COVID-19 Response and Resources

COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RESOURCES
Mass Livestream Schedule
For The Faithful
For Pastors and Parishes
For Principals and Catholic Schools
Faith Resources
Detroit Catholic Coverage
COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Faith Formation Programs

MAKE A GIFT TO YOUR PARISH
ARCHDIOCESE'S STATEMENTS
DETROIT CATHOLIC COVERAGE

NOVEMBER 4 UPDATE

In accord with the "Gathering Size Policy for Phase 4.0" of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Archdiocese of Detroit permits gatherings in parishes cannot exceed 50 people per venue or 20 people per 5000 square feet.

Essential parish activities (religious education, youth ministry, and RCIA) are permitted and should follow the guidelines outlined by the Department of Health: Schools Phase Guidance.

Requirements for liturgical activities remain unchanged and should follow the liturgical guidelines found here.

OCTOBER 9 UPDATE

Public health officials at the state, county and city levels have issued orders this week related to public gatherings and safety protocols in light of the Michigan Supreme Court's decision last Friday. Nothing in these orders changes our current requirements for liturgical gatherings including Mass, Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, Confessions, and Eucharistic Adoration.

If changes need to be made regarding non-liturgical activities, further communication will be provided. Until that time, please continue to follow all established guidelines and directives (especially related to the need for indoor gatherings requiring masks) which have been issued from the Archdiocese of Detroit for the liturgy, non-liturgical gatherings, and Catholic schools.

OCTOBER 5 UPDATE

The Archdiocese of Detroit is aware of Friday, Oct. 2 ruling by the Michigan Supreme Court regarding the emergency powers of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer.

The current safety precautions for parishes (below) and schools Click here in the Archdiocese of Detroit were given under the authority of Archbishop Vigneron and, taking into account expert advice from the medical community. Therefore, they are not affected by this ruling and they will remain in place until further notice.

DIRECTIVES FOR RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC MASSES

Directives pare la reanudación de misas públicas

1. At the discretion of the pastor, a parish in the Archdiocese of Detroit **is permitted to resume public Masses on Sunday, May 10, 2020** under the conditions below.

2. Pride of place for attending these earliest Masses should be given to the Elect, Candidates for Christian Initiation, and those for whom existing these two groups for entrance into the Catholic Church. Exceptions, consideration of RCIA and sacramental initiation of these groups will be forthcoming from the Office of Christian Worship.

3. All parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit **will resume public Mass for Friday, May 29, 2020** under the same conditions.

4. Necessary conditions for the resumption of public Masses

1. Face-coverings/masks are to be worn by the faithful in and around the church.

2. Cleaning and sanitizing of church facilities using proper techniques before or after Masses.

3. Physical distancing is practiced in the church and on the church property.

4. Parish churches are not to exceed 50 percent of total capacity for the church.

5. This limit should allow people to remain at least six feet apart.

2. Depending on local hospital, this number may have to be less than 50 percent of the total capacity.

3. An additional location on the church property (e.g. social hall, parking lot) may be used as an "overflow" for additional people desiring to attend public Mass.

1. This should not exceed the same 50 percent capacity for the space.

2. Both indoor and outdoor Masses require adherence to strict physical distancing guidelines.

5. Funerals, Weddings, and Baptisms no longer require individual permission and may resume along the same limits and under the same conditions as listed in #4 above.

6. All non-liturgical gatherings should continue to be suspended. At the pastor's discretion, exceptions may be made if attendees observe strict physical distancing guidelines and the gathering does not exceed 50 persons at any one time.

7. All the faithful in the Archdiocese of Detroit are dispensed from their Sunday obligation to attend Mass through Sunday, November 22, 2020.

GUIDELINES FOR RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC MASSES

Español

Preparing for Phase 1 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 the guidelines has been distributed to all pastors, first in an email on Friday, April 24. The attention and cooperation of all the faithful in this preparation process will bear fruit for the parish and allow a collectivity 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, November 22, 2020. See "Section V. Dispensation from Sunday Obligation" for more details.

Frequency of Masses

In accord with canon 905§2, all priests in the Archdiocese of Detroit are permitted to celebrate the Eucharist twice **and may celebrate three times on Sundays and holy days of obligation** (Archdiocesan faculty, V). A "day" consists of 24 continuous hours beginning at midnight (cf. Code of Liturgical Worship, Table of Liturgical Days). Thus, an "court" Saturday night Mass can be celebrated on Sunday.

The universal law of the Church is silent on exceeding these limits, which, we surmise, are based on a of a concern for the health and wellbeing of priests. Such a concern does not be overwhelmed with an inordinate number of Masses in a day. Nevertheless, these are extraordinary times and therefore priests are permitted to offer three Masses any weekday, if necessary for the community. Should any additional Masses be necessary, (such as a fourth Mass on Sunday) priests will need to seek the permission of the Regional Bishop.

General Information and Matters for Consideration

Those older than 65 years old (the recommendation of the 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 not be allowed to attend Mass or enter the church or the community. Clergy with a respiratory illness of any kind should avoid celebrating public Masses. Priests should be encouraged to "self-quarantine" if they do so during this phase. The same applies to other ministers, sacristans, lectors, and ushers.

1 **Physical distancing** is to be observed and signified by signs, tape, or other means. This includes both indoor and outdoor areas.

1 Masses offered should not 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 make every effort to provide seating in abundance (such as seating people in alternating rows and in a manner dispersed or seating in different sections for different Masses). See Section IV below.

1 These living in the household may sit together without distancing.

2 For the distribution of Holy Communion, new patterns of approaching the altar might need to be configured to better allow for proper distancing.

3. To the extent possible, those in line for Holy Communion should maintain a 6' distance between each other and those in the pews.

4. To the extent possible, the priest and ministers (deacon, lector, servers) should remain 6' apart from each other.

3. **Signage**

1 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.

2 Parishes can mark the floor where people will line up to indicate proper spacing between persons.

4. **Disposable gloves** are to be available for sacristans, those preparing the area and cleaning the area. Instructions for the proper removal of the gloves and other each are to be given/posted.

5. **Cloth face coverings (masks)** are to be worn by everyone approaching church and inside church (except for children under 2 years old).

1 The priest celebrant and other ministers need not wear masks or gloves during the liturgy given they are least 6' from the assembly facing Mass.

6. **Collection** Baskets could 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.

7. **Am circulation** Parishes should have the maximum fresh air as possible circulating within the building.

8. **Holy Water** and Baptismal fonts remain empty.

9. **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:

1 Because the faithful will be wearing masks, singing in the parts of the assembly might prove challenging and ineffective.

2 Health experts indicate that singing produces 6-10x more droplets from our mouths than recitation. Keeping singing for the assembly to a minimum is advised and the congregation should not remove their masks to sing.

3 If there is a "choir" present, it should be as small as possible with each member spaced about 10' apart.

4 If worship aids are produced, they are to be used for only one Mass and then disposed of to avoid any possible contamination.

5. The music minister singing the entrance and communion antiphon is a good option to incorporate music in our liturgies.

10. **Cleaning and Disinfecting** To help stop the spread of the virus, effective cleaning and disinfecting is essential. It is very important to be able to know the distinction between these two practices. It is also advisable to ensure that the products being used are effective in disinfecting as determined by the Environmental Protection Agency. Please click here for important information regarding proper cleaning and sanitizing.

1. Clergy, and others who assist, are to wash their hands before and after set-up for Mass as well as after Mass and clean up. Hands are to be washed and Masks must be cleaned with soap and warm water.

2. Hand sanitizer is to be available in the sanctuary as needed during a liturgy. If possible, hand sanitizer should also be placed near the entrances of the church for the faithful. The faithful are invited to bring their own supply of hand sanitizer to use before Holy Communion.

3. It is advisable to remove as much as possible from the pews, e.g. hymnals, missalettes, envelopes, to make it easier to clean and disinfect.

4. Consider propping open all necessary doors to minimize touching of doors.

5. After each liturgy, items used by the public should, e.g. door handles, rest rooms, be disinfected.

6. If parishes do not have available maintenance staff for this level of cleaning, they could ask some healthy parishioners to help with this task after Mass.

In Open Air / Outdoor Masses

1. As we approach more pleasant weather, and given the practical necessity, outdoor Masses are a good option.

1 This can relieve the burden of parishes having to clean and sanitize a larger church space.

2. Gathering outdoors may be of particular help for communities with small church buildings.

3. Appropriate physical distance must exist for those not in the same household.

4 The same precautions used for setting up for indoor Masses should be followed for outdoor Masses. (e.g. washing hands).

5. Any music for Mass outdoors follows the same guidelines as stated above.

6. It is preferred to park cars at one location or on the streets and have participants sitting in their own chairs in a different location than the church. This plan has the gathered assembly better visibility to see the Mass directly, without having to look through car and truck windshields. This is mitigated if there is a sufficiently elevated platform which allows the reasonable visibility of the altar.

7. The "seating arrangement" should be marked in a clear fashion or with the help of ushers. Participants should bring their own chairs, otherwise the parish will have to make provisions to sanitize parish-provided chairs.

8. Care needs to be taken so that the sacred elements are protected from weather.

2. Distribution of Holy Communion needs to be thought through and planned as with an indoor Mass, ensuring proper distancing as communion is given in line. Distribution would follow the options as for the indoor Masses.

1 In cases where faithful are in their cars, the communicants should exit their cars to receive Holy Communion, one at a time. From a health perspective, this is preferred because it permits the ministers to sanitize their hands as is necessary, just as with the indoor Mass. Walking from car to car, window to window, makes such hygiene difficult.

Matters Particular

1 If the clergy are greeting people prior to or following Mass, he should wear a mask and greet in a physically distant way.

2. A stand at the altar, or even on the altar, to hold the Missal for the presidential prayers should be used instead of having a server or deacon hold the Missal.

3. A separate chalice is to be provided for the celebrant and well-sanitized between masses.

1 Alternatively, the priests could receive from the chalice through self-intinction.

2. The minister receiving from the chalice should be the one responsible for purifying it.

3 Ministers in the entrance procession should be single file and 6' apart.

4. The offertory procession should be omitted.

5. The hosts to be consecrated for the faithful should be placed in a ciborium on a corporal towards the side of the altar. This allows the priest to proffer the wounds of consecration directly over the host he will consume, with the other hosts not directly in front of him as he prays the Eucharistic prayer.

7. During the elevation of the sacred species concluding the Eucharistic prayer, if there is a concelebration, the concelebrants should keep their hand and elevate the chalice. Since this action is brief, he does not need to wear a 6' distance.

8. The invitation to exchange the Sign of Peace is to be omitted.

9. 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.

3. If the priest is greeting people after Mass, he should wear a mask and greet in a physically distant way.

4. All vessels are to be thoroughly purified and cleaned with soap and hot water after every Mass.

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. Distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful is suspended at this time, nor should the lay faithful receive by intinction.

3. In Masses with a small number of people, Communion should be distributed by the priest(s) and deacon.

1. When capacities increase, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion need to be trained regarding these special processes.

2. The minister is to wash or sanitize his hands before distributing Holy Communion. He may also put on a mask.

1 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 pull down any face approach the minister.

6. If possible, a stand with a corporal and hand sanitizer should be set at the place of distribution of Holy Communion.

7. If possible, the reverence and the verbal exchange could take place 6' away.

1 Bow – "The Body of Christ" – "Amen" – then step forward to receive.

8. The minister should make special care not to touch the faithful in any way (hand, tongue, etc.).

1 If he does, he should pause, place the ciborium on the nearby table, sanitize his hands, and then proceed.

2. It is not necessary to sanitize hands between each communicant unless physical contact is made.

9. The faithful have a right to receive Holy Communion in the hand or on the tongue.

1. Receiving Holy Communion on the tongue could cause concern for some parishioners. Consideration should be the line for Holy Communion about spreading droplets to the fingers of the minister via breath.

2. Options for handling this fear includes:

1 Ask those receiving on the tongue to please receive last.

2 Have a designated minister for Holy Communion for those who wish to receive on the tongue

10. Special provisions (such as those in Canon 910) have been made to allow those who receive ever low-grade hosts, and Holy Communion to be homebound should receive particular consideration from pastors.

11. If the celebrant of the Mass is in a higher-risk group, a different priest, deacon, or EMHC may distribute Holy Communion.

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, November 22, 2020.**

Although the faithful are dispensed from their Sunday obligation to attend Mass, they must continue to keep the Lord's Day holy by participating in other ways. This can be done by celebrating 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.

PREVIOUS UPDATES

- September 30 Update
- August 14 Update
- July 30 Update
- June 22 Update
- June 8 Update
- April 30 Update: Directives
- April 14 Update
- March 17 Update: Food Pantries and Blood Drives
- April 3 Update: Liturgical Guidelines and Holy Week
- March 13 Update: Temporary Suspension of Public Masses

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- Catholic Charities of Southeast Michigan Resources and Information
- For Sacred Heart Major Seminary

Click here for more suggestions and information about the coronavirus from the CDC.

Please know that Archdiocese of Detroit has been, and will continue to, monitor news concerning the coronavirus. We are preparing for any potential impact on our parishes, schools and other ministries, and will follow any recommendations from local, state and federal officials.

We will continue to update this page with new information and resources as they become available.

Back to top