



Liturgical Guidelines During the Coronavirus Pandemic October 14, 2020

Given the continuing limitation on large public gatherings, and so as to allow people who are not well or otherwise at risk the ability to stay home, the following provisions will remain in effect until further notice:

- The general dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass remains in place.
- People in vulnerable populations are encouraged to stay home. High-risk individuals (e.g., people who are 65 and older, who are immuno-compromised or who have underlying health conditions) should be discouraged from serving in any capacity that brings them into contact with others.
- Live-streaming of Mass remains available.
- No social sharing of food or drink before or after Mass or any other gathering.

PURPLE TIER PROTOCOLS

Parishes whose respective County has been designated as “Purple” in the California COVID-19 Tier System must follow the following protocols.

General considerations

- Pastors must ensure that employees and volunteers adhere to the guidelines provided by the [CDC](#), [State of California](#), County Departments of Health (for example, [Los Angeles County APPENDIX F](#) “Reopening Protocol for Places of Worship,”) and/or City Offices regarding healthy hygiene practices, employee and volunteer training.
- Masses (e.g., Weekday, Sunday, First Communions, Confirmation, Weddings, Funerals, Quinceañeras) and other religious services (e.g., Baptisms, Adoration, Devotions, Prayer Services, “Wedding Without Mass,” “Funeral Liturgy Outside Mass,” Faith Formation, Prayer Groups) are allowed and encouraged but must take place outdoors.
- There is no limit to attendance for outdoor religious services, provided there is room for social distancing of at least six feet between family units.
- Even outdoors, parishioners must wear face coverings and practice social distancing (6 feet apart, unless they are family members who live together in the *same* house).
- Presiders and Lectors must also wear face coverings unless speaking.
- Sanitize all microphones in between use that are shared by multiple individuals.
- Cleaning materials should also be on hand to disinfect points of contact after each visitor departs. A disinfectant that will not harm church surfaces should be used.
- If parishes provide outdoor seating, the seating must be sanitized between Masses and other religious services. Parishioners may bring their own seating. [See sanitizing protocol.](#)
- Hand sanitation must be available for all visitors. This could take several forms, ranging from touch-less dispensers of antibacterial gel at the doors or wash stations in restrooms.

- One or more volunteers (or employees) should be stationed at the door(s) of the church whenever it is open. The volunteer(s) will perform a variety of duties:
 - Greet all visitors. California state guidelines recommend signage and use of social media advising people experiencing symptoms or considered at higher risk to stay home, but volunteers/employees at the doors could reinforce this message and remind visitors of the ongoing dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass.
- Post [signs](#) outlining health and safety protocols. Train volunteers to ask people if they have been in contact with any infected person. Remind anyone with symptoms to STAY HOME. Parishes may also choose to use sign-in sheets for contact tracing. Remind parishioners of the ongoing dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass.
- Parishes are to observe the following protocols regarding music and singing for all Masses and liturgical celebrations:
 - Choirs are not allowed.
 - Parishes can utilize a soloist who must always practice enhanced social distancing and is monitoring for symptoms. The soloist must be as far away as possible from any other person, at least 12 feet of distance.
 - Parishes can also choose to use instruments only. Instrumentalists must maintain physical distancing and use facemasks. Wind and brass instruments should be avoided and are discouraged from use.
 - Congregations are not encouraged to sing, but rather should be encouraged to pray silently with the music.
 - Parishes can also choose not to use a soloist or instrumentalist.
- Parishes are to observe the following protocols for all Masses and liturgical celebrations:
 - The invitation to the Sign of Peace is omitted. No physical contact should be made during the Sign of Peace.
 - Do not pass collection baskets or receptacles for offerings during the preparation of the altar. Instead, baskets are to be placed in a location where people can provide their donations as they enter or exit the seating area.
 - No sharing of bibles, books, papers, or other items. If worship aids are used, they must be one-time use.
 - Holy Communion will be offered only in the form of bread, on the hand. The priest should sanitize his hands before offering Communion, after making any physical contact with someone while giving Communion, and after Communion has concluded.
 - Lines for Communion will be monitored so that communicants stand 6 feet apart and 6 feet distant from other participants in pews.
 - The distribution of Communion may take place at its usual time or immediately after the conclusion of Mass, using the form given in the *Rite for Holy Communion Outside of Mass*.
 - The priest should raise a host to the congregation and say, “The Body of Christ,” with the congregation responding, “Amen,” so as to minimize spoken interaction between the priest and the communicant during the distribution of Communion.
 - Masks must be worn during the distribution of Communion.

Confessions

In addition to what is provided above and applicable to the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the following are also observed:

- Priests who are present may hear individual Confessions upon request or have scheduled Confession times. A location must be arranged so that confessions may be heard with safe distancing while maintaining privacy for the seal of the confession.
- Space must be provided for penitents to wait in line while maintaining safe distancing.
- Both priest and penitent must wear face coverings.
- The priest and penitent must remain at least 6 feet apart. They do not need to face one another. Ideally both will remain standing, so as to minimize points of contact. If priest and penitent are seated, they may sit side-by-side, facing in the same direction, so as to help maintain hygiene. Penitent's chair and other points of contact must be wiped down when penitent leaves. Priests should always be aware of maintaining privacy for the Penitent.

Baptisms

In addition to what is provided above and applicable to the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism, the following are also observed:

- Immersion fonts will not be used to confer Baptism. Blessed water will be poured into smaller containers, and each person will be baptized with water poured from a different container. The water will not be reused. Dispose of excess water appropriately after the Baptism is finished.
- The proper Trinitarian formula must be used.
- The use of the Oil of Catechumens and the "Ephphatha" may be omitted. If not omitted, the minister may use an instrument (i.e. cotton ball, cotton swab, cotton pad) to apply the Oil. If an instrument is used to anoint with Oil, the instrument may not be reused; a new instrument must be used if there are multiple individuals. Once the instrument has been used it must be set aside and later burned as it contains Holy Oil.
- When using Sacred Chrism, the minister may also use an instrument (i.e. cotton ball, cotton swab, cotton pad) to apply the Sacred Chrism. The same conditions apply as noted in the previous bullet point.

Confirmations

In addition to what is provided above and applicable to the celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation, parishes should also refer to the directives on the Memo sent to pastors on June 15, 2020 entitled, "Memo to Pastors and Administrators for Confirmation 2020 (COVID 19)".

Weddings/Funerals/Quinceañeras

Refer to what is provided observing all appropriate protocols.

RED TIER PROTOCOLS

Parishes whose respective County has been designated as “Red” in the California COVID-19 Tier System, may resume indoor Masses and liturgical celebrations, pending updated Health Orders from the County Department of Public Health and with the approval of the Archbishop.

In addition, parishes may also continue providing outdoor celebrations.

These parishes may resume indoor celebrations but must be limited to 25% of capacity or 100 people, whichever is less. All the preceding protocols remain in effect in addition to the following:

- Open the door for visitors to keep the points of contact to a minimum. Ushers should utilize face mask and gloves.
- Count visitors as they enter, to ensure that the number of visitors at any given time does not exceed the maximum number of people permitted by the local authorities.
- Act as ushers, inviting each group to a particular part of the church, where they should remain (no roaming around the church), maintaining social distancing (seated in every other row, with six feet of separation except when two or more members of the same household sit adjacent to one another).
- Ensure that pews and other points of contact are wiped down when visitors leave.
- Parishes must minimize potential points of contact (e.g. baptismal fonts and holy water containers at church entrances must be empty; hymnals and missalettes must be removed from pews; tapers must be removed from votive candle racks; frequently touched objects such as statues, etc., must be cordoned off).
- Parishes are to observe the following protocols regarding music and singing for all Masses and liturgical celebrations:
 - Choirs are not allowed.
 - Parishes can utilize a soloist who must always practice enhanced social distancing and is monitoring for symptoms. The soloist must be as far away as possible from any other person, at least 12 feet of distance. If the church is too small to allow for a soloist with at least 12 feet of distancing, they should discontinue utilizing a soloist for now. The soloist may also be located in a separate room within the church building to enhance social distancing.
 - Parishes can also choose to use instruments only. Instrumentalists must maintain physical distancing and use facemasks. Wind and brass instruments should be avoided and are discouraged from use.
 - Congregations are not encouraged to sing, but rather should be encouraged to pray silently with the music.
 - Parishes can also choose not to use a soloist or instrumentalist.

ANOINTING OF THE SICK

As in important part of ministry, priests are to attend to the needs of those who ask for the Anointing of the Sick.

- If a priest is sick or considered to be a high-risk individual (e.g. above 65 years of age, suffers from respiratory conditions, immunocompromised, etc.), he should request assistance from another priest.
- Priests or others attending to the needs of the sick or homebound are to observe all proper sanitary protocols. If in a hospital setting, check-in with proper medical personnel and follow their directions before entering and upon leaving the room of the patient. For home visits, this includes but may not be limited to handwashing before and after the visit, wearing gloves, a facemask, and a gown to cover clothes.
- Priests must clean and refresh their oil stocks before visiting each sick person.
- Instead of using his hand, the priest may use an instrument, such as cotton-tipped swab or cotton ball, to anoint the sick person (cf. *CIC* 1000, §2). The priest dips the cotton-tipped swab or cotton ball in the oil to administer the Sacrament. Please take care of using only one swab per person and dispose of the instrument appropriately (e.g. by burning or burying in the ground).
- If desired by the person requesting the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, priests may hear the confession of the sick person and grant individual absolution.
- If you find out that you have been exposed to the coronavirus, immediately contact your health care provider. As a result, you may be required to quarantine yourself.

LIVE-STREAMED MASS

Parishes are reminded of the following regarding indoor live-streamed Mass:

- Mass may be held inside the church for the purpose of live-stream or recording only.
- No more than 10 people may be in the church for the Mass, including the Presider and anyone involved in filming.
- Observing social-distancing and number limitations as noted above, all those involved in the celebration of Mass must be in the same location and time as the Presider.
- Live-streamed Mass can be followed by outdoor distribution of Communion.