

From: Fr. Michael J. Lumpe
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Subject: Update Letter to Priests
Attachments: The Return Immediate Preparation May 2 2020.docx; Guidelines+for+Mass+(4.28.2020) [1].pdf; Ohio dioceses reopening.pdf; Parish Resources to Celebrate the Memorial of St.docx

Brother priests,

Forgive me, there is a lot coming your way so early today! The possibility of our beginning the public celebration of Mass on Pentecost Sunday is by all means promising and uplifting, but at the same time places a lot of work before us. From all I can tell the roll out of the confessions went pretty. Thank you for that. It would be good to begin to open our Churches for prayer to the extent that we are able in the next week or two.

In preparation for the resumption of the public celebration of Mass we need to consider multiple approaches. I have asked Father Adam Streitenberger to coordinate a team to consider some of the Evangelization and re-engagement aspects. In the meantime, we will also be working to consider some of the practical aspects of what needs to be done to allow for people to gather safely with care for the health and well-being of all. To that end we have been in consultation with the other bishops, with medical and safety personnel and with the Governor's Office. We have also received a good deal of outside guidance.

You will see a number of documents attached to this message. These do NOT constitute policy nor even guidelines here in the diocese of Columbus. Rather they are starting points for our discussions. The first, entitled The Return Immediate Preparation, reflects the work of the Evangelization team with their draft recommendations. The second, Guidelines+For+Mass, represents the work of the Thomistic Institute in Washington, which was shared with the bishops through the USCCB. The message from the USCCB and the link to their work is below.

As it happens, there already exists an *ad hoc* group of theologians and experts in infectious disease and public health whose work thus far provides the kind of analysis and advice that bishops would be seeking. The work is coordinated by members of the Thomistic Institute at the Pontifical Faculty of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. You can find their guidelines at this link: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>

You will also find attached to this email message, the recommendations of the Offices of Divine Worship for the six dioceses in Ohio.

Finally, I want to share with you two calendar items for May. On the 15th of May, the Memorial of St. Isidore the Farmer, I intend to visit two farm areas in the Diocese, practicing of course the measures of responsible social distancing and limits on gatherings. This will be an opportunity to ask God's blessing on the work of our farmers. As you know last season was difficult in its own right, and the issues surrounding the pandemic bring particular challenges to the farms this year. I include with this email a Pastoral Resource Guide for Parishes in Rural Areas to use as you see helpful in your outreach to the farming community.

And on the 27th of May, I will celebrate a Baccalaureate Mass for Diocesan Seniors. This started as a combined Mass for the Seniors of our Catholic High Schools, but grew to be an opportunity for all our Seniors to celebrate their High School Graduations in Prayer. This will be live streamed that evening. Details will be forthcoming.

I realize I am throwing a lot at you right now. Further, it is not lost on me that you already have a lot going these days. We have the Re-engagement webinar this week from the Office of Advancement and Planning, and pastors have been working on our planning process and the analysis of Mass schedules. But I want you to have and to know what I have in front of me and I want you to be part of our planning and implementation. While there is general concurrence in the documents I present today, there are also a number of points of departure. I will need to adapt these to our realities and decide on our guidelines. Your experience and wisdom will help me.

I am looking to schedule a webinar later this week or early next week. Please read over this material and think about it. Please send any comments or questions to Father Adam Streitenberger at astreitenberger@columbuscatholic.org he will assemble them for me so that we can address them during the webinar and prepare our guidelines to be available next week.

Know that you were very much in my thoughts and prayers yesterday, on Good Shepherd Sunday, and that these prayers continue this and every day. I give thanks for you all the time and with you prayer that the Lord will continue to send laborers in to the harvest, blessing us with vocations from our Diocese.

Fraternally

+Bishop Brennan

The Return: Restoring Public Sacramental Life After COVID-19

As the planning process for return to public sacramental life begins, here are some initial points for the consideration of pastors and parish staff. If you have any questions, contact Adam Streitenberger at astreitenberger@columbuscatholic.org

Immediate Preparation (Now and June 21)

I. Ongoing Preparation

- **Resources:** We will be posting updates and resources for the ongoing preparation of returning to public sacramental life on the diocesan website and social media.
- **Livestreaming Sunday Masses:** Consider continuing livestreaming Sunday Masses even after the return to public Masses. The practice connects those who would or could not otherwise join us even after the “stay at home” order is lifted. Through the livestreaming Masses, parishes can begin inviting all viewers of their livestreamed events to public Masses on May 30/31. The invitation might also include instructions on how to update their contact information with the parish. Consider applying for grants from the Catholic Foundation to initiate or enhance their livestreaming.
- **Livestreaming other events:** Consider the ongoing livestreaming of other events, including daily Masses, devotions, and disciple formation programs. The Alpha Consortium will provide guidance and direction for how to promote and launch livestreamed programming in a forthcoming webinar.
- **Renewing our love for the sacraments:** The time away from the sacraments has enhanced people’s love and hunger for the sacraments. However, it might also have contributed to a diminishment of their understanding of the need for the Eucharist and confession. This time is the opportunity for catechesis on the sacraments. The homily is the ideal place to address issues such as the need for confession, for public worship, and for actual participation. In response, the Dominicans at St. Patrick will be providing “homily helpers” to engage these issues in the Sunday lectionary cycle. The Dominicans will also produce a series of talks on the issues. The talks will be posted on the social media of the diocese.
- **Continue Checking in and Encouraging:** Consider continuing the outreach to those at home in these remaining weeks and the weeks after the return to public Masses. Using parish social media, consider including photos of staff, priests, and the parish activities going on now and in the following weeks. This reminds parishioners that the parish has been at work during these “stay at home” weeks.
- **Promoting the return of public Masses:** Consider promoting the return to public Mass by reaching out to all registered parishioners through postcards/letters, announcements on livestreamed events, emails, texts, and even phone calls. These communications can communicate the balance of welcoming people and cautioning those who are still ill or at risk to remain at home. Therefore, such communication can include the Mass schedule, a description of practical steps the parish is taking to

keep the facilities safe for their return, the dispensation from the obligation, and instruction that those who are ill or at risk should remain at home.

- Webinars: Office of Development & Planning is hosting the first: “How to build virtual community with a goal of connecting parishioners and sustaining a pattern of giving even when public Masses are suspended” at 1pm on Tuesday, May 5 and 12:30pm on Wednesday, May 6.
- Webinar for Pastors on Public Masses: Bishop will be hosting a webinar on Friday, May 8 on determining the safety standards for public Masses. More information will be forthcoming in the bishop’s regular update. Please review the piece from the Thomistic Institute. Please email your questions, reactions to, or suggestions based on the piece to Adam Streitenberger at astreitenberger@columbuscatholic.org or to return@columbuscatholic.org. Firmer guidelines will be developed based on the that discussion and with the consultation of a committee of pastors.
- Farmers: The Office of Divine Worship has a parish resource guide for the feast of St. Isidore, including a Mass planning guide for the Memorial of St. Isidore on May 15, prayers of the faithful and a blessing that can be done virtually. There are suggestions for incorporating prayers and the blessing at the following Sunday Mass, a short prayer/blessing if pastors wish to visit the local farms for blessings and a prayer for farmers that can be shared via social media.

II. **Practical preparations for maintaining an assurance of safety**

- Parish Return Committees: Consider forming a committee for reopening to plan and execute the necessary steps to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. The Bishop’s Office will provide the specific safety standards for public Masses in a forthcoming notice.
- Signage: In support of a healthy and safe environment for all those attending, signage reinforcing the guidelines and recommendations by the Governor and Ohio Bishop’s should be clearly displayed in all parish buildings. Information on diocesan provided signage will be forthcoming.
- Facemasks and other precautions: Consider having masks available for those attending Masses. Face masks and sanitation kits can be ordered through Central Purchasing. Every parish should consider purchasing the special kits, which Central Purchasing is offering for the return. Please order as soon as possible.
- Hospitality: Regarding hospitality for Pentecost weekend and the near future, consider having ushers and greeters wear masks and gloves, provide masks for those who have not been able to procure one, and hold open all doors for people. Consider signs educating and explaining procedures be posted.

III. **First Three Weekends**

- Solemnity: Our return at Pentecost offers the opportunity for heightened solemnity as would have been celebrated at Easter, including flowers and music.
- Sacraments of Initiation: The Rites of Initiation for those who were preparing for the Easter Vigil are to take place on one of the first 3 weekends back. All three weekends, Pentecost, Holy Trinity, Corpus Christi, appropriately connect to the sacraments. It is left to the discretion of the pastors to choose the weekend and whether it is appropriate to do so at a regularly scheduled Mass or a special Mass.

For those unable to join us safely in the first three weeks, a later celebration may be scheduled for the Fall.

- First Communion and Confirmation: It is left to the discretion of the pastor whether to celebrate first communion in the first few weeks after the return or later in the Fall when grandparents may more safely attend. The bishop's office will work with the pastor to reschedule confirmation at the appropriate time.

IV. Remote Return Activities (July, August, and September)

- Special Masses: Consider the impact of the experience of these weeks on the local community. Special masses could be offered during the summer months (July and August). A) Mass for all deceased from the parish, B) Mass for all first responders, C) Mass for medical personnel, D) Mass for graduates (preferably on a Sunday before August), E) Mass for unemployed, F) Mass for small business owners. The Office for Divine Worship has put together resources for the Mass. Parishes might consider using the occasion to initiate an annual tradition of holding special Masses for these segments of the parish.
- More suggestions/best practices for the Remote Period, including parish or deanery 40-hours devotions, will be posted in a forthcoming document.

Guidelines on Sacraments and Pastoral Care

*Working Group on Infectious Disease Protocols for Sacraments & Pastoral Care*¹

April 28, 2020

Part III - Phased Restoration of Public Masses

General Principles:

The COVID-19 pandemic presents a serious threat to physical health. In response, public authorities are right to place limits on gatherings, to discourage unnecessary activities, and to call for physical distancing. At the same time, access to divine worship and to sacraments is of high importance for the spiritual good and the overall well-being of the faithful. As Catholics, we maintain that Christian worship and sacraments are just as necessary for the human person -- indeed, far more necessary -- than many commercial activities now permitted. This is particularly true in a time of widespread anxiety and potentially grave sickness.

The guidance provided here aims to clarify how such spiritual care, including public Masses, can be responsibly offered, especially as peak restrictions on public activities begin to be relaxed in phases. With proper safeguards to prevent infection, and integrating the scientific guidance of public health authorities as outlined below, it is possible to provide the Mass and the sacraments to the faithful in this period.

¹ Dr. Timothy P. Flanigan, M.D. (Prof. of Medicine (infectious diseases), Alpert Medical School of Brown University); Fr. Nicanor Austriaco, O.P. (Prof. of Biology, Providence College); Dr. Thomas W. McGovern, M.D. (Catholic Medical Association National Board Member, Former Clinical Research Physician, U.S. Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Diseases); Fr. Dominic Legge, O.P. (Assist. Prof. of Theology, Director of the Thomistic Institute, Dominican House of Studies); Fr. Dominic Langevin, O.P. (Assistant Professor, Editor of *The Thomist*, Dominican House of Studies); Fr. Paul Scalia (Vicar for Clergy, Diocese of Arlington); Fr. Gregory Pine, O.P. (Thomistic Institute). We are grateful for the comments and review of Rev. Msgr. Robert J. Vitillo (*Attaché, Permanent Observer Mission of the Holy See to the UN in Geneva and Secretary General, International Catholic Migration Commission*); Dr. Thomas Cesario, M.D. (*Prof. of Medicine (infectious diseases), Univ. of Calif. Irvine School of Medicine*); Dr. Paul Cieslak, M.D. (*Infectious Diseases & Public Health, Catholic Medical Association member*); Dr. Daniel Sulmasy, M.D., Ph.D. (*Prof. of Medicine, Georgetown University*); Dr. Suzanne Strom, M.D. (*Associate Clinical Professor, University of California, Irvine*); Fr. Christopher Pollard (*Diocese of Arlington*); and Fr. John Baptist Ku, O.P. (*Assoc. Prof., Dominican House of Studies*).

The following is based on current guidance issued by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other public health authorities. These guidelines also integrate the requirements of the Catholic Church for the valid and licit celebration of the Mass, in accord with Catholic teaching, liturgical law, and canon law. We have endeavored to formulate them with great care to preserve and respect the reverence due to the Holy Eucharist and the powerful liturgical and sacramental symbolism of the rites of the Mass.

We have divided these guidelines into phases, to correspond to the indications from the U.S. federal government on how public health authorities will step-down the restrictions on public activity as we pass through different stages of the COVID response.

We intend this document to reflect the most current guidance from health authorities. We will update it as the official guidance changes (as we expect it will, as we pass through different phases of the outbreak and as we learn more about the virus).

Latest information on how COVID-19 spreads:

According to [the latest information from the CDC](#) (April 22, 2020), “[t]he virus that causes COVID-19 is thought to spread mainly from person to person, mainly through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs or sneezes. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs. Spread is more likely when people are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).”

[The CDC adds:](#) “Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food.” “It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object, like a packaging container, that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads. In general, because of poor survivability of these coronaviruses on surfaces, there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.”

The CDC does not recommend that food take-out services be stopped, although it does counsel maintaining physical distancing measures (6 foot distance) where possible.

NB: For guidelines for distributing Holy Communion outside of Mass, which could be done even under the most restrictive limits on the size of public gatherings, see [the appendix at the end of this document](#).

A. Phase I: Public Masses with strict limits on public gatherings and strict physical distancing

In phase I, limits on public gatherings remain in place (in many locations, 10 people or less), although larger gatherings in “places of worship” may be permitted if strict physical distancing is maintained (for more on this, see point 2, below). Health authorities also recommend frequent hand hygiene, vigilance in maintaining physical distancing, and the use of face coverings in public. Anyone feeling sick should stay home, and anyone who has been in close contact with a COVID+ individual should self-quarantine for 14 days.²

Physical distancing calls for avoiding “close contact” with those outside one’s household. “Close contact” generally means avoiding being within 6 feet of another person, especially if this will last for 15 minutes or more.

Certain necessary tasks (e.g., receiving medical care, purchasing food, visiting a pharmacy, working in an essential business) may require that one come closer than 6 feet to others for brief periods. Reception of the sacraments is important for the faithful in the midst of this pandemic, and so the same guidelines apply: one should generally try to avoid being within 6 feet of others, but where necessary, a momentary interaction presents an acceptable risk, especially if other precautions are taken. Given how the virus is thought to spread (principally via respiratory droplets from sneezes and coughs), this risk is lower for brief encounters than in cases of prolonged contact.

1. General Provisions

- Dispense the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass during this phase.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (i.e. those who are older or who have underlying health conditions) to stay home. As circumstances allow, a visit from a priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to bring them the Eucharist may be possible. (*Guidance for bringing Holy Communion to a private home is forthcoming in a separate part of these guidelines.*)
- Tell the faithful that anyone with a cough of any sort, and anyone feeling sick, should not come to the church for a visit or for any ceremonies.

² “Close contact” with a COVID-19 case is defined by the CDC as contact with a person who is COVID+ for a prolonged period of time (typically 15 minutes or more) or direct infectious exposure (via respiratory droplets, like being sneezed on) to someone who is COVID+. ([CDC on how COVID spreads](#))

- 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. (See [CDC recommendations on cleaning your facility](#).)
- In accord with current public health recommendations, the faithful should wear cloth face coverings when in public, including when they come to church. Surgical masks or N-95 respirators are not recommended. (See [CDC recommendations on face coverings](#).)
 - Cloth face coverings should not be placed on young children under age 2, anyone who has trouble breathing, or anyone otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance. (See [CDC recommendations on face coverings](#).)
 - See below for special instructions concerning the reception of Holy Communion.

2. Limiting the Size of the Congregation & Physical Distancing

- Masses should be limited in attendance, depending on the guidance of public health authorities.
 - Guidance from the [U.S. federal government](#) says that, during the first phase of reduced restrictions, *in cases where strict physical distancing cannot be observed*, social gatherings should generally be of no more than 10 people. It adds that venues like “places of worship. . . can operate under strict physical distancing protocols.” That is, according to the federal government’s guidance, **a church can hold larger gatherings in this first phase if it can provide for strict physical distancing**. (More on this below.)
 - State or local health authorities may modify the federal guidance to be more or less restrictive for a given jurisdiction.
 - **Recommendation:** Masses could be scheduled with greater frequency. Attendance could be first-come first-served, or allocated by some other system (a rotation system based on the first letter of last names, an online ticketing system like Eventbrite, etc.).
 - **Alternative:** “Drive-in” or outdoor Masses are possible, where the Mass is celebrated in a location visible to the faithful who remain in their cars. For example, a Mass could be celebrated on the front steps of a church, or in a church parking lot (perhaps on a platform erected for this purpose).

Such events do not constitute gatherings of more than 10 persons, if the attendees remain in their cars.

- **Strict Physical Distancing:** In Phase I, a Catholic church or chapel may hold public Masses of more than 10 persons (taking account of local health guidance), as long as it maintains strict physical distancing. (See [U.S. federal guidelines](#).)

For a public Mass, to maintain strict physical distancing:

- The faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other at all times.
 - **Recommendation:** 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).
- Members of a single household do not need to practice physical distancing with each other and so may sit together in the same row. (For example, if a group arrived in a single private vehicle, they could sit together.)
- 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.
- 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.)
 - Suggestion: dismiss the congregation by rows at the end of Mass to avoid crowding at the exits.
- If all the available spaces are filled, do not admit additional people to the church building.
- 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.
- Choirs are discouraged, especially if seated together. Vigorous singing, especially in close proximity to others, may increase the risk of viral spread.

3. Specific Provisions for the Parts of the Mass

- A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind should avoid celebrating public masses or administering sacraments during this phase. The same holds for other

ministers who might serve at a Mass (deacon, servers, lectors) as well as for sacristans, ushers, etc.

- The priest celebrant and other ministers 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. In such circumstances, there is no substantial risk of infection.
 - A further consideration: the Mass is imbued with powerful sacramental and liturgical symbolism. Wearing a mask and gloves would be a detrimental counter-sign in this context, and it is not warranted by considerations of hygiene if the priest remains a proper distance from the congregation. (An analogy: public health officials do not wear masks during press conferences, given the nature of those public appearances and the distance between the officials and the audience/press, although they do wear them in private meetings.)
- To the extent possible, the other ministers (deacon, servers, lectors) should maintain a 6-foot distance from the priest and from each other, except as provided below.
 - *Suggestion:* The priest could 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.
 - Maintain a proper distance in the sacristy and during the entrance and recessional processions.
 - 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 (bringing up the gifts) should 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.
 - The lavabo should be done by the priest alone, without assistance, either at a credence table near the altar or at the side of the altar itself. After the priest returns to the center of the altar, a server could then remove the lavabo items.
- Special provision should be made for the collection -- baskets should not be passed from person to person. Long-handled baskets could be acceptable if the ushers can remain a suitable distance from others.

- Alternative: set up central boxes or collection points where the faithful can place their contributions.
- If hosts for the communion of the faithful are to be consecrated, they could be placed on a second corporal towards the side of the altar. This allows the priest to proffer 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 should be omitted.

4. The Distribution of Holy Communion

We recommend three possible ways for handling the issue of Holy Communion, in order to reflect both the Church’s great reverence for the Eucharist and the powerful sacramental and liturgical symbolism of Holy Communion, while also providing appropriate precautions against infection. Option 1 provides for Mass without any distribution of Holy Communion to the faithful. Option 2 provides for Holy Communion immediately at the end of Mass, with additional precautions (our recommended option). Option 3 provides for Holy Communion during Mass, with more modest precautions.

Option 2 has several advantages over Option 3 (explained in more detail below): it more clearly communicates that the faithful need not receive Holy Communion if they have reservations; allows for the priest to wear a mask for Holy Communion while preserving the principle that the priest would never be masked during Mass (in Option 3, the priest does not wear a mask for Communion because it is during Mass); and provides for hand sanitizer at the communion stations.

NB: As noted above, as of April 22, [the CDC’s most recent guidance](#) states: “Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food,” and “there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.” The CDC does not recommend that food take-out services be stopped, although it does counsel maintaining physical distancing measures (6 foot distance) where possible.

Option 1: Mass without distributing Holy Communion

This is the most restrictive option. Since being present and actively participating in the Mass is a great good for the faithful, and since it is not strictly necessary that any particular members of the faithful receive Holy Communion at Mass, Mass could be celebrated in which only the priest (or, if a deacon is present, only the priest and deacon) consume the Eucharist. In this case, they would do so in the normal way. The priest would then proceed to the post-communion prayer.

Obviously, it is far preferable that the faithful would receive Holy Communion, but at least in this case they would be able to attend Mass in person.

Option 2: Mass followed by the distribution of Holy Communion, with special precautions

This is our recommended option, because it respects the symbolic and liturgical integrity of the Mass (which should be celebrated without mask or gloves), avoids any practices in the Mass that could become sources of future liturgical abuse, gives a greater freedom to the faithful to determine whether or not they will come forward for Holy Communion (some may be nervous about doing so), and also provides for additional precautions to reduce risk. It also will permit the priest to remove his chasuble for the distribution of Holy Communion, given that it is difficult to launder if anyone should sneeze or cough on him.

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the conclusion of the Mass. He may add that the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
- The Precious Blood should not be distributed to the faithful, nor should the faithful receive the Eucharist by intinction. (A deacon or a concelebrating priest, if present, may receive by intinction.)
- 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 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 and a bottle of hand sanitizer.
- The priest (and any other ministers distributing Holy Communion) should use hand sanitizer immediately before approaching the tabernacle. He may also don a surgical mask or cloth face covering.
 - NB: 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 retrieves the newly-consecrated hosts from the tabernacle and returns to the altar.
- 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.*”
- The priest (and other ministers if present) proceeds to the place prepared for distribution of Communion. Each stands next to a table with corporal and hand sanitizer in order to distribute Communion.
- 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.
 - Hand hygiene is effective against the virus. In these circumstances, gloves are not needed if the priest performs hand hygiene.
- 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, and use hand sanitizer. (He may also arrange for an ablution cup to be on the table, and may purify his fingers in the ablution cup before using 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.
- **Communion on the tongue vs. in the hand:** We have carefully considered the question of Communion on the tongue vs. Communion in the hand. Given the Church’s existing guidance on this point (see [*Redemptionis Sacramentum*](#), no. 92), and recognizing the differing judgments and sensibilities that are involved, we believe that, with the precautions listed here, it is possible to distribute on the tongue without unreasonable risk.
 - Opinions on this point are varied within the medical and scientific community: some believe Communion on the tongue involves an elevated

and, in the light of all the circumstances, an unreasonable risk; others disagree. If Communion on the tongue is provided, one could consider using hand sanitizer after each communicant who receives on the tongue.

- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle.
- The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

Alternatively, the priest may say the concluding prayer, blessing, and dismissal from the *Rite for Holy Communion Outside of Mass*, as follows:

“Let us pray. O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption. Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”

He then gives a blessing in the normal way and dismisses the people with: *“Go in the peace of Christ.”*

Option 3: Mass with the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass

This is also a reasonable option, especially in circumstances where mitigated precautions are appropriate. Given that Holy Communion is distributed during the Mass, more care should be taken to avoid adopting hygiene measures that could become a counter-sign to the liturgical and sacramental signification of the priest’s actions at Mass. This option therefore does not recommend the same level of precautions as Option 2: we do not recommend that a priest wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass, and we caution that the frequent and obvious use of hand sanitizer during Mass is to be discouraged.

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that, for those who desire to receive Holy Communion, they may do so at the appropriate moment, but that those who wish to remain in their places may do so. He may add that the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
- The Precious Blood will not be distributed to the faithful, nor should the faithful receive the Eucharist by intinction. (A deacon or a concelebrating priest, if present, may receive by intinction.)
- 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 priest should perform hand hygiene (e.g., with hand sanitizer) immediately before distributing Holy Communion.
- Hand hygiene is effective against the virus. In these circumstances, gloves are not needed.
- We have carefully considered the question of Communion on the tongue vs. Communion in the hand. Given the Church's existing guidance on this point (see [*Redemptionis Sacramentum*](#), no. 92), and recognizing the differing judgments and sensibilities that are involved, we believe that, with the precautions listed here, it is possible to distribute on the tongue without unreasonable risk.
- The faithful receive Holy Communion in the normal way.
- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle, and then perform hand hygiene (e.g., with hand sanitizer).
- The Mass concludes as normal.

A Note about Drive-in Masses or Drive-up Holy Communion:

In cases where the faithful are in their cars (either for a drive-in Mass or drive-up distribution of Holy Communion), the communicants should get out of their cars to receive, one car at a time. This could be done akin to what is [recommended above for Holy Communion after Mass](#).

This is preferable from a public health perspective, because it permits the priest (wearing a mask but not gloves) to stand next to a hand sanitizing station (a table with corporal and hand sanitizer, as described above) 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.

In addition, distribution of the Eucharist in another vessel or container (a plastic bag, paper cup, or a metal pyx) is not warranted from a public health perspective and may even increase risk: CDC guidance suggests that the virus is not easily transmitted by food, whereas passing other containers from person to person involves more contact with surfaces. From a sacramental perspective, there are additional reasons to discourage this practice, dealing with reverence for the sacrament, the problem of self-communication, the danger of profanation, and the problem of purifying or disposing of containers.

In principle, there should be no public health objection to having people exit their cars, one car at a time (perhaps guided by an usher to direct traffic). This would not constitute a large gathering.

B. Phase II: Public Masses with moderate limits on public gatherings and moderate physical distancing

According to the [current guidance from the U.S. federal government](#), phase II will permit larger public gatherings: up to 50 persons, and if physical distancing can be observed, even larger assemblies may be permitted. Places of worship may operate with moderate physical distancing protocols.

Observing moderate physical distancing means continuing to avoid “close contact” with those outside one’s household. (“Close contact” generally means avoiding being within 6 feet of another person, especially if this will last for 15 minutes or more.) Being within 6 feet of another person for brief moments and exchanges is permitted in this phase.

In this phase, more activities in public are permitted, and likewise churches may begin to permit more activity, with appropriate precautions. Reception of the sacraments is important for the faithful in the midst of this pandemic, and so in this phase, one should generally try to avoid being within 6 feet of others, but where necessary, a momentary interaction presents an acceptable risk, especially if other precautions are taken. Given how the virus is thought to spread (principally via respiratory droplets from sneezes and coughs), this risk is lower for brief encounters than in cases of prolonged contact.

NB: Depending on the circumstances, some jurisdictions that reach Phase II may later be obliged to return to Phase I, with its greater restrictions. This may call for adaptation of these guidelines in the future as circumstances warrant.

1. General Provisions

- Dispense all at-risk individuals from the obligation to attend Mass during this phase, as well as anyone feeling sick or experiencing respiratory symptoms, even if not suspected to be COVID-related.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (i.e. those who are older or who have underlying health conditions) to stay home. As circumstances allow, a visit from a priest, deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion to bring them the Eucharist may be possible. (*Guidance for bringing Holy*

Communion to a private home is forthcoming in a separate part of these guidelines.)

- Tell the faithful that anyone with a cough of any sort, and anyone feeling sick, should not come to the church for a visit or for any ceremonies.
- 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. (See [CDC recommendations on cleaning your facility](#).)
- Follow the recommendations of public health authorities regarding face coverings.

2. Limiting the Size of the Congregation & Physical Distancing

- Masses should be limited in attendance, depending on the guidance of public health authorities.
 - [Guidance from the U.S. federal government](#) says that, during the second phase of reduced restrictions, social gatherings may be as large as 50 persons. It adds that venues like “places of worship. . . can operate under moderate physical distancing protocols.” That is, according to the federal government’s guidance, **a church can hold gatherings larger than 50 in this second phase if it can provide for moderate physical distancing.** (More on this below.)
 - Local health authorities may modify the federal guidance to be more or less restrictive for a given jurisdiction.
 - **Recommendation:** Masses could be scheduled with greater frequency. Attendance could be first-come first-served, or allocated by some other system (a rotation system based on the first letter of last names, an online ticketing system like Eventbrite, etc.).
 - **Alternative:** Larger “drive-in” or outdoor Masses remain possible, where the Mass is celebrated in a location visible to the faithful who remain in their cars.
- **Moderate Physical Distancing:** In Phase II, a Catholic church or chapel may hold public Masses of more than 50 persons (taking account of local health guidance), as long as it maintains moderate physical distancing. For a public Mass, moderate physical distancing should include:
 - The faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other insofar as possible.

- **Recommendation:** 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).
- Members of a single household do not need to practice physical distancing with each other and so may sit together in the same 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.
- Station ushers at the entrances of the church in order to help “direct traffic,” to help 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.)
- If all the available spaces are filled, do not admit additional people to the church building.
- 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.
- Choirs are discouraged, especially if seated together. Vigorous singing, especially in close proximity to others, may increase the risk of viral spread.

3. Specific Provisions for the Parts of the Mass

- A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind should avoid celebrating public masses or administering sacraments during this phase. The same holds for other ministers who might serve at a Mass (deacon, servers, lectors).
- The priest celebrant and other ministers 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. In such circumstances, there is no substantial risk of infection.
 - A further consideration: the Mass is imbued with powerful sacramental and liturgical symbolism. Wearing a mask and gloves would be a detrimental counter-sign in this context, and it is not warranted by considerations of hygiene if the priest remains a proper distance from the congregation. (An analogy: public health officials do not wear masks

during press conferences, given the nature of those public appearances and the distance between the officials and the audience/press, although they do wear them in private meetings.)

- It remains advisable for the ministers to maintain a reasonable distance from each other, but in this phase, they may be seated in their normal locations if more suitable in light of the layout of the sanctuary.
 - *Suggestion:* The priest could 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.
 - The offertory procession (bringing up the gifts) should be omitted.
- Special provision should be made for the collection -- baskets should not be passed from person to person. Long-handled baskets could be acceptable if the ushers can remain a suitable distance from others.
 - Alternative: set up central boxes or collection points where the faithful can place their contributions.
- If hosts for the communion of the faithful are to be consecrated, they could be placed on a second corporal towards the side of the altar. This allows the priest to proffer 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.
- The invitation to the faithful to exchange a sign of peace should be omitted.

4. The Distribution of Holy Communion

Holy Communion may be distributed. We recommend two possible ways to do this, both of which reflect both the Church’s great reverence for the Eucharist and the powerful sacramental and liturgical symbolism of Holy Communion, while also providing appropriate precautions against infection.

NB: As noted above, as of April 22, [the CDC’s most recent guidance](#) states: “Currently, there is no evidence to support transmission of COVID-19 associated with food,” and “there is likely very low risk of spread from food products or packaging.” The CDC does not recommend that food take-out services be stopped, although it does counsel maintaining physical distancing measures (6 foot distance) where possible.

Option 1: Mass followed by the distribution of Holy Communion, with special precautions

This is our recommended option, because it respects the symbolic and liturgical integrity of the Mass (which should be celebrated without mask or gloves), avoids any practices in the Mass that could become sources of future liturgical abuse, gives a greater freedom to the faithful to determine whether or not they will come forward for Holy Communion (some may be nervous about doing so), and also provides for additional precautions to reduce risk. It also will permit the priest to remove his chasuble for the distribution of Holy Communion, given that it is difficult to launder.

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the conclusion of the Mass. He may add that the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
- The Precious Blood should not be distributed to the faithful, nor should the faithful receive the Eucharist by intinction. (A deacon or a concelebrating priest, if present, may receive by intinction.)
- 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 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 and a bottle of hand sanitizer.
- The priest (and any other ministers distributing Holy Communion) should use hand sanitizer immediately before approaching the tabernacle. (Optional: He may also don a surgical mask or cloth face covering.)
 - NB: If the priest who has celebrated the Mass is in a high-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 retrieves the newly-consecrated hosts from the tabernacle and returns to the altar.
- 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.*”

- The priest (and other ministers if present) proceeds to the place prepared for distribution of Communion. Each stands next to a table with corporal and hand sanitizer in order to distribute Communion.
- If any of the faithful are wearing face coverings, they should remove them 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.
 - Hand hygiene is effective against the virus. In these circumstances, gloves are not needed if the priest performs hand hygiene.
- We have carefully considered the question of Communion on the tongue vs. Communion in the hand. Given the Church’s existing guidance on this point (see [*Redemptionis Sacramentum*](#), no. 92), and recognizing the differing judgments and sensibilities that are involved, we believe that, with the precautions listed here, it is possible to distribute on the tongue without unreasonable risk.
- 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, and use hand sanitizer. (He may also arrange for an ablution cup to be on the table, and may purify his fingers in the ablution cup before using 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.
- The priest offers a concluding prayer, as follows:

“Let us pray. O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption. Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”
- He then gives a blessing in the normal way and dismisses the people with: “*Go in the peace of Christ.*”

Option 2: Mass with the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass

This is also a reasonable option, especially in circumstances where mitigated precautions are appropriate. Given that Holy Communion is distributed during the Mass, more care should be taken to avoid adopting hygiene measures that could become a counter-sign to

the liturgical and sacramental signification of the priest's actions at Mass. This option therefore does not recommend the same level of precautions as Option 1: we do not recommend that a priest wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass, and we caution that the frequent and obvious use of hand sanitizer during Mass is to be discouraged.

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so at the appropriate moment, but that those who wish to remain in their places may do so. He may add that the faithful should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other as they come forward for Holy Communion.
- The Precious Blood will not be distributed to the faithful, nor should the faithful receive the Eucharist by intinction. (A deacon or a concelebrating priest, if present, may receive by intinction.)
- If any of the faithful are wearing face coverings, they should remove them 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 priest should perform hand hygiene (e.g., with hand sanitizer) immediately before distributing Holy Communion.
 - Hand hygiene is effective against the virus. In these circumstances, gloves are not needed.
- **Communion on the tongue vs. in the hand:** We have carefully considered the question of Communion on the tongue vs. Communion in the hand. Given the Church's existing guidance on this point (see [*Redemptionis Sacramentum*](#), no. 92), and recognizing the differing judgments and sensibilities that are involved, we believe that, with the precautions listed here, it is possible to distribute on the tongue without unreasonable risk.
 - Opinions on this point are varied within the medical and scientific community: some believe Communion on the tongue involves an elevated and, in the light of all the circumstances, an unreasonable risk; others disagree. If Communion on the tongue is provided, one could consider using hand sanitizer after each communicant who receives on the tongue.
- The faithful receive Holy Communion in the normal way.
- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle, and then perform hand hygiene (e.g., with hand sanitizer).
- The Mass concludes as normal.

A Note about Drive-in Masses or Drive-up Holy Communion:

In cases where the faithful are in their cars (either for a drive-in Mass or drive-up distribution of Holy Communion), the communicants should get out of their cars to receive, one car at a time.

This is preferable from a public health perspective, because it permits the priest to stand next to a hand sanitizing station (a table with corporal and hand sanitizer, as described above) 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.

In addition, distribution of the Eucharist in another vessel or container (a plastic bag, paper cup, or a metal pyx) is not warranted from a public health perspective and may even increase risk: CDC guidance suggests that the virus is not easily transmitted by food, whereas passing other containers from person to person involves more contact with surfaces. From a sacramental perspective, there are additional reasons to discourage this practice, dealing with reverence for the sacrament, the problem of self-communication, the danger of profanation, and the problem of purifying or disposing of containers.

In principle, there should be no public health objection to having people exit their cars, one car at a time (perhaps guided by an usher to direct traffic). This would not constitute a large gathering.

C. Phase III: Public Masses with minimal limits on public gatherings and limited physical distancing.

According to the [current guidance from the U.S. federal government](#), in phase III, there will not be limits on the size of gatherings. At-risk individuals will be encouraged to continue to practice physical distancing. Places of worship may operate under limited physical distancing protocols.

In this phase, the faithful need not remain 6-feet from each other at all times, although they should avoid crowding to the extent possible. In church, therefore, it will no longer be necessary to use tape to close off large portions of seating. However, churches should designate special seating for at-risk persons where physical distancing can be practiced.

NB: Depending on the circumstances, some jurisdictions that reach Phase III may later be obliged to return to earlier phases. This may call for adaptation of these guidelines in the future as circumstances warrant.

1. General Provisions

- Dispense anyone feeling sick or experiencing respiratory symptoms, even if not suspected to be COVID-related, from the obligation to attend Mass.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 (i.e. those who are older or who have underlying health conditions) to sit in special seating when they come to church, and to continue to practice physical distancing.
- Tell the faithful that anyone with a cough of any sort, and anyone feeling sick, should not come to the church for a visit or for any ceremonies.
- 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. (See [CDC recommendations on cleaning your facility](#).)
- Follow the recommendations of public health authorities regarding face coverings.

2. Physical Distancing

- Masses no longer need to be limited in size.
- In this phase, the faithful need not remain 6-feet from each other at all times, although they should avoid crowding to the extent possible.
- Designate special seating for at-risk persons. Indicate clearly (by taping-off seating, placing signs, etc.) that this seating is for persons who are practicing physical distancing (maintaining a 6-foot distance from others who are not members of their household). Members of a single household do not need to practice physical distancing with each other and so may sit together in the same row.
- Encourage the faithful to avoid crowding, especially in high-traffic areas (for example, when entering or exiting the church, in the vestibule, etc.).

3. Specific Provisions for the Parts of the Mass

- The priest celebrant and other ministers should **not** wear masks or gloves during the celebration of Mass.

- They no longer need to remain more than 6 feet from the congregation, but should take care to avoid crowding.
- It remains advisable for the ministers to maintain a reasonable distance from each other, but in this phase, they may be seated in their normal locations.
- Consider omitting the offertory procession.
- Consider taking up the collection in such a way as to avoid passing baskets from person to person.
- Consider omitting physical contact at the sign of peace.

4. The Distribution of Holy Communion

- Holy Communion may be distributed in the normal way. Those distributing Communion (whether a priest, deacon, or extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion) should not wear masks or face coverings.
- Before beginning the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and other ministers, if present) could use hand sanitizer.
- Do not distribute the Precious Blood to the faithful. (Exception: those with severe reactions to gluten may be permitted to receive the Precious Blood in this phase.)
- 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.
- Make special provision so that at-risk individuals can come forward for Holy Communion first, and also so that they can remain 6 feet from other members of the congregation while in line for Holy Communion.
- If any of the faithful are wearing face coverings, they should remove them before coming forward for Holy Communion.
- Communion may be received in the hand or on the tongue.
- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle, and then perform hand hygiene (e.g., with hand sanitizer).
- The Mass concludes as normal.

Appendix: Distribution of Holy Communion to Individuals outside of Mass (may be done while observing strict limits to the size of public gatherings)

Even where there are very strict limits on public gatherings, it is possible to distribute Holy Communion to individuals outside of Mass, as described below.. For example, a parish might livestream a Mass, consecrate hosts for Holy Communion at that Mass, and then designate times later in the day when the faithful could come to the church individually to receive Holy

Communion. The same procedure might be used when only small numbers are able to be present for a public Mass -- for those who cannot attend due to the restricted size of the assembly, distributing Holy Communion at a later time might provide some measure of consolation and spiritual strength to the faithful who were not admitted to Mass.

Attending Mass in person is obviously far preferable. This is not meant to be a substitute for attending Mass, but a stop-gap measure in a time of serious disruption.

- Only a small number of the faithful are admitted to the church at any one time (under current restrictions, this might be less than 8 or less than 10 persons).
- Station ushers outside of the church to control the flow of traffic. Ask the faithful to remain in their cars until it is their turn to stand in line.
- Designate a waiting area outside of the church where the faithful can line up, maintaining a 6-foot distance from each other at all time.
- A small table should be placed at each communion station, with an unfolded corporal and a bottle of hand sanitizer.
- The priest (and any other ministers) use hand sanitizer immediately before beginning to distribute Holy Communion. They may also don a surgical mask or cloth face covering.
- Allow into the church at any time only the number permitted by local health authorities (e.g., no more than 10 persons at a time).
- Place tape on the floor of the aisle of the church to indicate where the faithful should stand before receiving Holy Communion. This will help ensure proper physical distancing.
- After a cohort of the faithful enter and take their places in line, the priest conducts the *Rite for Holy Communion Outside of Mass*, choosing the option for the short form of the readings (e.g., Jn 6:54-55, Jn 14:6, Jn 14:23, or the other options set forth in that Rite).
- As provided in that Rite, he holds up a single host and 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.*”
 - The faithful should lower 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.
 - Hand hygiene is effective against the virus. In these circumstances, gloves are not needed if the priest performs hand hygiene.

- **Communion on the tongue vs. in the hand:** We have carefully considered the question of Communion on the tongue vs. Communion in the hand. Given the Church’s existing guidance on this point (see [*Redemptionis Sacramentum*](#), no. 92), and recognizing the differing judgments and sensibilities that are involved, we believe that, with the precautions listed here, it is possible to distribute on the tongue without unreasonable risk.
 - Opinions on this point are varied within the medical and scientific community: some believe Communion on the tongue involves an elevated and, in the light of all the circumstances, an unreasonable risk; others disagree. If Communion on the tongue is provided, one could consider using hand sanitizer after each communicant who receives on the tongue.
- 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, and use hand sanitizer. (He may also arrange for an ablution cup to be on the table, and may purify his fingers in the ablution cup before using 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.
- After receiving Holy Communion, the faithful move towards the exit, to another area marked with tape on the floor to indicate proper spacing. A brief period of silence should ensue to permit each person to say a prayer of thanksgiving.
- The priest then offers a concluding prayer as provided in the Rite. For example:

“Let us pray. O God, who in this wonderful Sacrament have left us a memorial of your Passion, grant us, we pray, so to revere the sacred mysteries of your Body and Blood that we may always experience in ourselves the fruits of your redemption. Who live and reign with God the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.”
- He then gives a blessing in the normal way and dismisses the people with: *“Go in the peace of Christ.”*
- The group exits the church by a separate door, and the usher lets in the next group of the faithful.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC LITURGIES PROVINCE OF OHIO

RATIONALE

The following is a draft of some general principles and guidelines prepared by the Worship Office Directors of the six Roman-rite Catholic dioceses of Ohio. We offer it as a starting point for policies created by our Bishops.

We suggest that policies and guidelines be implemented in phases with clearly delineated expiration dates or markers of medical advances at each phase. This way, any variation from normal liturgical practice will be noted as temporary. The following statements might be in effect until July 1, 2020, unless and until extended by a subsequent statement.

INTRODUCTION

“...the liturgy is considered as an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ. ... In the liturgy the whole public worship is performed by the Mystical Body of Jesus Christ, that is, by the Head and his members” (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 7).

In solidarity with the entire Body of Christ, we must be aware of our obligation to respect not only our liturgical traditions, but also our obligation to respect the dignity of every human life – a right the Church has always protected. During this pandemic, we will continue to champion the Common Good and to conduct our public gatherings in a manner which protects the health of our assemblies and others whom they will encounter.

DISPENSATION FROM THE OBLIGATION TO ATTEND SUNDAY MASS

- While we recognize that many are eager to return to Mass in our churches, it remains important for those who are elderly and otherwise at risk to refrain from returning to public liturgies until it is manifestly safe to do so.
- All the faithful -- especially those who are sick, at high risk of becoming sick, and their caregivers -- continue to be dispensed from their Sunday obligation until further notice.

SAFETY AND HYGIENE IN OUR PUBLIC SPACES

The following are norms to be observed in our churches and other public spaces.

- Baptismal fonts and holy water stoops should remain empty.
- Water for baptism is to be changed and blessed before each baptism. As always, blessed water should be properly disposed in the ground.
- Vessels should continue to be washed after each Mass in hot soapy water.
- All liturgical vestments, including server albs, are to be regularly cleaned.
- High use areas within the church should be wiped down with disinfectant before and after each liturgy. This will include pews, chairs, and ambos.
- Door handles, push plates, and knobs should be wiped down after each liturgy. Doors might be propped open to lessen contact.
- Restroom facilities should be sanitized after each liturgy.
- All hymnals and missalettes (and other items) should be removed from the pews and stored for the duration of the pandemic. At each Mass, disposable worship aids should be distributed, then discarded.

Alternately, the use of digital projection and screens is encouraged. As always, appropriate copyright licenses are to be respected.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Pastors and ushers should make every effort to ensure appropriate social distancing before, during, and after liturgical celebrations. Methods will vary in light of the capacity of church buildings.
- These principles also apply to chapels and other smaller rooms on the parish campus.
- Other than family/household units, worshippers should be seated six feet apart in all directions.
- “Cry Rooms” should be closed and locked. Those parishes who utilize these spaces for families with small children should make clear that these rooms are not available.
- The location of stations for the distribution of Holy Communion should be considered.
- Appropriate spacing between individuals in the Communion Procession should be considered, perhaps utilizing tape on the flooring.
- Music Ministers, including choirs and ensembles should also adhere to social distancing.
- Parishes should discourage any large gatherings before or after Mass.
- Liturgies that would unduly crowd church buildings (e.g. First Communion, Confirmation, etc.) should be adjusted or duplicated to ensure smaller crowds.

GOOD HYGIENIC PRACTICES

- Pastors should make every effort to clearly communicate good hygienic practices and liturgical alterations to their parishioners in light of continuing public health concerns.
- Those who are sick or symptomatic should stay home.
- Face masks are highly encouraged.
- Hand sanitizer should be available at all entrances to the church building.

TEMPORARY CHANGES TO LITURGICAL PRACTICES

- Processions through the assembly at the beginning and end of Mass should be re-examined.
- There is to be no physical contact during the Sign of Peace or the Lord’s Prayer.
- Until further notice, the assembly is not to receive the Precious Blood from the chalice.
- Until further notice, the reception of Holy Communion on the tongue is prohibited.
- Bread and wine should continue to be kept from public areas (brought only from the credence table).
- Priests, deacons, and all liturgical ministers should model good hygienic practices before, during, and after Mass. Presiders, deacons, and EMHC’s may continue to discreetly use hand sanitizer before Mass, before the Communion Procession, and after Mass.

MASS SCHEDULES

- The continuation of live-streamed liturgies is of benefit to those who are homebound, sick, or otherwise vulnerable.
- If pastorally advantageous or possible, a temporary adjustment in the weekend Mass schedule might be considered to ensure proper social distancing.

Parish Resources to Celebrate the Memorial of St. Isidore
In Rural Communities

May 15th, 2020



Catholic Diocese of Columbus

Office for Divine Worship

Isidore and Maria, Patron Saints of Farmers

Isidore was born in 1070 to a peasant family near Madrid, Spain. He was baptized “Isidore” in honor of the famous archbishop of Seville. Isidore the farmer was actually a day laborer, working on the farm of the wealthy John de Vergas at Torrelaguna, just outside Madrid. He married a poor girl, Maria Torribia. Their only child, a son, died in infancy.

The couple took a vow of continence to serve God. Isidore’s life is a model of simple Christian charity and faith. He prayed while at work. He shared what he had with the poor, even his meals. He often gave them more than he had for himself.

A story told about St. Isidore (feast day, May 15) is that he often came later to work in the fields than other laborers because he would first attend Mass in the morning. Yet his work never suffered and he always met the chores required of him. It was said two angels, one on either side of Isidore, appeared and joined their pious companion in plowing the fields.

St. Maria (feast day, September 9) always kept a pot of stew on the fireplace in their humble rural dwelling. She knew that her husband Isidore would often bring home anyone who was hungry. One day he brought home more hungry people than usual. After she served many of them, Maria told him that there simply was no more stew in the pot. He insisted that she check the pot again, and she was able to spoon out enough stew to feed them all.

In representations, St. Isidore is portrayed as a peasant with a sickle or staff, and sometimes with an angel or white oxen near him. He died in 1130 and was canonized in 1622.

After Isidore’s death, Maria became a hermit, but she too performed miracles and merited after her death the name of “Santa Maria de la Cabeza”, meaning Head, because her head (conserved in a reliquary and carried in procession) has often brought rain from heaven for an afflicted dry countryside. All of Spain honor her remains by pilgrimages and processions at Torrelaguna, where they were transferred in 1615. She was beatified in 1697 and while never formally canonized is considered a saint in Spain.

The virtues found in the lives of Isidore and Maria – commitment to family, love for the land, service to the poor and a deep spirituality – are qualities that still can be found in rural America.

Taken From: <https://catholicrurallife.org/resources/spiritual/isidore-and-maria-patron-saints-of-farmers/>

Mass: Optional Memorial St. Isidore

Friday, May 15th, 2020

Vestments: White

From the Common of Holy Men & Women: For One Saint

Collect

Lord God, to whom belongs all creation, and who call us to serve you by caring for the gifts that surround us, inspire us by the example of Saint Isidore to share our food with the hungry and to work for the salvation of all people. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever.

Readings

Readings of the Day or Lectionary 564A

Common of Holy Men and Women #737-742

Universal Prayer

On this the feast of St. Isidore, we gather together our prayers like a heavenly bouquet and present them to God, our loving Father with hope that he will hear the cries of our hearts.

1. That the Church may always foster communities of faith that teach about the need for people to be good stewards of the land, caring and ensuring that the gifts of creation are responsibly cared for. Let us pray to the Lord...
2. That government may provide resources and support to companies that process food and meat, so that business practices utilize these resources in an ethical manner that ensures safety and proper management of food sources. Let us pray to the Lord...
3. For all who work the land, may they derive a just livelihood for themselves and their families, we pray to the Lord..
4. For nurturing the rural way of life, its values, and its traditions, we pray to the Lord...
5. For the health and safety of those who work to provide food for all people, we pray to the Lord... Lord, hear our prayer.
6. For seasonable weather, good growth and good yields, so that there may be abundant harvests to feed all of God's people, we pray to the Lord... Lord, hear our prayer.
7. For those who care for livestock, may they treat their animals ethically and in a humane manner and not just as a means for profit, we pray to the Lord...Lord, hear our prayer.
8. For farmers who are struggling as a result of the environment in the food chain supply caused by the coronavirus, may God grant prudent decisions and wisdom to all those who are affected. We pray to the Lord

Good and gracious God, you never abandon your sons and daughters. Look kindly upon our petitions; and grant our prayers in the name of Jesus Christ, Our Lord. Amen.

Eucharistic Prayer

Could use for the Sanctification of Human Labor

Optional Blessing

Let us Pray:

Heavenly Father, King of the Universe, you are the sole source of abundance. Bless † your people during these challenging days and bring forth great fruits from their labors so that all may benefit from their work.

During this time of uncertainty, guide them with strength and ingenuity so they may face their challenges in wisdom and grace.

Bless † our region with good weather and keep us safe from the tempest of storms and trials. Enable all of us to realize that without your providence and care, our work is in vain. St. Isidore, pray for our farmers and intercede on our behalf to Our Lord, who is the source of all creation. Amen.

- Note it is appropriate to use this prayer also on Sunday, May 17th as a special blessing for farmers after either the homily or prior to the closing prayer.
- It is also highly suggested that you add one or two petitions for farmers in your Universal Prayer/Prayers of the Faithful at the Sunday Mass on May 17th.
- The following prayer would be appropriate to share via social media on your parish's website.

A Prayer for Farmers

Almighty and Merciful Father,
We humbly ask that you remember us, your children.
You are the Great Vinedresser.
God, You are the Great Shepherd.
You make the sun to shine and the rain to fall,
God, You give growth to every plant,
You make every bud blossom and bring forth every fruit.
God, You fill our hills, pastures, and meadows with grass and grain.
You give life and health to each animal,
Even noticing when the sparrow falls from the sky.
You visit the earth and life springs from your footsteps,
Visit us today and bring forth life in our fields.
Visit us today and give health to our animals.

Blessed Father,
With every green shoot that rises from the dirt,
And with every new animal that is born,
Remind us of the spiritual life that is budding and being born in our lives.
And we will give you the praise that's due your name.
In the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Blessing of the Land and/or Livestock

Blessing farmland and/or livestock is one way that rural pastors and priests can provide pastoral care and support to their parishioners who are farmers. Farmers are not exempt from economic concerns that have resulted from the coronavirus pandemic. Due to issues with the supply/demand food chain system, many farmers are dumping milk, unable to sell animals, and have had issues getting the necessary seeds for planting. Making a visit to the farm, can be individualized and set by appointment with all the preventive measures such as wearing a mask, wearing gloves and practicing social distancing being done.

Holy water may be used, but it must land on the ground and not on people or animals.

This is a simple blessing may be used.

Introduction:

Priest: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

All: Amen

Priest: May God who is wonderful in all his works, be with you all

All: And with your spirit.

Priest: It is with great joy that we gather here this *morning/ afternoon/ evening* on *the name of family Farm*. Thank you for your stewardship of this land (and/or these animals). The fruits of your labor provides food and necessary goods for our communities.

Let us praise the Lord, from whom we have rain from the heavens that gives forth abundance from the earth. Blessed be our God now and forever.

All: Amen

Scripture:

Brothers and sisters let us listen to the words of the book of Deuteronomy:

The Lord shielded them and cared for them, guarding them as the apple of his eye. As an eagle incites its nestlings forth by hovering over its brood, so he spread his wings to receive them and bore them up on his pinions.

The Lord alone was their leader; no strange god was with him. He had them ride triumphant over the summits of the land and live off the products of the fields, giving them honey to suck from its rocks and olive oil from its hard, stony ground; butter from its cows and milk from its sheep; with the fat of its lambs and rams;

Its Bashan bulls and its goats, with the cream of its finest wheat, and the foaming blood of its grapes you drank.

The word of the Lord

All: Thanks be to God

Prayer of Blessing:

For Crops/Farmland:

Let us pray-

O God, from the very beginning of time you commanded the earth to bring forth vegetation and fruit of every kind.

You provide the sower with seed and give bread to eat,
Grant we pray that this land, enriched by your bounty and cultivated by human hands, may be fertile with abundant crops.

Then your people, enriched by the gifts of your goodness, will praise you unceasingly now and for ages unending.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. (Sprinkle the ground with holy water-optional)

Amen

Animals:

Let us pray-

O God, you have done all things wisely.

In your goodness, you have made us in your image and given us care over living things.

Reach out with your right hand and grant that these animals may serve our needs and that your bounty in the resources of this life may move us to seek more confidently the goal of eternal life.

We ask this through Christ our Lord. (Sprinkle the ground or barn building with holy water-optional)

Amen.

Closing Prayer

Priest: Breathe into our hearts, we beg You, O Lord, a desire for heavenly glory, and grant that we may come, bearing in our hands the sheaves of justice, to where the blessed Isidore is resplendent with You in glory, through Christ our Lord.

R. Amen.

Priest: St. Isidore.

R. Pray for us.

Priest: And may Almighty God bless us, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Amen