

DIOCESE OF SIOUX CITY GENERAL COVID-19 UPDATES

Reminder: As in the past, all of the following protocol adjustments may be made tighter or more stringent at the authority of the Pastor based on the local data, logistics, and unforeseen issues in their individual parish(es). Liberalization of the protocols is strictly prohibited without express permission of Bishop Nickless.

Religious Education

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 30, 2021, religious education classes may resume in person if both the Pastor and Director of Religious Education deem it safe and logistically possible and prudent, taking into consideration the number of students and the required protocols of using face masks, socially distancing, and sanitizing. Virtual and hybrid classes may continue as alternatives to in-person classes, based upon local needs and circumstances.

Music

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 30, 2021, one cantor with one accompanist is allowed, but not mandated, for any liturgy. Congregational singing remains prohibited, and any music should be restrained and reasonable in nature. The recitation (or singing by the cantor) of the Entrance and Communion antiphons in the *Roman Missal* is highly encouraged. By virtue of liturgical law, recorded music is always prohibited.

Parish Meetings

EFFECTIVE JANUARY 30, 2021, in-person parish meetings may take place at the Pastor's discretion. This includes council meetings, board meetings, leadership meetings, adult education, Bible studies, RCIA, guild meetings, Knights of Columbus meetings, and other parish meetings of this type.

Parish Facilities

NO CHANGE: Parish facilities remain closed for use. There are to be no funeral dinners, no receptions or parties, and no rentals to outside groups. All parish dinners (e.g. Lenten fish fries) must employ a takeout, drive-thru, or curbside delivery method and exclude any kind of indoor dining. Exceptions for already-existing facility bookings must be discussed with the Vicar General, Fr. Brad Pelzel. Schools may continue to use parish facilities for lunchtime overflow.

Face Masks

NO CHANGE: While in the office, hall, or other facilities, all parish staff members are required to wear a face mask when they leave their personal work area and are to constantly wear a face mask when working in a common space with other co-workers. Parishioners are also to wear face masks when volunteering or conducting parish business.

Camp CAYOCA

Camp CAYOCA will be cancelled for this summer and the chancery staff will be providing options for individual parishes to host a Vacation Bible School with local programming.

Spring Confirmation

After considering all the factors and logistics, Bishop Nickless, under advisement, is asking all Pastors with a scheduled Spring 2021 Confirmation to seek delegation from him to celebrate this Sacrament. Please contact Renee DeMay as soon as possible, but at least one month in advance of your scheduled Confirmation to request delegation. You will be asked to complete an online form, which will provide the necessary details for Bishop Nickless to prepare the letter of delegation. An online form must be filled out for each Confirmation Mass that is to be celebrated. Pastors will only be able to validly celebrate Confirmation after seeking and receiving written delegation from the Office of the Bishop.

LENT AND HOLY WEEK GUIDELINES

Lenten Prayer Opportunities

Additional times of Masses, Eucharistic Adoration, Confessions, Stations of the Cross, and various devotions are left to the discretion of the parish Pastor. Stations of the Cross, for instance, should forego shared books and instead employ printed sheets or personal copies that are kept by parishioners.

February 2: The Feast of the Presentation of the Lord (Candlemas)

No processions for this feast should take place, but the blessing of at least some candles should take place in the sanctuary, beginning with the Sign of the Cross and the Greeting (nos. 4-5), as is printed in the Proper of The Presentation of the Lord in the *Roman Missal*. Mass continues in the usual way after the blessing.

February 3: St. Blase Blessing of Throats

This blessing is not to be offered individually this year. Instead, as the *Book of Blessings* permits (pgs. 691-701), the blessing may occur within Mass as a conclusion to the General Intercessions. The celebrant, without crossed candles, extends his hands over the assembly from the sanctuary and says the prayer of blessing.

February 17: Ash Wednesday

By mandate of the Congregation for Divine Worship in Rome, ashes are to be distributed in the following (European) manner:

The Priest says the prayer for blessing the ashes. He sprinkles the ashes with holy water, without saying anything. Then he addresses all those present **and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal**, applying it to all in general: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel," or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." The Priest then cleanses his hands, puts on a face mask and distributes the ashes to those who come to him or, if appropriate, he goes to those who are standing in their places. The Priest **takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one without saying anything.**

February 21: Rite of Election

Bishop Nickless will not celebrate the Rite of Election or Call to Continuing Conversion and Pastors are therefore expected to exercise their faculty to celebrate this Rite in their parishes on the First Sunday of Lent. The Rite of Election may either be celebrated within Mass or outside of Mass in the context of a Liturgy of the Word. The Rite of Election and Call to Continuing Conversion will be provided digitally to all Pastors by the Office of Worship.

Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass is tentatively planned for late March at the Cathedral of the Epiphany. Due to the ongoing challenges of COVID-19, this Mass will most likely be celebrated with the Deans alone and the holy oils will then be distributed in an undetermined manner by deanery. More information will come in the following weeks regarding the logistics of the Chrism Mass.

March 28: Palm Sunday

Palms may be ordered now and may be blessed prior to the celebration of the Palm Sunday Masses. Following all proper protocol, the palms may be set aside next to the bulletins to be individually picked up by parishioners after Mass. The Simple Entrance should be used for this Mass.

April 1: Holy Thursday

The Washing of Feet, already an optional rite, is to be omitted at Mass. The Transfer of the Holy Eucharist at the end of Mass, where feasible and reasonable, is allowed to take place.

April 2: Good Friday

Individual Adoration of the Cross is not to take place. Instead, as is allowed by the Roman Missal, the clergy shall personally adore the cross and then, raising and showing the cross to the whole church, invite the faithful to adore the cross from their places in silence with a gesture of reverence (such as a profound bow, genuflection, kneeling, etc.).

April 3: Easter Vigil

Because of the early date of Easter this year, the Vigil Mass is permitted to begin at 8:00 pm in the Diocese of Sioux City. For those who are to be anointed with holy oils during the Sacraments of Initiation, a cotton ball should be used. Additionally, baptismal water should not be re-used but fresh for each person. Holy water should continue to be left out of the fonts in churches. Delegation to confirm those who are completing their Sacraments of Initiation must be sought by the Pastor from the Office of the Bishop.