



## **Preparing for Phase I of Returning to Mass**

It is prudent that we prepare for a gradual “opening” of our churches for the celebration of Mass. The suggestions and guidelines below are intended to assist pastors and parishioners in this task. A version of this document has also been distributed to all pastors in the Archdiocese of Detroit. The attention and cooperation of all the faithful in this preparation process will bear fruit for the parish and allow us collectively to do our part to avoid a severe “second wave” of the virus.

**The dispensation from the Sunday obligation to attend Mass is granted to all the faithful through Sunday, September 6, 2020.**

## **General Information and Matters for Consideration**

Those older than 65 years old (the recommended CDC age), with a compromised health condition or caring for the sick in any way, are encouraged to stay home. Anyone who is ill, has a temperature, cough, etc., should definitely stay home as an act of justice to the whole community.

1. **Physical distancing** is to be observed and signified by signs, tape, or other means. This includes both indoor and outdoor areas.
  - a) Masses offered indoors will be limited in attendance, depending on the guidelines set by public authorities. The faithful are asked to contact their parish for details about how to attend an upcoming Mass.
2. **Seating for the assembly**: Mindful of the imposed allowed limitations and the physical layout of the church, parishes should clearly designate where seating is permitted.
  - a) Those living in the same household may sit together without distancing
  - b) For the distribution of Holy Communion, new patterns of approaching the altar might need to be configured to better allow for proper distancing.
  - c) To the extent possible, those in line for Holy Communion should maintain a 6’ distance between each other and those in the pews.
  - d) To the extent possible, the priest and ministers (deacon, lector, servers) should remain 6’ apart from each other.

### **3. Signage**

- a) Parishes reminding people to wear masks and to keep physical distance would be helpful, as well as signs to assist in the reception of Holy Communion.
- b) Parishes can mark the floor where people will line up to indicate proper spacing between persons.
4. Cloth face coverings (masks) are to be worn by everyone approaching church and inside church (except for those under 2 years old).
  - a) The priest celebrant and other ministers need not wear masks or gloves during the liturgy given they are more than 6’ from the assembly during Mass.
5. Collection: Baskets

should not be passed from person to person. Other collection points (e.g. boxes) suitable for the faithful to drop in their offerings should be provided.

6. **Music**: Music is certainly important to our liturgical celebrations as it attempts to lift the soul and express our faith. Each parish needs to consider the following as we begin to return to Mass in limited numbers while observing the required physical distancing.

- a) Because the faithful will be wearing masks, singing on the part of the assembly might prove challenging and ineffective.
- b) Keeping singing for the assembly to a minimum is advised and the congregation should not remove their masks to sing.
- c) If there is a choir present, it should be as small as possible with each member spaced about 10’ apart.
- d) The music minister singing the entrance and communion antiphon is a good option to incorporate music in our liturgies.

## **In Open Air / Outdoor Masses**

1. As we approach more pleasant weather, and given the pastoral necessity, outdoor Masses are a good option.
  - a) This can relieve the burden of parishes having to clean and sanitize a larger church space.
  - b) Gathering outdoors may be of particular help for communities with small church buildings.
  - c) Appropriate physical distance must exist for those not in the same household.
2. The same precautions used for setting up for indoor Masses need to be followed for outdoor Masses.

## **Dismissal and Recessional**

1. Ministers recess in the same way as the beginning of Mass, in single file.
2. To avoid large numbers leaving at the same time, consider dismissing the people one pew or one section at a time.

## **Distribution of Holy Communion**

1. At the start of Mass, and again at the time of Communion, the priest should explain how Holy Communion will be distributed
2. The minister is to wash or sanitize his hands before distributing Holy Communion. He may also put on a mask.
  - a) Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if someone is wearing a glove. Instead, proper and diligent hand hygiene should be observed before and after distributing and/or receiving Holy Communion.
3. The faithful should remove any masks and gloves as they approach the Minister of Communion.
4. If possible, the reverence and the verbal exchange could take place 6’ away.
  - a) Bow “The Body of Christ” “Amen” then step forward to receive.
5. The minister should take special care not to touch the faithful in any way. (continued on page 2)

### **Dispensation from the Sunday Obligation**

As parishes prepare to begin having public Sunday Mass, all the faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass through Sunday, September 6, 2020.

Although the faithful are dispensed from their Sunday obligation to attend Mass, they must observe the Lord's Day and are encouraged to spend time in prayer on Sunday, meditating on the Lord's passion, death, and resurrection (an excellent way to do this is through participating in a broadcast of the Sunday Mass) or participating in a spiritual or corporal act of mercy.

Parishes are encouraged to continue making their Masses available via live stream during this time, in order to maximize accessibility to the faithful.

As we enter this new phase of response, keep in mind that although Sunday Mass participation may not be available, weekday Mass will provide other opportunities to celebrate the Eucharist.