



Archdiocese of Kingston

Norms for the Celebration of Sacraments

I. Preamble: Priority of the Spiritual Life

As clergy, we must take seriously the recommendations of health experts and the government. Nevertheless, the role of the Church is the salvation of souls. In times of crisis, the Church has always been there to strengthen the faith, hope and love of people, to nourish their spiritual lives, and through prayer and worship to implore divine assistance to aid the efforts of scientists and researchers in finding a cure and restoring normalcy to society.

II. Care for the Priest and Deacon

Any priest or deacon with lowered immunity should remain isolated at home. A priest or deacon who feels ill with flu like symptoms could infect others and should remain in isolation. If in doubt, priests and deacons, particularly those who are retired and elderly priests, with compromised immune systems should err on the side of caution in their decision-making.

III. Responsibility

Priests and Deacons are reminded that they exercise their ministry in conjunction with their Archbishop. This unity is most important in times of crisis and should be given a high priority and be evident to the people. Any action on their part that is not in keeping with these directives reflects upon the Archbishop, on their Parish and Archdiocese, and may make them, the Parish and Archdiocese liable for lawsuits.

IV. Celebration of the Sacraments and Rites of the Church

The restrictions implemented by the government concern the number of people who may assemble for liturgical celebrations and church activities. In times of uncertainty, the tendency is for Christian people to gather together for prayer and the celebration of the Mass and Sacraments. Unfortunately, it is the gathering of people which now poses an extreme danger.

1. Church Buildings:

- a. Government regulations require that churches should be closed to the public. Therefore, churches, halls, offices, rectories and adoration chapels are to be closed. Priests are not to schedule appointments or to receive people in the rectory.
- b. Hand sanitizers should be placed near the entrances to the church, with clear instruction that they be used by those entering or leaving the building.
- c. Washroom facilities must be disinfected on a regular basis, particularly before and after any celebration indicated below.

2. Baptism of Children:

- a. Of all the sacraments, Baptism is the one necessary for salvation. While recognizing the grace and action of God through Baptism of Desire, nevertheless, Baptisms should not be postponed for long periods of times.
- b. The complete Rite of Baptism is to be celebrated in the area around the Baptismal Font.
- c. Baptisms are to be celebrated in the church and not in homes. Only the parents and godparents should bring the child to the church, with social distancing and other precautions maintained as fully as possible.

3. Initiation of Adults and Children of Catechetical Age:

- a. The Rites of Initiation of adults and children of catechetical age, including the Scrutinies, are postponed until they can be celebrated in their entirety at a later date.
- b. Scrutinies with children (ages 7 to 14) are best celebrated with a small group outside of Mass. When restrictions on the public celebration of Mass are lifted, the Scrutinies for adults are to be celebrated at the Parish Sunday Eucharist, if possible, or at a weekday Mass.
- c. If, with the agreement of the priest or at the urgent request of adults who have celebrated the Rite of Election, the priest may baptize, confirm and give the Eucharist without the celebration of Mass with the permission of the Ordinary.

4. Confirmations and First Communions:

- a. All Confirmations and First Communions are put on hold until further notice.

5. Eucharist:

- a. The public celebration of the Eucharist with the faithful is suspended until further notice in conformity with the Declaration of Emergency by the Government of Ontario and confirmed by decree of Archbishop Mulhall.
- b. Public celebrations of the Mass or distribution of Communion, whether in the church or outdoors, are not permitted.
- c. Videotaping and streaming of Masses may include no more than 4 people to serve as musician, reader and media technician. Those attending must observe social distancing, as well as insuring proper sanitation and disinfecting of microphones, pews, door handles, etc.

6. Confessions:

- a. Gatherings for Penitential Celebrations are to be cancelled.
- b. Confessions are not to be celebrated in the church. Priests are not to schedule times for confessions, unless these are held outdoors.
- c. Permission for General Absolution is not given. The danger of contagion is greater when a large number of people congregate.
- d. Through social media, bulletins and other means, priests should post information about how to make a Perfect Act of Contrition. An Act of Contrition should be made available to parishioners.

7. Sacrament of the Sick:

- a. When anointing the sick in danger of death, the priest should wear medical/surgical gloves for the laying on of hands and anointing, and, if available a mask.
- b. Care must be taken that the container of Holy Oil does not become contaminated. The priest's thumb should be dipped in the oil only once for the anointing both of forehead and hands. Gloves must be discarded after anointing each person.
- c. It is advisable that a number of cotton swabs soaked in the Oil of the Sick be placed in plastic bags, and used only once for each person. The used swabs should then be burnt after one use.

8. Communion to Shut-ins:

- a. Communion to the sick by lay people is suspended. Viaticum is permitted for those in danger of death.

9. Funerals

- a. At present, a Liturgy of the Word without Communion may be celebrated in the church with only the family present as subject to the limits prescribed by the Ontario Government and the regulations of the Funeral Home.
- b. It is recommended that, if possible, priests and deacons postpone Funeral Liturgies until a later date and celebrate a Committal Service at the cemetery only.
- c. Priest and deacons should be aware that Funeral Homes might have their own regulations, which should be respected.

10. Marriages

- a. At this time a Marriage without Mass or Communion in the church may be celebrated with only the bride, the groom and two witnesses present.

11. Celebration of Holy Week and the Easter Triduum:

- a. The Vatican has issued guidelines for the private celebration of the Triduum by parish priests. These will be communicated separately.

+Michael Mulhall
Archbishop of Kingston
March 30, 2020