

COVID-19 LITURGICAL PROTOCOL FOR THE DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY

THE HOLY EUCHARIST (INCLUDING WEDDINGS, FUNERALS, CONFIRMATIONS, ETC.)

- **Dispensation.** The obligation to attend Sunday Mass continues to be dispensed until at least the end of 2020.
- **At-Risk.** Though the decision is left up to individual priests and parishioners, those who are 65 years and older (especially with underlying medical conditions) are recommended to exercise caution and be aware of the risks when partaking in liturgical functions.
- **Masks.** Facemasks are to be worn by parishioners and assisting clergy while present in the church. The celebrant is not required to wear a mask.
- **Social Distancing.** Masks should be present throughout the church to assist parishioners to properly social distance for seating and the reception of Communion. Individuals living in the same household do not need to socially distance.
- **Pews.** Every other pew should be blocked off to provide adequate social distancing.
- **Contact Tracing.** Parishes should continue to utilize some form of sign-up or attendance tracking, such as through a website or even by recorded and livestreamed Masses.
- **Congregating.** Parishioners should not group together in the church before or after Mass.
- **Bulletins.** Bulletins may be provided at the exits on a table for taking after Mass, but they are to not be available before Mass. All other paper materials, including hymnals and worship aids, are prohibited.
- **Servers.** No Mass servers are to be used at all during this time.
- **Processions.** Aside from the Communion procession, no other processions (entrance, offertory, recessional, etc.) are to take place during Mass.
- **Contactless.** No distribution of the Precious Blood, no Sign of Peace, no physical contact.
- **Singing.** Congregational singing is not allowed, including the Mass parts of the Kyrie, Gloria, Sanctus, Agnus Dei, and so forth. If desired, instrumental music may be played or solo music may be sung by a cantor to cover liturgical action, such as Communion.
- **Length.** Mass is not to be unduly long and therefore requires, for instance, brief homilies and announcements.
- **Communion.** The distribution of Holy Communion is to take place at the normal time during Mass, with ushers dismissing the pews to adequately socially distance.
- **Dismissal.** The ushers are to dismiss the congregation pew by pew, beginning with the back of the church and moving towards the front.

SCHOOL MASSES

- **Social Distancing.** Grades K-2 are allowed to sit with their cohorts in closer proximity to avoid discipline issues that teachers may face. All children are to be masked.
- **Communion Outside of Mass.** Communion is not to be brought to those in classrooms who were not physically present for Mass.
- **Protocols.** All protocols for the celebration of the Eucharist are to be followed, including no congregational singing, no servers, masks, and so on.

WEDDINGS

- **Masks.** The bride and groom do not need to wear a mask. All other guests, including the wedding party, are to wear masks. The celebrant must wear a mask during the exchange of vows and rings.
- **Worship Aids.** Absolutely no worship aids or leaflets are to be passed out in the church.

FUNERALS

- **Masks.** All those in attendance at a funeral are to wear a face mask, including the funeral home directors and employees.
- **Worship Aids.** Absolutely no worship aids or leaflets are to be passed out in the church.
- **Visitation.** Visitation is allowed in the church, either the evening prior or before the Funeral Mass, following all the protocols laid down for The Holy Eucharist.
- **Compliance.** Priests have the right to enforce these protocols and the right to refuse their participation in the service if the funeral home is not compliant with these protocols.

CONFIRMATION

- **Delegation.** Priests must actively seek delegation from Bishop Nickless to celebrate Confirmation, requesting it in writing (email) and providing the intended date(s), time(s), location(s), and names of the Confirmandi. Priests must have the delegation letter in hand in order to proceed with the Confirmation.
- **Contactless.** Anointing with Chrism may take place with an instrument such as a cotton ball. Sponsors are not required to place their hand on the shoulder of those to be confirmed.

RECONCILIATION

- **Space.** Confessions are to take place in a room or space that can sufficiently accommodate social distancing for the penitents waiting to confess. Examples might include the church hall, a chapel, a religious education classroom, or other similar large spaces.
- **Method.** There will be no face-to-face confessions, but instead a barrier will be placed between the priest and the penitent. A moveable confessional screen is an example of an appropriate and preferable barrier. Barriers constructed of plexiglass may be utilized, keeping in mind that the penitent has a canonical right to confess anonymously.
- **Masks.** Both priest and penitent are to wear masks.
- **Contactless.** The penitents are to confess behind the barrier while standing, so as to prevent contact with any surfaces, ledges, or kneelers of the barrier.

BAPTISM

- **Masks.** Both the celebrant and those in attendance should wear masks.
- **Social Distancing.** Insofar as it is possible, social distancing should occur.
- **Contactless.** Anointing with the Holy Oil and Chrism may take place with an instrument such as a cotton ball.
- **Water.** If several baptisms are celebrated at once, fresh pours of water should be used instead of the same water that was poured and returned to the font.

ANOINTING AND PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

- **Contactless.** Anointing with the Oil of the Sick may take place with an instrument such as a cotton ball. The laying on of hands can be relatively contact-free.
- **Personal Protection Equipment.** Masks and other personal protection equipment are to be worn, especially if the recipient is suffering from the effects of COVID-19.
- **Homebound Communion.** Homebound parishioners and EMHCs should first be contacted to determine their level of comfort in visiting/having visitors in their home. It should be communicated to homebound parishioners that the reception of Holy Communion, due to the circumstances, may not be as frequent as what they are accustomed to.
- **Care Facilities.** Extra caution should be exercised when entering care facilities, if allowed by that facility. Because individual facilities have their own policies regarding entry, these are to be respected and followed. Any liturgies in these facilities will most likely be suspended for the foreseeable future.

PRAYER AND ADORATION

- **Sanitizing.** It is left to the pastor's discretion how long his churches are open for prayer, Adoration of the Blessed Sacraments, and other devotions. The parish will need to have a plan for how to sanitize the church if there cannot be a sufficient period of at least 48 hours between use.

OTHER PARISH FUNCTIONS

- **Similar Protocols.** Other parish functions that are not liturgical are still expected to follow CDC guidelines and the governor's proclamation regarding gatherings, including wearing masks and socially distancing as much as possible. This includes meetings, gatherings of any kind, food preparation and service, and so forth.