

Diocese of Covington
Protocols for Celebrating the Liturgy amid COVID-19
12 April 2021

- I. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation for all the faithful of the Diocese of Covington continues until further notice. Additionally, those who are sick should refrain from coming to church.

- II. Eucharist
 1. The public celebration of the Eucharist continues.
 2. No additional weekend Masses are to be added.
 3. The following precautions are to be observed:

Before Mass

- Parishioners should not congregate before Mass.
- Parishioners are to sit six (6) feet apart, with an exception made for members of the same household.
 - Seating in the churches will be limited to allow for this social distancing. Every other pew will be blocked off to ensure the necessary distancing in every direction.
 - All open pews will have markers every six (6) feet to assist parishioners in spacing themselves within the pews.
 - Once pastors determine the seating capacity, efforts should be made to inform the parishioners of the new restrictions in order to limit the number attending a single liturgy.
- Parishioners are required to wear a face covering when in the church.
- Pews, ambos, door handles, railings (indoor and outdoor), and bathrooms should be sanitized after every Mass. Pastors should consider recruiting volunteers to help with this process. Only one person at a time should be allowed in the restroom.
- Hymnals may be returned to the pews. However, parish may choose to continue using disposable worship aids.
- Ministers:
 - All ministers are to be masked.
 - The priest may remove the mask when speaking from the Altar or the Ambo.
 - The deacon may remove the mask when speaking from the Ambo.
 - Lectors may remove the mask when speaking from the Ambo.

- More than one lector may again be utilized.
- Up to three (3) servers may be utilized; they are required to wear white gloves and a face covering; proper social distancing must be maintained. All server vesture (including gloves) is to be washed weekly.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are limited to two (2) only for each Mass.
- Sacristans must wash/sanitize hands before and after setting up for Mass; they must also wear face coverings during that time.
- Music
 - Musicians should sanitize their instruments after every liturgy.
 - All microphones should be sanitized after each Mass.
 - Choirs may gather and sing together so long as the necessary social distancing of six (6) feet is maintained.
 - Choirs/ensembles of more than four (4) individuals are required to wear masks while singing.
 - Congregational singing may resume so long as all members of the gathered community adhere to the requirement of a face covering while in church.
- Consider having volunteers hold the doors open for parishioners or propping doors open as parishioners enter the church to reduce the touching of door handles.
- Holy water fonts are not to be used and baptismal fonts are to be covered.

During Mass

- Processions may resume so long as the proper social distancing of six (6) feet is maintained.
- Consider other methods for the collection if you pass a basket from one person to another. Note: All financial security protocols must be followed.
- There is to be no procession of the gifts (offertory procession).
- At the discretion of the pastor, while following all social distancing and mask requirements, the Sign of Peace may once again be offered.
- Distribution of Holy Communion

- Only the priest(s), vested deacon(s) and two (2) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may distribute Holy Communion at a single Mass.
- Ministers must wear face coverings and sanitize their hands before and after distribution of Holy Communion. Note: hands are sanitized after the minister receives Holy Communion.
- When there is more than one (1) minister of Holy Communion, bread is to be separated into separate ciboria prior to Mass.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood to the faithful is to be omitted. Note: when concelebration occurs, priests should receive via intinction.
- Markers should be placed in the aisles allowing for proper social distancing in the Communion Procession. Note: Alternatives to the Communion Procession may be used, such as the minister moving through the pews.
- Holy Communion is to be received by the faithful in the hand.
 - It is the decision of the pastor whether or not to allow reception of Holy Communion on the tongue. If this practice is allowed, the minister must sanitize his/her hands after distributing to each individual communicant.
- Those with a gluten intolerance should make arrangements with the pastor.

After Mass

- Consider having volunteers hold the doors open for parishioners or propping doors open as parishioners exit the church to reduce the touching of door handles.
- The priest and deacon may greet the faithful as long as they do so while masked and without physical contact. It is encouraged that this occur outside the church building.
- Parishioners should not congregate after Mass
- Ancillary gatherings connected to Mass continue to be suspended; for example, Children’s Liturgy of the Word or coffee and donuts following Mass

III. Sacrament of Baptism, Sacrament of Holy Matrimony, and Funerals

1. Public baptisms, weddings and funerals are permitted.
2. The above guidelines must be followed.

- IV. Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick
 - 1. Priests are to follow current guidelines as it relates to the Anointing of the Sick.
 - 2. As a reminder, priests are permitted to use an instrument, such as a cotton ball or a cotton-swab, for the actual anointing.

- V. Sacrament of Penance
 - 1. Regularly scheduled confessions continue.
 - 2. Lines for confessionals should have the necessary markers to encourage safe social distancing.
 - 3. Both the confessor and the penitent should wear masks.

- VI. Other liturgies and devotions are permitted but are required to follow the above protocols.