MAINTAINING OUR MISSION

Faith Formation

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FIRST COMMUNIONS

Scheduling

- Parishes with large classes should offer multiple First Communions. Parishes may also restrict guest attendance to the immediate family, if necessary.
- While the celebration of First Communion normally occurs within the context of the Sunday Mass, First Communions may take place during weekday Masses under current circumstances, especially where there are large numbers of students.
- It is greatly encouraged that First Communions take place before the beginning of the new catechetical year to ensure continuity between sacramental formation and reception, and to avoid certain practical problems such as children forgetting what they learned and outgrowing clothing, which would be a hardship to those with financial limitations.

Social Distancing

- State and health guidelines for social distancing requiring 6-foot separation between persons should be maintained before, during and after the celebration of First Communion by all.
- Photographs should be taken outside.

Reception of Eucharist

- To underscore, for the children's benefit, that reception of the Eucharist is the highpoint of the liturgy, and in keeping with the nature and celebration of this sacrament of initiation, First Communion students are to receive the Eucharist DURING the liturgy, and not after (unlike other norms which require that the Eucharist be given after Mass during this time of transition).
- Family members and others who attend may receive the Eucharist at the end of Mass, as determined by the pastor/administrator according to local circumstances. Ministers of the Eucharist (during the pandemic, priest, deacons and acolytes) should have hand sanitizer available while administering the Eucharist, and greater time and space between recipients should be afforded to allow for hand sanitization, if needed.



MAINTAINING OUR MISSION

- Reception from the cup, even for First Communion, will not be permitted.
- It is strongly encouraged that the First Communicant receive Holy Communion in the hand. Reception of Holy Communion on the hand or tongue is allowed, at the discretion of the parents.

Joyful Celebration in Simplicity

- While all liturgies should be simplified during this time of re-opening to avoid lengthy gatherings, music and prayers should reflect the day's celebrations. Decorations will add to the festivity. However, as choirs are not permitted for liturgies during this time, special student-performed songs are permissible where social distancing can be maintained, for example, from the children's seats.

Masks

- As the effectiveness of masks is questionable when individuals touch them frequently, and as First Communicants tend to fidget with their apparel, the wearing of masks during the celebration of First Communion by children is to be left to the judgment of the parents or guardian. Parishes may, however, request that, should masks be worn, patterns and designs be in keeping with reverence for the liturgy.



APPENDIX A: CLEANING AND SANITIZING GUIDELINES

The CDC has published specific definitions for cleaning and disinfecting which include the following:

Cleaning - refers to removal of dirt and impurities, including germs from surfaces. Cleaning alone does not kill germs. Removing the germs decreases their numbers and therefore helps to reduce the risk of spread of infection.

Disinfection – this process works using chemicals, for example and EPA-registered disinfectant to kill germs on the surface. Killing the germs remaining on the surface after cleaning further reduces any risk of spreading the infection.

NOTE: Cleaning and Sanitizing MUST be done Before and After each service to be permitted to open your Church and keep it open.

- Evaluate the workspace to determine the kinds of surfaces and objects that need to be cleaned/disinfected. These surfaces include frequently touched areas like tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, phones, keyboards and bathroom facilities (i.e. toilets, faucets, sinks)
- Maintain a schedule of those areas that will need to be routinely cleaned and disinfected.
- Identify the porous and non-porous surfaces that need to be cleaned. For soft surfaces (i.e. carpeted floor, rugs and drapes – follow the manufacturer’s instructions with the use of the appropriate cleaners on this surface. If possible, launder the items that can be laundered based on the manufacturer’s guidelines.
- Normal routine cleaning of surfaces with soap and water is required to remove germs and dirt on the surfaces before applying the disinfectant.
- Recommend all cleaning staff should wash their hands with soap and water before and after any cleaning and sanitizing process. If soap and water is not available, the staff may use a hand sanitizer with a 60% or better alcohol base.
- Cleaning staff should wear a face mask and use disposable gloves to clean and sanitize, and dispose of gloves after each use. Check with manufacturer if other PPE is required.
- Use an EPA-approved disinfectant against COVID-19 and frequently disinfect the surfaces and objects after each service (www.epa.gov). Follow the directions on the manufacturer’s label before using any disinfectant. Obtain a copy of the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) from your supplier so that you are aware of safety precautions in the use of the product.



APPENDIX B: REOPENING CHECKLIST

All Guidance is Based on Federal and State Health and Safety Publications.

COVID-19 Safety Team

- Establish a COVID-19 Safety Team to oversee the implementation and enforcement of safety and security protocols and procedures.
- Determine who will be working to maintain cleanliness and sanitization.
- Provide any necessary training to all staff and volunteers who will be cleaning and sanitizing the facility, greeting and screening attendees, and securing the facility.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- Staff must wear disposable gloves and face mask when cleaning, and use hand sanitizer or wash their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before and after cleaning.
- Create checklist of items that were cleaned, with staff initials, timestamp, and date of completion to be checked by COVID-19 Safety Team prior to opening the Church or facility.
- Arrange for cleaning and disinfecting of high touch point areas (pews, kneelers, railings, doorknobs, restrooms, etc.) after each Mass.
- Stagger Mass times in order to allow for cleaning and air circulation.
- Maintain CDC guidelines for use and types of required disinfectants found on the EPA website: www.epa.gov

Preventative Measures

- Continue to live stream Mass and prayer services.
- Provide markings to indicate any designated seating areas, and maintaining social distancing spacing of 6-feet while entering, being inside, and exiting the building.
- Identify the use of one door for entering and a different door for exiting the church or building.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations upon entry.
- Provide no touch trash bins.
- Provide stationary donation box – must be monitored and secured
- Do not permit the use of communal water coolers, allow attendees to bring their own water, if needed.



APPENDIX B: REOPENING CHECKLIST

- Keep doors and windows open whenever possible, or use HVAC system.
- Screen attendees for masks, and any visual signs of illness.
- Roster attendees for contact tracing support.
- Create and follow an exit protocol that allows for social distancing as attendees go to their cars.
- Congregating in communal spaces after Mass is not allowed.
- Monitor parking lot to ensure safe exits.
- Designate a private space in case anyone gets ill during a service, and direct all attendees to dismiss.

Training for Greeters

- Know how to visually screen attendees to determine if they are permitted to attend mass (wearing a mask, no visual signs of illness)
- Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 available at the CDC website: www.cdc.gov
- Instruct attendees where to sit based on assigned social distance measures
- Instruct attendees of protocols in place: hand sanitizer, use of restrooms, and enforcement of CDC guidelines, as posted.
- Do not provide reading material (books, flyers, newsletters, bulletin, and/or missalettes).
- Do not shake hands, and maintain social distancing when greeting others.

Personal Protective Equipment for Employees and Volunteers

- Must wear disposable gloves when cleaning.
- Must wear face mask at all times.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Personal Protective Equipment for Attendees

- Must wear face mask at all times.
- Gloves are optional.
- Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer



APPENDIX B: REOPENING CHECKLIST

Signage

- Signage about health guidelines posted outside of entrance to the facility
- Examples from CDC here: www.cdc.gov
- Signage for parking lot (need for parking lot attendants?)
- Signage for seating
- Signage for entrance and exit doors

Requirements for Attendees

- Number of attendees will be designated by state and federal guidelines, and enforced.
- Follow all CDC guidelines as posted, and stay home when sick.
- Must follow facility protocol in order to enter and remain in facility.
- Wear facial covering/mask
- Rostering of attendees – if an attendee becomes ill with COVID-19, attendees will be contacted to be alerted of the potential risk and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Most vulnerable (over 65, compromised immune or respiratory health, diabetes) encouraged to stay home.
- Must observe safety guidelines regarding the celebration of Mass including directives regarding Holy Communion and the Sign of Peace.



APPENDIX C: EMPLOYEE/WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

The Pastor/Administrator will re-open the parish worksites for employees after the governor and/or mayor have rescinded any stay-at-home orders and once employees are allowed to return to their places of employment. The process of returning to work at the parish worksites could proceed in the following manner:

- Offices will return to work in a gradual, phased manner as determined by the Pastor/Administrator or his designee. Employees who are at higher risk for infection or who live with or care for individuals who are at a higher risk of infection may request to continue to work at home for the remainder of the Yellow Phase. This request should be made to the supervisor, and the employee does not have to disclose any personal health information involving their own health conditions or health conditions of people with whom they live or for whom they provide care.
- Employees who have young children at home due to the closure of day care facilities, pre-schools, and elementary schools may also request to continue to work from home for the remainder of the school year.

Daily Wellness

Before coming to work at the parish worksites each day, every employee is expected to ask themselves personal daily wellness questions. The purpose of this process is to safeguard the health of co-workers and other people with whom each employee has contact. The process works as follows:

- Each employee will ask themselves prior to every workday these questions: Do I have the presence of a fever (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or higher), a changing cough, shortness of breath and/or has any one in my immediate family tested positive for the virus?
- If the employee answers “no” to all the questions, the employee should plan on coming to work that day.
- If the employee answers “yes” to any of the questions, the employee would not attend work that day and should notify their supervisor of their absence. The supervisor will be informed that the employee exhibited symptoms but will not be told what symptoms in order to respect privacy. An example of a tool in answering these questions is this online self-assessment tool:
<https://www.mayoclinic.org/covid-19-self-assessment-tool>



APPENDIX C: EMPLOYEE/WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

Answering these wellness questions is based on the “honor system” and is dependent on the willingness of each employee to be truthful. The parish will allow employees who do not pass the daily wellness questions to either work from home or use sick leave. Please refer to Section 4.9 on Sick Leave in the Parish Personnel Manual.

As an employer, the parish wants to do everything it can to protect the health of its employees by reducing the risk of contact with co-workers who are exhibiting symptoms that may indicate the presence of the virus. In addition to self-monitoring their symptoms, employees should continue to:

- Wash their hands often, and for at least, 20 seconds at a time.
- Avoid touching their face.
- Practice social distancing by staying at least 6-feet away from other people.
- Cover their coughs and sneezes with the sleeve of their shirt or coat.

Use of a Face Covering/Mask

While inside the parish worksites, employees must wear a face covering/mask over their noses and mouths when they are in public locations, such as:

- Front Lobby
- Hallways
- Staircases
- Elevators
- Restrooms
- Meeting Rooms

Face coverings/masks do not need to be worn in:

- Private offices and cubicles if no one else is present. If another person enters the office or cubicle, both individuals should put on face coverings/masks.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

During the workday, employees are encouraged to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects in their work areas such as:

- Doorknobs
- Handles
- Tabletops,
- File Cabinets
- Light switches
- Phones, Copiers, Printers, Keyboards, Monitors



APPENDIX C: EMPLOYEE/WORKPLACE GUIDELINES

Occurrence of Symptoms

During the workday, if an employee begins to feel ill and exhibits any of the symptoms of the virus, especially a fever, a changing cough, or difficulty breathing, the employee should immediately notify his/her supervisor that he/she is not feeling well, but need not disclose the symptoms that are being experienced. The employee should leave work immediately while wearing a face covering/mask until off property.

Workplace Modifications

The following adaptations will be made at the parish work sites to safeguard employee health:

- Please avoid having visitors come to the parish worksites; and utilize teleconferencing or other remote communication methods whenever possible. All visitors should be given face coverings/masks to wear while in the worksites.
- Please space chairs in foyers, offices, waiting areas, and meeting rooms at least 6-feet apart. Prop open doors when possible to reduce the need to use doorknobs.
- Maintain social distancing while greeting people and extend hospitality verbally instead of by shaking hands.
- Limit the number of persons in employee common areas (such as break rooms or conference rooms) at any one time to the number of employees that can maintain a social distance of 6-feet.
- Limit the number of persons in the elevator to 1-2 maximum maintaining the furthest distance from the other person.
- Stagger break times to reduce the number of employees on break at any given time so that appropriate social distancing of at least 6-feet may be followed.
- Stagger work start and stop times when practical to prevent gatherings of large groups entering or leaving the work sites at the same time.
- Onboarding and visual reminders on new safety behaviors should be provided, for example, posting the "COVID-19 Safety Procedures for Businesses" flyer.



APPENDIX C: RED PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

**All guidance is in alignment with Federal and State Publications.
The following protocols remain in place for all counties in the Red Phase.**

Churches are not open for private prayer.

Public Masses and Other Events

- Suspension of Masses open to the public and all public gatherings in all diocesan parishes, worship sites, college campuses, chapels and healthcare facilities remains in effect for counties in the red phase.
- All public adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Hours, devotional prayers and processions, indoors or outdoors, are suspended.
- Private and live stream Masses should not include members of the parish who may be present in the Church for individual private prayer.
- During livestream Masses, a priest is permitted to have the assistance for a very limited number of people (as few as possible, no more than 10).

Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be celebrated outdoors, respecting social distancing, masks, etc.
- In the gravest circumstances, priests may make themselves available for the sacrament of the anointing of the sick, taking care to follow CDC guidelines for personal protection.
- The Sacrament of Penance may be celebrated but only outdoors, either in parking lots or another place where social distancing (6-feet apart) is absolutely respected. Confessions cannot be celebrated in church, in the rectory, or within any parish building. The faithful are encouraged to follow the directives of the Holy See regarding perfect contrition that have been communicated to you in our regular updates.

Sacrament of Matrimony

- In exceptional circumstances, weddings may be celebrated with no more than 10 people including the priest/deacon officiant. Couples must be advised that once the ritual of matrimony is celebrated it cannot be repeated. As such, a Mass of Thanksgiving sometime after the actual wedding ceremony may/should be planned if the couple wishes for more than ten people to gather for a celebration. While churches may “hold open” the date of a scheduled wedding, whether the sacrament can be celebrated on that date will depend entirely on whether the restrictions have been lifted to the “yellow phase.”
- Clergy are encouraged to speak to each couple and share this information with them and if necessary assist them in the rescheduling of the wedding.



APPENDIX C: RED PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

Funerals

- In exceptional circumstances, funerals with a Mass may be scheduled but with the limit of ten people or fewer. It should also be noted that the cemeteries are still closed for public interments until the restrictions are lifted.
- If approved by the respective cemetery, priests and deacons may conduct graveside burial services when appropriate for immediate family members only, mindful of the CDC guidelines for public gatherings. Provisions are to be made for the celebration of memorial Masses after the current healthcare crisis subsides, or the county transitions to the “yellow phase” when gatherings with a maximum capacity of 25 would be permitted.
- The use of cemetery chapels for final committal services is suspended.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

These guidelines assume that the parish has made plans for all Prevention and Safety measures.

Churches are not to reopen until and unless all safety guidelines are met.

Access to Churches for Private, Individual Prayer

- Parishes can be open for individual, private prayer. Hours and times are to be determined by the Pastor.
- All general prevention protocols for signage, distancing of six feet, sanitization, and restricting persons with symptoms must be followed.
- If a Church is unable to reasonably sanitize or maintain CDC authorized numbers of visitors for prayer (in this phase, 25 people), it cannot be open.
- People who visit a church for private, individual prayer are to wear masks and could be asked to follow any necessary directions regarding designated entrances and exits to help with social distancing.

Status of Public Masses and Other Events

- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended until further notice.
- Public Masses in diocesan parishes, worship sites, college campuses, chapels and healthcare facilities may resume when a date has been publicly announced by the diocese. Based upon guidelines from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, in the yellow phase, no weekday Mass can have more than 25 people, including the priest. As preparations are made to open churches for weekend Masses, directives for allowable numbers of attendees will be issued from the diocese based on public safety guidelines.
- People who are at risk because of an underlying health issue or who are elderly or sick are strongly encouraged to stay home for their own health and to avoid any risk of contracting the virus.
- All guidelines and sanitization procedures for before, during and after Mass must be followed. **The gradual reopening of parishes and resuming public Masses according to diocesan timelines and guidelines is dependent on a parish's ability to execute the proper sanitization procedures and liturgical directives.**



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

Guiding Parishioners in Coming Back to Mass

- The Pastor and each parish reopening team will develop a system that adequately allows the faithful to gather, in a way that meets all requirements stated in these guidelines.
- Each pastor should assess his specific situation to determine a method for keeping track of the number of people attending, and controlling attendance so it does not exceed allowable limits.
- A parish may consider establishing a reservation system for Mass attendance for both weekday and weekend services.
- Creating a reservation system may allow the parish to know exactly who is attending Mass on any given day in case contact tracing is necessary. Daily records should be maintained.
- Merely depending on "first come, first served" for Mass attendance may not be practical.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

GUIDELINES FOR RESTORATION OF PUBLIC MASSES - EFFECTIVE ON DATES ANNOUNCED BY THE DIOCESE

(Based on recommendations from the Thomistic Institute)

Masses with strict limits on public gatherings and strict physical distancing

- Maintain strict social distancing of 6-feet.
- Wear a face covering in public (masks).
- Practice frequent hand hygiene.
- Anyone feeling sick should stay home.
- Anyone who has been in close contact with a COVID+ individual should self-quarantine for 14 days.

General Provisions for All Masses Indoors and Outdoors

Ministers

- A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind should avoid celebrating public Masses or administering sacraments during this phase.
- A deacon with a respiratory infection of any kind should not serve at Mass or administer sacraments during this phase.
- Lay liturgical ministers showing any signs of illness cannot serve.
- Lay liturgical ministers who are 65 years of age or older or have underlying health conditions should not serve.
- Each Mass should use as few liturgical ministers as possible for the reverent and appropriate celebration of the liturgy. Use one reader and only two altar servers. It is recommended that well-trained, mature servers be utilized.
- Unless absolutely necessary, there are to be no extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion. Instituted acolytes are permitted. If extraordinary ministers must be utilized, they are to be trained to distribute Holy Communion under these special circumstances.
- Musicians are to be limited to an organist/pianist (or instrumentalist) and cantor. Choirs and scholas are not permitted.
- Ushers will be needed to ensure there is no crowding at the entrances of the church, to remind the faithful to sanitize their hands and maintain social distancing, to monitor the restrooms, and to facilitate the Communion procession. The ushers must be well-informed before public Masses resume. The number of ushers at each Mass is to be limited.
- The priest celebrant and other ministers serving in the sanctuary should not wear masks or gloves during the celebration of Mass. Instead, they should remain more than 6-feet from the congregation during the entirety of the Mass.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

- The priest/deacon must take care to not touch their face during Mass. This also applies to liturgical ministers.
- To the extent possible, the other ministers (deacon, servers, readers) should maintain a 6-foot distance from the priest and from each other.
- Liturgical ministers are to maintain a proper distance in the sacristy and during the entrance and recessional processions.
- All liturgical ministers are to wash their hands immediately before the celebration of Mass.
- After Mass, vessels are to be washed with soap and water after they have been purified.

Before Mass

- The priest is to 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.
- Hymnals are not to be used.
- Worship aids are not to be distributed unless they are for one-time use and are discarded after each liturgy. Worship aids are to be picked up by the faithful and not handed out by ushers. Worship aids may be put online for use with a cell phone or tablet.
- Parish bulletins are not to be distributed by anyone before or after Mass. They are to be picked up by the faithful.

During Mass

- If necessary, given the configuration of the church, consider modifying the procession's route in order to maintain a 6-foot distance from members of the congregation.
- The offertory procession is to be omitted.
- A deacon (if present) or a server may bring the missal, chalice, paten/ciborium, and cruets of wine and water to the altar, while the priest remains at the chair. (Alternatively, the priest could do this himself.) After the deacon or server moves away, the priest could come to the altar and arrange the items on the altar.



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- For the collection -- baskets are not to be passed from person to person.
- Long-handled baskets could be acceptable if the ushers can remain a suitable distance from others.
- Central boxes or collection points where the faithful can place their contributions may be set up.
- If hosts for the communion of the faithful are to be consecrated, they are to be placed on a second corporal away from the priest. This allows the priest to pray 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.
- For the elevation of the sacred species at “Through him, and with him, and in him,” If a deacon is present, he may stand alongside the priest and elevate the chalice. Since this action is brief, he need not remain 6-feet from the priest while doing so.
- The invitation to the faithful to exchange a sign of peace is to be omitted.

Celebration of Mass Indoors

General Provisions

- Mass indoors is recommended.
- Determine the capacity of the church with 6-feet of social distancing in the pews.
- Use tape to close off rows of seating in the church, in order to guide the faithful to sit at least 6-feet from each other (for example, allow seating every third row).
- In areas where the faithful might stand in line (for example, waiting to go to confession or to receive Holy Communion), place tape on the floor to indicate proper spacing between persons.
- Maintain and or establish Mass times according to parish needs during the pandemic.
- Station ushers at the entrances of the church to help “direct traffic,” to ensure that the faithful keep 6-feet from each other while entering and exiting the building. (Members of a single household may enter and exit together, since they do not need to practice physical distancing with each other.) Ushers should seat people and ensure that they are maintain social distancing.



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- Encourage the faithful to maintain physical distancing everywhere on the church property (on the church steps, in the parking lot, etc.).
- Develop a plan for restroom use: limit the number of people who enter a restroom at the same time, and place tape on the floor outside of the restroom to indicate where people should stand in line to wait for the restroom, while maintaining a 6-foot distance from each other.
- Holy Water fonts are to remain empty.
- Ensure adequate ventilation by opening windows and doors, or activate HVAC system.
- Place hand sanitizer near the entrances to a church. Encourage those entering and exiting to perform hand hygiene.
- Regularly clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces in the church.

The Distribution of Holy Communion Indoors

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest is to explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion will do so at the conclusion of the Mass. All should be encouraged to receive Communion in the hand.
- The Precious Blood is not be distributed to the faithful.
- A sufficient quantity of hosts for distribution to the faithful should be consecrated at the Mass.
- The priest (and, if present, the deacon) would consume the Eucharist in the normal way but will not immediately proceed to distribute Communion to the servers or the faithful. Rather, the newly consecrated hosts would be briefly placed in the tabernacle awaiting the conclusion of the Mass.
- After the concluding blessing and the dismissal, the priest (and deacon, if present) remain in the sanctuary. At the chair, the priest removes his chasuble and the deacon removes his dalmatic.
- A small table should be placed at each communion station, with an unfolded corporal, ablution bowl, and a bottle of hand sanitizer.
- The priest (and deacon) should use hand sanitizer immediately before approaching the tabernacle. All those distributing Holy Communion must wear a mask.
- If the priest who has celebrated the Mass is in a higher-risk group, a different priest, arriving at the conclusion of Mass, may distribute Holy Communion in his place.
- Now vested in alb and stole, the priest retrieves the newly consecrated hosts from the tabernacle and returns to the altar.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

- Holding up a single host, he says: “Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.” He then leads the people in saying: “Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”
- If there are instituted acolytes present to distribute Holy Communion, they are to go to a communion station and receive Holy Communion there. The priest or deacon will then bring them a ciborium of Sacred Hosts.
- The altar servers are to receive Holy Communion at this time.
- The priest (and other ministers if present) proceeds to the place prepared for distribution of Communion. Each stands next to a table with corporal, ablution bowl, and hand sanitizer in order to distribute Communion.
- An usher directs one row at a time to receive Communion. The faithful are to stand at markings on the floor that are six feet apart. The faithful should remove any face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion.
- Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the faithful is wearing gloves.
- The faithful receive Holy Communion in the normal way. If the priest senses that his fingers have made contact with a person’s hands or mouth, he should pause, place the ciborium on the corporal, purify his fingers in the ablution cup, and use hand sanitizer. He may repeat this process as often as he judges necessary during the distribution of Holy Communion. It is not necessary, however, for him to use hand sanitizer between each communicant, unless he makes actual contact.
- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle. Water from the ablution bowl is to be poured into the sacrarium. The faithful may depart at the direction of an usher, one row at a time. Ushers are to make sure that crowding does not happen at the doors.



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Celebration of Mass Outdoors

General Provisions

- Normally, Mass outdoors, while permitted, is not recommended due to the weather in our area. Also, it is not a long-term solution.
- Outdoor Masses are to be held on parish property, preferably in a parking lot. Any variation requires permission from the General Secretariat.
- The faithful are to remain in their vehicles.
- Individuals without a vehicle must maintain strict social distancing.
- Noise level and consideration for those living in close proximity of the parish is to be carefully considered.
- There must be an outdoor sound system or FM transmitter.
- Outdoor altars must be protected with a covering (tent, overhang, awning, etc.)
- Altars are to be erected in a visible location (stairs, raised platform, stage, etc.)
- There must be an ambo of some kind for the Liturgy of the Word.
- The altar is to be covered with an altar cloth.
- At least two candles are to be placed on or next to the altar.
- There must be a crucifix.
- Ciboria must have lids.
- Every precaution is to be made for inclement weather – wind and rain.
- For safety reasons, outdoor Masses are not permitted during a thunderstorm.
- The priest celebrant must be fully vested for Mass.

The Distribution of Holy Communion Outdoors

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion will do so at the conclusion of the Mass. They are encouraged to receive communion in the hand.
- He is to add that ushers will direct individuals from no more than two vehicles at time to each communion station to receive Holy Communion and the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward.
- The Precious Blood is not to be distributed.
- A sufficient quantity of hosts for distribution to the faithful should be consecrated at the Mass.
- The priest (and, if present, the deacon) would consume the Eucharist in the normal way but would not immediately proceed to distribute Communion to the servers or the faithful. Rather, the newly consecrated hosts would remain on the corporal on the altar in ciboria with lids awaiting the conclusion of the Mass.
- After the concluding blessing and the dismissal, the priest (and deacon, if present) remain near the altar (in the outdoor sanctuary). At the chair, the priest removes his chasuble and the deacon removes his dalmatic.



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- The priest, deacon, or instituted acolyte must don a mask during distribution. They are not to wear gloves.
- If the priest who has celebrated the Mass is in a higher-risk group, a different priest, arriving at the conclusion of Mass, might distribute Holy Communion in his place.
- Now vested in alb and stole, the priest and deacon go to the altar. Holding up a single host, the priest says: "Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb." He then leads the people in saying: "Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed."
- If there are instituted acolytes present to distribute Holy Communion, they are to go to a communion station and receive Holy Communion there. The priest or deacon will then bring them a ciborium of Sacred Hosts.
- The priest (and other ministers if present) proceeds to the place prepared for distribution of Communion. Each stands next to a table with corporal, ablution bowl, and hand sanitizer in order to distribute Communion.
- The communicants are to get out of their cars, at the direction of an usher, to receive. (This is preferable from a public health perspective, because it permits to stand next to a hand sanitizing station and thus gives him the ability to sanitize his hands after each Holy Communion, if necessary. If the priest walks from car to car or from window to window, this hand hygiene would be difficult. It is also preferable from a sacramental perspective, because it removes the temptation to pass the Eucharist from person to person in the car, if a passenger is not near an open window, and eliminates the problem of self-communication).
- The faithful should remove any face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion.
- Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the faithful is wearing gloves.
- While encouraged to receive by hand, the faithful may receive Holy Communion in the normal way by tongue or hand. If the priest senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hands or mouth, he should pause, place the ciborium on the corporal, use the ablution bowl, and use hand sanitizer. He may repeat this process as often as he judges necessary during the distribution of Holy Communion. It is not necessary, however, for him to use hand sanitizer between each communicant, unless he makes actual contact.



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- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle. Water from the ablution bowl is to be poured into the sacrarium.
- The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving.



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Guidelines for Restoration of Indoor Confessions in a Church or Home *(Based on recommendations from the Thomistic Institute)*

General Provisions

- Anyone who is showing signs of illness should stay home.
- Suggest that those who are at highest risk for infection (i.e. those who are older and/or have underlying health conditions) request a home visit by a priest.
- Upon entering the church, individuals are to sanitize their hands.
- Individuals are to wear a mask inside of the church.
- Given the Catholic Church's norms for confession, the priest must be physically present to the penitent in person and must be able to hear the penitent without the aid of electronic devices.

Confessions Inside of a Church

- 6-foot distance between the priest and penitent is to be maintained.
- In the yellow phase, avoid gatherings of more than 25 people in church. Penitents must stand at least 6-feet apart and must be far enough away from the confession area in order to maintain confidentiality.
- Set up a zone, with markings on the floor, where the faithful can wait in line while maintaining a 6-foot distance from others. This area is to be significantly distanced from the confession area in order to maintain privacy (Example: The back of the church serves as the wait area and the sanctuary serves as the confession area).
- Consider playing sacred music softly to serve as background noise to protect confidentiality.
- Do not use enclosed confessionals.
- Find an area within the church to set up anonymous and face-to-face options for the penitent. For sanitary reasons there is to be no chair for the penitent and avoid areas that require the penitent to open a door.
- Direct the penitent to leave the church after receiving the sacrament.

Confessions Inside of a Home

If penitent is healthy (no suspicion of close contact with a COVID+individual) but is staying home -- for example, to maintain social distance, or because the penitent is in a high risk category (like being over 70 or having a chronic medical condition), a priest may go to the penitent's home, as follows:



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- The priest may first consider meeting the person outside of the home, such as on the porch or on the person's lawn, provided that there is sufficient space for a private conversation.
- If this is not possible, the priest may enter the home if he can ensure that the appropriate social distancing measures are taken. He is to maintain a distance of 6-feet from other persons, including the penitent while hearing a confession.
- Before entering the home, he should drape a small "sick call" confessional stole around his neck. He should not bring anything else with him. He should leave his mobile phone in his car or outside the home if possible; if he brings it with him, he should not touch it while he is in the home.
- The priest is to wear a mask if entering a home.
- The priest is to perform hand hygiene immediately before and after the visit. He should avoid touching his face, nose, or eyes before washing his hands.
- He may then remove his confessional stole.

Guidelines for Anointing of the Sick

Sacramental Principles:

The Sacrament of Anointing is only strictly necessary when a person is unable to manifest sorrow for his or her sins (e.g., the person is unconscious and so cannot make a confession) and is in need of forgiveness. In such cases, the sacrament of anointing forgives mortal sin, presuming -- as one should in the normal case -- that the person desired to receive the sacraments before death. (The person remains bound to make a complete confession at the next opportunity, should one arise.) For this reason, when called to the bedside of a person who is unconscious and dying, priests should make every effort to confer the Sacrament of Anointing.

In order for an anointing to be valid, the priest must be physically present to the penitent in person. The priest himself must both pronounce the entirety of the sacramental formula and anoint the recipient's body with the oil of the sick. (The sacramental formula is: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit. May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up.") The priest may not delegate the act of anointing to another person.



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A Clarification on Anointing and Confession

The case of unconscious dying persons poses special challenges for the administration of the sacraments. In the sacrament of confession, the priest's absolution forgives sins only if conjoined to a penitent's act of repentance or turning away from his or her sins, manifested by an exterior act. This is required for validity. (There is widespread misunderstanding on this point. Even in the case of general absolution – that is, absolution given to many people at once, without individual confession of specific sins – penitents must each make an act of repentance with an exterior sign in order for the absolution to remit their sins.)

Therefore, when a person is near death and is unconscious or largely unresponsive, a priest may speak to the person, asking him or her to make some sign of sorrow (which need not be verbal) for the person's sins. If the person does so, the priest should then recite the formula of absolution over the person. This is called a "generic confession," and it is permitted in cases like this, where the person is in danger of death and it is impossible to confess sins by species and number due to inability to speak.

In contrast, the sacramental structure of the anointing of the sick does not require its recipient to make an external confession. When a seriously sick person is unconscious or unable to respond, therefore, it is very important to confer the sacrament of anointing. The anointing remits the sins of a person now unable to make an act of repentance, as long as the person desired to be forgiven or had some desire for the sacraments before losing consciousness. The priest should presume that every Catholic had such a disposition and so should anoint an unconscious Catholic who is dying unless there is clear evidence that the person did not want to receive the sacraments.

If the person is not in a state of grace and is able to confess, however, the person is bound to do so. The Rite of Anointing provides for this to take place at the beginning of the rite.



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A. If a person has no COVID-19 symptoms and no suspicion of close contact with COVID+ individual, but is otherwise a candidate for anointing due to age or another sickness (e.g., someone with an advanced cancer diagnosis, someone about to undergo a risky surgery for a serious medical condition, or someone hospitalized for a non-COVID related condition):

In general, follow the guidelines and mandates of the local jurisdiction regarding limits to the number of people gathering at the same time or “shelter-in-place” orders. In any case, gatherings should be no more than recommended by civil authorities.

- The priest is to wear a face mask.
- The priest is to remain at least 6-feet from the recipient for the entirety of the Rite of Anointing, except for the actual moment of anointing.
- If the anointing is taking place outside of church (e.g., in a patient’s home), the priest should avoid contact with surfaces in the home as much as possible.
- If in a private home, the priest should select a location more than 6-feet from the recipient where he can set out the items he will use during the anointing (described below). He should ensure that the surface is clean and has recently been disinfected.
- In a location more than 6-feet from the recipient, he should set out:
 - the oil stock containing the Oil of the Sick;
 - a cotton swab;
 - a paper bag (like a grocery bag with handles, or a brown paper lunch sack), which he should open fully and leave standing up, open;
 - alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel.

Before beginning the Rite of Anointing, the priest is to perform hand hygiene (washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based gel). The priest is then to conduct the Rite of Anointing as normal but should omit the laying-on of hands. When the moment comes for the anointing, the priest is to use an instrument (a cotton swab) for the actual anointing, as follows (This is permitted by the current rubrics for the Rite of Anointing.):

- Keeping a 6-foot distance from the recipient, he is to dip the tip of the swab one time in the holy oil. He is then re-close the oil stock.
- He is to approach the person and anoint the person on the forehead alone (omitting the anointing of the hands), while speaking the full sacramental formula.
- He is to avoid contact with the recipient, using only the tip of the cotton swab to touch the recipient’s forehead.



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- He is to then return to a 6-foot distance from the person. He should drop the cotton swab into the open paper sack, without touching the sack with his hands.
- He is to immediately perform hand hygiene, using hand sanitizer.
- He is to then fold the bag closed several times, so that the cotton swab remains securely in the interior of the sack. (If desired, he could later tape the paper bag closed.) Later, the priest will burn the paper bag with the cotton swab inside it.
- The priest then concludes the Rite of Anointing as usual.
- The priest is to take the folded paper bag with him. At a later point, the priest should burn it with the cotton swab inside it. He is not to re-open or re-use the bag.
- He is to sanitize his hands after the encounter (and, if in a private home, again after he exits the home).

B. If a person is confirmed or suspected COVID+, is conscious, and is self-isolating at home:

- A sick person is not to be brought to the church, church offices, or rectory to be anointed.
- The sacrament of anointing is only strictly necessary when a person is unable to manifest sorrow for his or her sins (e.g., the person is unconscious and so cannot make a confession) and is in need of forgiveness.
- If a suspected or confirmed COVID+ patient is self-isolating at home and is conscious and thus able to make an auricular confession, the priest should hear the person's confession, following the guidelines we have provided for such cases (see Part I - Confession). In such a case, we recommend postponing the anointing of a suspected or confirmed COVID patient, since full PPE will not be available in a home setting, and the person will have already been restored to sanctifying grace by the sacrament of confession.

NB: Even if a conscious person is unable to articulate sins by species and number due to some extraordinary circumstance (e.g., inability to speak), the priest may pose questions to the penitent or may simply ask the penitent if he is sorry for his sins (a "generic confession"). If a penitent is able to make some sign indicating repentance, the sacramental absolution will validly remit the penitent's sins. As Part I of these guidelines makes clear, such a confession can take place while maintaining a 6-foot distance from the patient, and therefore without hospital-level PPE.



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C. If a person is confirmed or suspected COVID+, is at home or in a nursing facility, is unconscious, and is in imminent danger of death:

We presume that most COVID+ patients who are unconscious (or otherwise unable to make a confession) will be hospitalized. If, however, for a grave reason it is necessary for an unconscious COVID+ patient to be anointed at home or in a nursing facility (e.g., the person is in imminent danger of death, perhaps awaiting the arrival of emergency medical assistance), the priest should follow these steps.

Before going to the home, the priest is to prepare the following items:

- A printout of Appendix A (a one-page reproduction of the rite of anointing in a hospital or institution), which the priest will leave behind in the patient's room. The priest should not bring his Pastoral Care of the Sick
- A cotton swab, and a paper bag (like a grocery bag with handles. or a brown paper lunch sack.

Before entering the home, the priest must don a surgical mask, and should then place his short "sick call" confessional stole around his neck.

NB: A patient who is having trouble breathing or who is unconscious should not wear a face covering or mask.

- The priest is not to bring anything into the home with him except for what is absolutely necessary. For example, a priest may not bring into the home a ritual book, a mobile phone, a holy card, or any other item. He may not reach into his pockets for any item whatsoever. He may not bring anything whatsoever out of the home, except as provided below.
- It is important that the priest not bring anything out of the patient's room without the strictest of precautions, as provided in these guidelines.
- The priest is to avoid touching surfaces in the home as much as possible and should avoid all contact between his clothing and the items in the home as much as possible. He is to take care not to touch his eyes, nose or mouth while inside the home and wearing protective gloves.
- Social distancing: The priest is to limit the number of people he comes into contact with during his visit in the home, always respecting the CDC-recommended safe distance of 6-feet.



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- The priest is to select a location outside the patient's room where he can set out the items he will use during the anointing (described below). He is to ensure that the surface is clean and has recently been disinfected.
- On this disinfected surface outside the patient's room, he is to set out:
 - the oil stock containing the Oil of the Sick;
 - a cotton swab;
 - a paper bag (like a grocery bag with handles, or a brown paper lunch sack), which he should open fully and leave standing up, open;
 - alcohol-based hand sanitizing gel.
- Before beginning the Rite of Anointing, the priest is to perform hand hygiene. (washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or using an alcohol-based gel). He is to then put on gloves.
- The priest is to dip the tip of the cotton swab one time in the holy oil. He is then to re-close the oil stock and place it in his pocket.
- Taking the swab in his dominant hand, and a printout of Appendix A (the Rite of Anointing in the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute) in his other hand, he is to enter the patient's room. He is to stand at least 6-feet from the patient.
- He is to conduct the Rite of Anointing as provided in Appendix A of the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute, remaining 6-feet from the patient until the moment of anointing. He is to omit the laying-on of hands.

When the moment comes for the anointing, the priest should use the cotton swab to anoint, as follows. (The use of a cotton swab as an instrument of anointing is permitted by the current rubrics for the Rite of Anointing).

- He is to approach the person and anoint the person on the forehead alone (omitting the anointing of the hands), while speaking the full sacramental formula.
- He is to avoid contact with the recipient, using only the tip of the cotton swab to touch the recipient's forehead.
- He then imparts the Apostolic Pardon, as indicated in Appendix A of the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute. He is to walk out of the room to the open paper bag, taking care not to touch anything whatsoever. He is to drop the cotton swab into the open paper sack, without touching the sack with his hands.
- He then reenters the room and, remaining 6-feet from the patient, recites the Lord's Prayer, the Concluding Prayer, and imparts the Concluding Blessing. This completes the Rite of Anointing.



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- He is to leave the page containing Appendix A from the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute in the patient's room.
- He is to exit the room and remove his gloves turning them inside-out as he does so and discarding them as soon as possible. The gloves can be placed in the trash in the patient's home.
- He is to immediately perform hand hygiene, using hand sanitizer.
- He is to then fold the bag closed several times, so that the cotton swab remains securely in the interior of the sack. (If desired, he could later tape the paper bag closed.)
- The priest is to take the folded paper bag with him. At a later point, the priest is to burn it with the cotton swab inside it. He is not to re-open or re-use the bag.
- After exiting the home, he is to perform hand hygiene. He is to remove his mask, and again perform hand hygiene. (For example, he might leave a small bottle of hand sanitizer near his car, which he would use after the visit and before touching his car keys, mobile phone, car door, or other items.) He is to avoid touching his face, nose, or eyes before washing his hands.
- As possible, the priest is to wash the exterior of the oil stock with soap and water. If possible, he could also discard the oil remaining in the stock (normally by burning the cotton ball soaked in the oil), wash the interior, and replenish with oil of the sick.

D. If a person is confirmed or suspected COVID+, and is hospitalized:

If properly equipped with PPE (as guided by hospital personnel and protocols), a priest may enter the patient's room, may stand or sit at the patient's bedside, and even may touch the patient as appropriate. Many hospitals recognize the essential role of the chaplain or chaplain-equivalent in the necessary care of the patient. A hospital nurse can show the priest the proper way to don and doff appropriate PPE. The priest should follow hospital guidance for infection control procedures. He may need to pre-clear with hospital staff the procedure he will use (described below) to remove the cotton swab used to anoint the patient from the patient's room, for proper sacramental disposal by burning.

- Before going to the hospital, the priest is to prepare the following items:
 - His small stock of the oil of the sick, and a small "sick call" stole.
 - A printout of Appendix A from the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute in the patient's room (a one-page reproduction of the rite of anointing in a hospital or institution), which the priest will leave behind in the patient's room. The priest should not bring his Pastoral Care of the Sick.
- The priest is to select a location outside the patient's room where he can set out the items he will use during the anointing (described below). He is to ensure that the surface is clean and has recently been disinfected.



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- On this disinfected surface just outside the patient's room, he is to set out the oil stock containing the Oil of the Sick;
 - a cotton swab;
 - a paper bag, which he should open fully and leave standing up, open.
- Before beginning the Rite of Anointing, the priest is to perform hand hygiene (washing hands for 20 seconds with soap and water, or using an alcohol-based gel).
- The priest is to then dip the tip of the cotton swab one time in the holy oil. He is to then re-close the oil stock and place it in his pocket.
- Taking the swab in his dominant hand, and a printout of Appendix A from the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute (the Rite of Anointing). in his other hand, he then enters the patient's room.
- If the patient is conscious and time permits, he is to offer an opportunity to go to confession before anointing the patient. Normally this should be done before the anointing or as part of the Rite itself (after the opening prayer- see Rite of Anointing in a Hospital Institution, no. 155). If the patient makes a confession, the priest should impart the Apostolic Pardon immediately after the sacramental absolution and before the anointing.
- He is to then conduct the Rite of Anointing as provided in Appendix A from the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute. When the moment comes for the anointing, the priest is to use the cotton swab to anoint, as follows. (The use of a cotton swab as an instrument of anointing is permitted by the current rubrics for the Rite of Anointing.)
- He is to approach the person and anoint the person on the forehead alone (omitting the anointing of the hands), while speaking the full sacramental formula.
- If not already given, he then imparts the Apostolic Pardon, as indicated in Appendix A of the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute.
- He is to walk to the door of the room to the open paper bag, taking care not to touch anything whatsoever. He is to drop the cotton swab into the open paper sack, without touching the sack with his hands.
- He is to then re-enter the room and recite the Lord's Prayer, the Concluding Prayer, and impart the Concluding Blessing.
- This completes the Rite of Anointing. He is to leave the page containing Appendix A from the Anointing of the Sick guide by the Thomistic Institute in the patient's room.
- He is to exit the room and doff his PPE following the instructions of hospital personnel. He is to then perform hand hygiene.
- He is to fold the bag closed several times, so that the cotton swab remains securely in the interior of the sack. (If desired, he could later tape the paper bag closed.)
- The priest is to take the folded paper bag with him. At a later point, the priest is to burn it with the cotton swab inside it. He is not to re-open or re-use the bag.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

Infant Baptisms

A. General Provisions

- Baptisms are not to include more than one family at a time.
- There is to be no more than 25 people in attendance (if there are more than 25 people, strict social distancing must be maintained).
- Anyone who is showing signs of illness is to stay home.
- Suggest that those who are at highest risk for infection (i.e. those who are older and/or have underlying health conditions) stay home.
- Priests or deacons who are older and/or have underlying healthy conditions should not celebrate the sacrament.
- Upon entering the church, individuals are to sanitize their hands.
- Individual are to wear a mask inside of the church (individuals under two years of age should not wear a mask).
- The celebrant is to wear a mask.
- 6-feet of social distance is required by those in attendance who are not living in the same household while they are in the church
- While in the church, the parents are to hold the child, no one else.
- The celebrant is to stay 6-feet away from the parents and the godparents until he is required to approach the child during the ritual.
- Pictures during the baptism are to be taken while maintaining social distance. No photos are to be taken after the baptism. If weather permits, encourage the family to take pictures outside of the church.
- Place hand sanitizer on a table near the font.
- The celebrant must take care to not touch their face during the ritual.
- Any processions are to consist of only the celebrant, parents, and godparents and 6-foot of social distance must be kept.

B. Rite of Receiving the Child

- Before the baptism begins, the celebrant and the parents and godparents are to wash/sanitize their hands.
- The parents and godparents are to wear a mask.
- The celebrant is to wear a mask.
- The parents and godparents are to be 6-feet away from each other (unless they live in the same household) and 6-feet away from the celebrant.
- During the signing of the child on the forehead, the celebrant approaches the child, signs the child and then moves back to his place. Then the parents sign the child. The godparents are to then approach to sign the child. They then return to their place.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

C. Sacred Celebration of the Word of God

- The readings and homily are to occur while maintaining social distance.

D. Prayer of Exorcism and Anointing Before Baptism

- If his hands have been compromised, the celebrant is to sanitize his hands before praying the Prayer of Exorcism.
- The celebrant is to pray the Prayer of Exorcism at his place, 6-feet from the parents and godparents.
- The celebrant then approaches and anoints the child. He uses a cotton swab for the anointing. He then lays his hand on the child.
- The celebrant then moves to the font. The parents and godparents remain at their places.

E. Celebration of Baptism

- The Blessing of Water and Invocation of God Over the Water as well as the Renunciation of Sin and Profession of Faith occur with the celebrant at the font and the parents and godparents at their place, 6-feet away.

F. Baptism

- The celebrant invites the parents and godparents to approach the font. After questioning the parents and godparents, he immediately baptizes the child.
- After the baptism, the parents and godparents return to a place that is 6-feet away from the priest.

G. Explanatory Rites - Anointing After Baptism

- The celebrant says the anointing prayer from his place. Then he goes to the child and anoints the child with sacred Chrism on the crown of the child's head and once again, he uses a cotton swab for the anointing.

H. Handing on of a Lighted Candle

- The celebrant hands a baptismal candle to the father or godfather and then moves back to his place.
- The father or godfather lights the candle from the paschal candle and then returns to his place.



APPENDIX D: YELLOW PHASE LITURGICAL GUIDELINES

I. The Ephphatha

This is optional (at the discretion of the celebrant).

If the celebrant chooses to do the Ephphatha, he is to not directly touch the ears and lips of the child. The celebrant moves back to his place.

J. Conclusion of the Rite

- The Lord's Prayer is prayed with the celebrant, parents, and godparents at their places.

Blessing and Dismissal

The celebrant blesses the mother, the father, and all those present from his place.

K. After

- The celebrant places the purificator and towel into the soiled linen container and empties the baptismal water into the sacrarium or onto the ground.
- Everything used during the baptism – book, Holy Oil containers, candle lighter, etc. is to be wiped down.
- The celebrant is to wash/sanitize his hands following the cleanup.



APPENDIX F: HOLY MASS GUIDELINES FOR THE FAITHFUL

- The faithful are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass during this phase.
- Those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (i.e. those who are 65 years of age or older or who have underlying health conditions) should stay home.
- Anyone who is showing symptoms of illness or feeling ill is to stay home.
- The faithful are to wear a mask in church and while on church property (except for those ages 2 and under).
- Liturgical ministers showing symptoms of illness or feeling ill are to stay home.
- Due to the requirement to clean and disinfect the inside of the church after each Mass, the location of Mass may be limited to one or two churches in each parish/grouping.
- The number of entrances may be reduced to better control crowd flow and limit the number of places that will need to be sanitized.
- Hand sanitizer will be available at all entrances. Each person is to sanitize their hands upon entering the church.
- Social distancing of 6-feet is required. Pews will be marked. Households will be able to sit next to each other without social distancing.
- The floor will be marked for waiting in line to go to confession or to receive Holy Communion.
- Ushers will be at the entrances of the church to help “direct traffic,” to ensure that the faithful keep six feet from each other while entering and exiting the building.
- The faithful are to maintain physical distancing everywhere on the church property (on the church steps, in the parking lot, etc.).



APPENDIX F: HOLY MASS GUIDELINES FOR THE FAITHFUL

- The faithful are not to congregate anywhere on parish property.
- The number of people who enter a restroom at the same time will be limited and tape on the floor outside of the restroom will indicate where people should stand in line to wait for the restroom.
- Holy water fonts will be empty.
- The offertory procession will be omitted.
- There will be no sign of peace.
- The Precious Blood will not be distributed.

Instructions for the Faithful for The Reception of Holy Communion Indoors

Those who are in a state of grace and desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the conclusion of the Mass. Communicants are encouraged to receive Communion in the hand. An usher will direct one row at a time for the reception of Communion. Each communicant is to stand at markings on the floor that are six feet apart. Each communicant is to remove any face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion. Holy Communion may not be received in the hand if a communicant is wearing gloves. The communicant may receive in the hand or on the tongue. If the priest senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hand or mouth, he will use hand sanitizer. After the reception of Holy Communion, the faithful may depart at the direction of an usher, one row at a time. Please remember, in order to keep everyone safe, Communion in the hand is to be received by placing the non-dominant hand over the dominant and keeping one's fingers flat to avoid contact with the hand of the minister. No reaching out to take Holy Communion. On the tongue, tilt the head back and fully extend the tongue until the Sacred Host is placed there.



APPENDIX F: HOLY MASS GUIDELINES FOR THE FAITHFUL

Instructions for the Faithful for The Reception of Holy Communion Outdoors

- Those who are in a state of grace and desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the conclusion of the Mass. Communicants are encouraged to receive Communion in the hand.
- Ushers will direct individuals from no more than two vehicles at time to each communion station to receive Holy Communion.
- Each communicant is to stand at markings on the ground that are 6-feet apart.
- Each communicant is to remove any face coverings before coming forward for Holy Communion.
- Holy Communion may not be received in the hand if a communicant is wearing gloves.
- The communicant may receive in the hand or on the tongue.
- If the priest senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hand or mouth, he will use hand sanitizer.
- The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving.
- Please remember, in order to keep everyone safe, Communion in the hand is to be received by placing the non-dominant hand over the dominant and keeping one's fingers flat to avoid contact with the hand of the minister. No reaching out to take Holy Communion.
- On the tongue, tilt the head back and fully extend the tongue until the Sacred Host is placed there.

