



Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls

Chancery

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May 1, 2020

Guidelines for Public Masses

Public Masses, that is Masses prayed with congregants participating in the nave of the church or chapel, may begin on May 15, 2020 or later. Prior to their start, pastors should work to make estimates of their seating capacities so as to provide adequate spacing and introduce measures to uphold healthy social distancing.

During this time, the faithful remain **dispensed from the obligation to attend Holy Mass on Sunday** until further notice. This measure is in place so that you can prudently discern your own attendance. If you feel unsafe, you should feel no guilt or shame in staying home. Similarly, you should feel a freedom to permit others who are comfortable attending to do so.

The following measures are intended to promote social distancing, good hygiene, and limit the opportunities for viral infections to be spread. These measures apply to daily and Sunday Masses and other liturgies (including Baptisms, First Communions, Confirmations, Weddings, Wakes & Funerals, and Confessions, etc.).

1. To promote social distancing for **parishioner seating** a variety of measures are possible
 - a. Allow adequate space. Suggestions include dividing the total floor space of the church's seating area by 40 sq ft (the area of a 6' diameter circle) or estimating 30% of the worship space's seating capacity.
 - b. Pews should be marked off in some fashion so that 6' distances between congregants can be maintained throughout the Mass.
 - c. Families are to maintain 6' distancing between their family and other families or individuals throughout the celebration of Mass. Seating is to be arranged such that six feet of distance can be maintained between members of one household and members of another.
 - d. Ushers, staff, or other volunteers should be relied upon to promote the social distancing practices that have been established by the pastor.
 - e. The number of liturgical ministers (lectors, servers, cantor, instrumentalists) should be limited so that social distancing can be modeled during the liturgies. Choirs should not be asked to serve at liturgies unless proper social distancing can be maintained.
 - f. Pews and door handles should be wiped down using disinfecting agents after each liturgy. Pastors may find it wise to establish a team and/or procedures to ensure attention to this detail. Consideration also could be made to prop doors open to limit the need for contact if possible.

2. Pastors are encouraged to consider adding additional Mass times IF needed to accommodate parishioner needs while maintaining social distancing practices.
 - a. During this pandemic, Bishop DeGrood permits parishes with more priests to offer additional Masses on Sundays. In addition, priests are permitted to pray up to 3 Masses on Sunday and 2 on Saturdays with 2 on weekdays, as needed.

- b. Pastors should consider creating some system of Mass availability for parishioners if needed so people desiring to come to Mass can and so that proper social distancing can be maintained.
3. Parishioners should be encouraged to wear a **mask** when in the worship space and to **sanitize their hands** before entering it.
4. There should be no **sign of peace**.
5. In lieu of the customary passing of baskets, there should instead be stationary baskets near the church entrances where parishioners can place their **offertory donations** as they enter or leave the church or chapel. Gift bearers should not be used during the offertory time.
6. Regarding the reception of **Holy Communion**
 - a. The faithful may be reminded that if they are concerned about their personal vulnerability they are not required to receive Holy Communion at this time.
 - b. Concelebrating priests should communicate by intinction.
 - c. Attending deacons do not need to receive the Precious Blood, which is only required for a priest. If they desire the Precious Blood, it should be done by intinction.
 - d. Ordinary and extraordinary ministers should wear a mask and sanitize their hands prior to distributing Holy Communion to the faithful.
 - e. Distribution of the Precious Blood is not advised except for the in case of gluten intolerance.
 - f. Limiting the number of Eucharistic Ministers (ordinary or extraordinary) is advised wherever this is reasonably possible.
 - g. The communion procession should be done in such a way as to promote social distancing.
 - i. Celebrants are encouraged to consider asking congregants to form a single line where traditionally two lines are formed and to ask congregants seated on one side of the worship space to receive first before alternating to the opposite side.
 - ii. Depending on the layout of the church, it might be prudent for the priest or Eucharistic Minister to bring Holy Communion to the faithful, weaving through unused pews, rather than following the parish's typical custom for distribution.
 - h. Communicants should be encouraged to sanitize their hands prior to reception, whether using their own supply or using sanitizer provided in the aisles if available.
 - i. Communicants should be encouraged to receive on the hand. Those who wish to receive on the tongue could be accommodated with communion at the end and by a specified minister or location if the pastor deems this proper.
 - j. For those who are gluten intolerant, special arrangements are to be made with the pastor prior to the start of the Mass.
 - k. At Masses that are live-streamed, the distribution of Holy Communion to congregants could wait until after Mass as a courtesy to those watching online and to avoid having to walk around camera equipment.
7. There should be no **social gatherings** on parish or Church property after liturgies.