

## **Liturgical Celebrations and Sacraments**

- **Suspension of Public Masses and Other Liturgies:** All Masses and related liturgical services that would normally be open to the public in all Archdiocesan parishes, shrines, private chapels, oratories, missions, and campus ministries are suspended until further notice.
  - **Dispensation from Sunday Mass Obligation:** The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass for the Catholics of the Archdiocese of Boston remains in place until public celebration of the Mass can be safely resumed.
  - **Limits on Livestreamed/Recorded Masses:** Masses that are taped or streamed from the Church should be limited to essential people without a congregation, but attendance must be limited to no more than 10 people.
  - **Livestreaming vs. Pre-recording Masses:** Livestreaming Masses is preferred. The livestreamed Mass may be recorded at the same time for later re-broadcast/availability for viewing online. Pre-recording Masses, while not recommended, may be permitted under the conditions described by this helpful USCCB document. <http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/frequently-asked-questions/guidelines-for-televising-the-liturgy.cfm>
  - **Religious Houses/Seminaries:** The closed (private) celebration of the community liturgy within religious houses or seminaries is permitted, with the recommendation that no outside (non-resident) priests concelebrate. If a concelebrated Mass, the principal celebrant should intinct the Host for himself, along with any other concelebrants. Only the last concelebrant (or Deacon) to receive should consume the remaining Precious Blood, therefore, a large amount of wine need not be consecrated.
  
- **The Easter Sacraments** are postponed until the earliest time they can be administered after the beginning of public Masses.
  
- **First Communions** are postponed until the earliest time they can be administered after the beginning of public Masses.
  
- **Confirmations** scheduled to take place in the Archdiocese of Boston are postponed until further notice. When possible, we will follow up with those parishes regarding what options will be available for rescheduling.
  
- **Baptisms and weddings** may proceed, but attendance must be limited to no more than 10 people.
  
- **Funeral Masses, Wakes, Graveside Committals:** There will be no Funeral Masses or services in our churches and no wake or funeral services in funeral homes with a priest or deacon present. Graveside services with no more than 10 people present with a priest or deacon presiding are allowed and encouraged. Parishes are to explain this policy and to contact families subsequent to the graveside service to make arrangements for a

Memorial Mass to be celebrated in the church at a later date. The parish is encouraged to include in the Prayers of the Faithful the names of those parishioners who have passed away during this time of pandemic.

- **Sacrament of Reconciliation:** Priests may still celebrate the Sacrament of Penance when requested.
  - Penance Services are to be discontinued until further notice.
  - Priests are to take reasonable precautions between the penitent and confessor.
    - Priests are reminded to observe the necessary distance of six feet between priest and penitent, and the recommended steps such as hand-washing before and after meeting with the penitent, as well as wiping the surfaces in the area between confessions.
  - Since some penitents prefer anonymity, a screen should be available wherever the confession would take place.
  - Within the Anointing of the Sick: The Sacrament of Penance is always offered when the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick is celebrated.
  
- **For clergy providing ministry to persons known to be carriers of COVID-19**
  - **Restrictions for who can fulfill this ministry:**
    - No priest or deacon in the high-risk group (i.e., over 60)
    - No priest or deacon with comorbidity; i.e., when two or more chronic illnesses are present. For example, Hypertension, diabetes, Crohn's disease, any cancers, rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, COPD, heart disease.
    - These restrictions follow the healthcare guidance that indicate younger, healthier individuals are at a much-diminished risk of contracting a serious case of COVID-19.
  
- **Anointing of the Sick**
  - If this is performed in a hospital or healthcare facility, the guidelines for protective measures, including garments, prevail.
  - If this is not performed in a hospital or healthcare facility: If available, latex gloves should be worn unless the patient or priest/deacon has an allergic sensitivity to latex. Additionally, if available, protective eye wear (a pair of glasses will suffice) should be worn. Eyeglasses or goggles or eye protectors can be re-used BUT MUST be cleaned immediately after each visit with Lysol/Clorox wipes or washed with soap and water.
  - The anointing may be done with a cotton-tipped swab or a cotton ball which is to be burned or buried after use.
  - If the priest uses his gloved hand, the glove is to be burned or buried after the visit.
  - If Holy Communion is given, it is to be distributed in the hand.
  - Maintain social distance (six feet) with everyone in the room, except the patient.
  - Do not offer comfort with any physical contact.
  
- Also informed by best practice health care recommendations, the Archdiocese is establishing immediately the following directives for clergy providing Holy Communion to the Sick and Homebound:

- If this sacramental ministry is provided in a hospital or healthcare facility, the guidelines for protective measures, including garments, prevail.
- If not provided in a hospital or healthcare facility: If available, latex gloves should be worn unless the patient or priest/deacon has an allergic sensitivity to latex. Additionally, if available, protective eye wear (a pair of glasses will suffice) should be worn. Eyeglasses or goggles or eye protectors can be re-used BUT MUST be cleaned immediately after each visit with Lysol/Clorox wipes or washed with soap and water.
- If the sacramental ministry is provided in a home, the following directives apply:
  - Wash hands or use a hand sanitizer once you enter the home;
  - Avoid any physical contact with the person or family during the visit;
  - Use a hand sanitizer again before distributing Communion; If the communicant usually receives Communion on the tongue, strongly encourage him or her, for your safety as well as his / hers, to receive Communion in the hand.
  - Maintain social distance (six feet) with everyone in the room, except the patient.
  - Do not offer comfort with any physical contact.