



ARCHDIOCESE OF DENVER

+ S. J. R.
01/27/2021

Prot. Num. 2021-0026.1

Ministry in the Time of Coronavirus | Effective 1 February 2021

The following directives and guidance are intended to supersede all previous guidance. Pastors are expected to make prudent decisions after reading and understanding this document.

Directives-

- **Suspended:** Hand holding, physically exchanging a sign of peace, use of communal holy water fonts, and the distribution of the Precious Blood.
- **Occupancy:** Create an environment that is conducive to the practice and transmission of the Catholic faith, while at the same time taking reasonable precautions and utilizing best practices to limit the potential spread of the virus.

Guidance-

- **Obligation:** While the general dispensation from attending Sunday Mass remains; all those who are healthy, vaccinated, or not “at risk” are encouraged to resume regular attendance at Mass, space permitting. Pre-recorded and livestream Masses may continue but should begin to be reduced.
- **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.
- **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. 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.
 - 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 caution, the faithful should continue to wear face masks while entering, moving about, going forward for communion, and exiting all indoor spaces. 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.
- **Holy Water:** Dispensers designed for soap or hand sanitizer can be repurposed for dispensing Holy Water in a sanitary manner.
- **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:** Singing can increase the spread of the virus, thus congregational singing should be minimalized. If a choir is used, it should be limited with increased physical distancing and mask use.
- **RCIA Baptisms:** If no scrutinies are celebrated, the Prayer of Exorcism from the Rite of Baptism needs to be inserted into the continuous Rites of Christian Initiation when they are celebrated.