



# ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

Prot. Num. 2020-0243.3

## Further Guidance for Public Mass | Effective 1 October 2020

The following guidance is an update to the 2 June 2020 document; it is not intended to be comprehensive. Pastors are expected to make prudent decisions after reading and understanding Archdiocesan and civic regulations. Due to the variance in county regulations, things will not be the same in all locations throughout the archdiocese.

- **Obligation:** It is anticipated that the obligation of the faithful to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses will be partially restored beginning on the First Sunday of Advent (further guidance is forthcoming). All those who are healthy and not “at risk” are encouraged to resume regular attendance, space permitting, by the end of November. Pre-recorded and livestream Masses may continue but should begin to be reduced.
- **Occupancy:** Pastors may choose to use spaces other than the principal church. Capacity for all gatherings is determined by the number of people who can be safely distanced from each other in any space. A minimum of 6-feet of separation, in all directions, should be observed between individuals or cohorts. Taking into account local regulations, churches and other areas being used for Mass should not exceed 50% of their fire code occupancy.
- **Germ Mitigation:** The faithful should refrain from unnecessarily touching surfaces, respect physical distancing, use hand sanitizer when it is available, follow the directions for seating, and stay home if they are sick, symptomatic, or have recently been exposed to someone who has tested positive for the virus. Safeguarding the health and welfare of others, not just oneself, is a moral duty. Parishes should ensure proper cleaning and provide hand sanitizer.
- **Flow of People:** No matter the occupancy, advanced preparation should take place and instructions should be given so that pinch points do not infringe upon physical distancing. A structured dismissal may be necessary so that crowding does not occur.
- **Suspended:** Hand holding, physically exchanging a sign of peace, use of holy water, and the distribution of the Precious Blood are all to remain suspended.
- **Communion:** It is not necessary that the priest be the one who distributes the Eucharist, especially if he is 65 or older; deacons or extraordinary ministers can help. Hand sanitizer should be used by the minister before and after the distribution of Holy Communion. The host should be placed in the hand in a manner so as to avoid any skin-to-skin touching. Should this occur, hand sanitizer should be used before resuming distribution. Communion on the tongue is permitted so long as the following occur:
  - Those receiving on the hand and those receiving on the tongue are not intermixed.
  - All those who wish to receive on the tongue wait until everyone else has received communion.
  - Only one minister/line distributes on the tongue.
  - When the minister is aware that their finger has touched the mouth or tongue of the communicant, they are to stop distribution and sanitize their hand before resuming.
- **Masks:** Out of compliance, caution, and charity for one another, the faithful should continue to wear face masks while entering, moving about, going forward for communion, and exiting all indoor spaces. Once seated and while physically distanced from other individuals or cohorts, the faithful may lower their masks if congregational singing has been adequately reduced, otherwise, masks must be worn continually. For the priest and deacon, it seems prudent to wear a mask for the procession, during the distribution of communion, the recession, and when greeting people after Mass. It is unnecessary to wear a mask while presiding from the sanctuary and preaching. For all other ministers, it seems prudent to wear a mask except for the times when they are addressing the congregation from the sanctuary or low ambo, e.g., readings, announcements, universal prayer, etc.
- **Hymnals & Missalettes:** Because of the difficulty in sanitizing hymnals & missalettes they are to be removed from the pews. Disposable/single use aids can be produced if needed.
- **Singing & Choirs:** It has been demonstrated that singing can increase the spread of the virus, thus congregational singing should be minimalized, especially if the faithful are permitted to lower their masks once seated. If a choir is used, it should be limited to 4 singers with increased physical distancing and mask use.