



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII  
**DIOCESE OF HONOLULU**  
WITNESS TO JESUS

May 22, 2020

To the Catholic Faithful of Hawaii

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

Peace be with you!

Those are the words of the risen Jesus as he breathed out the Holy Spirit upon his Apostles, sending them out in the power of the Spirit to proclaim that He is risen from the dead, and is always with us. Just as the Apostles encountered Jesus physically in the Upper Room on the night of the Resurrection, we encounter him physically in the Holy Eucharist. Now that it has been deemed safe for us to gather again in our churches to physically encounter the risen Lord in Holy Communion, we rejoice that the Spirit will open the way for us once again.

Our gathering for the Eucharist after so long a time without being able to celebrate together, while it will be a joyful event, will also have restrictions, because we want to be sure that all who attend are kept as safe as possible from infection. After consulting with the Priests' Council, it was decided that, while the parishes are not ready to open this coming weekend, we will open for public worship the weekend of May 30/31, which is Pentecost Sunday. Your pastors will be making final preparations this week to assure that we can gather as safe as possible.

While each parish will have somewhat different ways of implementing the Guidelines presented below, we ask your patience and cooperation. Yes, these are bothersome requirements, but they are necessary for the continuing health and safety of all during this global pandemic.

Be assured of my prayers for all of you as we come together to worship our Heavenly Father, to celebrate the presence of the Risen Lord, and to allow him to rekindle in us the fire of the Holy Spirit!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Larry Silva  
Bishop of Honolulu

GUIDELINES FROM BISHOP LARRY SILVA, BISHOP OF HONOLULU  
FOR THE REOPENING OF CATHOLIC CHURCHES IN HAWAII  
DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC (May 22, 2020)

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Regarding Public Masses

1. **Catholic churches, missions, chapels and oratories in Hawaii will reopen for public worship the weekend of May 30/31, Pentecost Sunday.** During this coming week, parishes and hospitality ministers will be prepared to assist people in following these Guidelines.
2. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is extended through June 30, 2020. This will allow those who are not comfortable attending Mass at this time to stay away with a clear conscience. Masses will continue to be live-streamed, at least from some locations. Log-in information can be found at [www.catholicahawaii.org](http://www.catholicahawaii.org). Before June 30, we will evaluate whether or not to extend the dispensation longer.
3. As an act of charity, anyone who is sick, who is particularly vulnerable to infection, or is in a high-risk group should not attend Mass at this time.
4. Some (though not all) parishes may be prepared to offer weekday Masses as soon as May 25. Please check with your parish regarding the weekday Mass schedule.
5. All who attend Mass must maintain proper social distancing. Whether members of the same household will be able to sit together will depend on the particular decision of each parish, so please follow the directives of your parish.
6. The social distancing protocol will mean that not everyone who would like to go to a particular Mass may be able to do so, because of the limited space in the church. Each parish will have a way of limiting the number of people who attend each Mass, and we ask your patience and cooperation. (Some will issue tickets in advance for the number of spaces available; others may have an on-line or call-in reservation system.) It is important that you know your own parish's protocol so that you will not be disappointed when those who exceed the proper number must be turned away.
7. Parishes are free to use a lanai area adjacent to the church or to move Mass from the church to a larger gathering space (such as a parish hall or school gym), as long as the Mass can be seen and heard and proper social distancing is maintained.
8. The Mass schedule of each parish may be different from its normal Mass schedule, so please check with your parish regarding its schedule. Time will be needed to clean and sanitize the church between Masses, and dismissal will be by rows, so that people can maintain social distancing as they exit, so this may necessitate a greater amount of time between Masses. Some parishes may decide to add Masses to accommodate more people throughout the day. (Priests may celebrate three Masses per day under these circumstances.)
9. Masks or face coverings will be worn by all who attend Mass. The only exceptions will be the priest-celebrant, while he is speaking, and the lectors and cantors, while they are reading or singing. Particular care should be taken to maintain social distancing for cantors, since the projection of the voice can carry particulates a longer distance.
10. "Cry rooms" or other enclosed spaces will be closed while these health restrictions are in place. (And we all love children, even those who may be a little noisy!) Baptismal fonts and holy water fonts will be emptied.

11. Hymnals, missalettes and other worship material will be removed from the church before Mass. If hymns need to be printed, each sheet should be handled by only one person, then discarded. Parishioners are free to bring their own missals with them, if desired.
12. The collection will be taken only with a long-poled basket (whose handles should be sanitized before and after use); or offerings may be placed in a locked box, guarded by at least two unrelated people.
13. The normal presentation of the gifts of bread and wine will not take place, but these elements will be brought to the altar from the credence table.
14. There will be no physical contact during the Lord's Prayer or the Sign of Peace. A bow, a smile, or a wave will serve as a true sign of peace to one's neighbor.
15. For Holy Communion, all ministers of Holy Communion will wear masks. Those receiving Communion will be ushered row by row so that a six-foot distance will be maintained at all times. Just before arriving at the Communion station, the communicant will remove the mask, receive Communion reverently, then immediately replace the mask.
16. Communion on the hand (one hand held open above the other) is encouraged for the greater health and safety of all, though Communion on the tongue is not prohibited. The Precious Blood will only be taken by the priest.
17. All ministers of Holy Communion, including the clergy, will sanitize their hands immediately before distributing Communion and immediately after doing so. (A small table or stand may be placed next to each Communion station, so that if a minister feels his or her hands may have been contaminated, the paten/ciborium can be placed on the table momentarily while the minister sanitizes his or her hands.)
18. People should leave the church according to the directives given by the ushers or the priest in order to maintain social distancing during the leave-taking. Congregating in the parking lot or elsewhere is discouraged, unless social distancing is maintained.
19. No social gathering (e.g. coffee and donuts) may be held after Mass.
20. Immediately after Mass the church will be sanitized according to the protocol adopted by the parish.

#### Other Sacraments and Church Meetings

21. Priests may hear confessions, as long as they do so with both priest and penitent taking proper precautions, including social distancing and wearing masks. Check with your parish for specific times and directives.
22. Priests, deacons and other duly commissioned extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion – who are not at high risk of infection themselves -- may take Communion to the homebound, always exercising proper hygiene procedures and wearing masks.
23. Funerals, weddings, and Baptisms may take place according to the Guidelines above for the celebration of Mass. Funerals at this time may not include visitation times, only the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Mass, and the Committal. Baptisms should be done in such a way that the same water is not poured on more than one person or stored in the font after it is used, thereby eliminating Baptism by immersion at this time.
24. Pastors will decide when to celebrate the sacraments of Initiation for the Elect who normally would have been initiated at the Easter Vigil. At least one Scrutiny should be celebrated before the sacraments of initiation are celebrated.

25. Since there is a large backlog of Confirmations/First Communions, Bishop Silva will give special delegation to all priests to confer the sacrament of Confirmation on the members of their respective parishes, extending from May 30 to December 31, 2020. The pastor will decide when to celebrate Confirmation/First Communion, and may do so at several Masses in order to maintain proper social distancing. If a pastor desires the Bishop to confer these sacraments, he should make arrangements with the Office of the Bishop, and the Bishop will try to accommodate all requests, either personally or with the help of the Vicar General.
26. Churches may now remain open during the day for private prayer at the discretion of the pastor and observing whatever guidelines he may establish.
27. In-person church meetings may resume, IF proper social distancing and the wearing of masks is observed. Otherwise, meetings should continue to be conducted virtually.

Questions or concerns should be directed to Deacon Modesto Cordero, Director of the Office of Worship at [mcordero@rcchawaii.org](mailto:mcordero@rcchawaii.org) or (808) 585-3342.