

Liturgical Guidelines
Applicable during phases 1-3
Diocese of Des Moines
Updated March 29, 2021

Anticipatory Measures

- All the faithful remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice. In addition, those who have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 10 days, or have been exposed to the virus (considered 15 minutes within 6 feet of known or suspected COVID-19 case), or shown symptoms at any time in the previous 10 days are to stay home. It is preferable and prudent to ask parishioners to take their temperature at home prior to coming to Mass.
- Parishes are encouraged to continue livestreaming Mass.
- Holy Water fonts may now be refilled
- Hand sanitizer may be made available to the faithful. All ministers should wash hands thoroughly before Mass and refrain from any handshakes or acceptance of materials from parishioners before Mass. Arrangement should be made for any materials that need to be dropped off at church in a specific place or container.
- Parishioners over the age of five, who do not have a medical or psychological condition prohibiting mask use are required to use a mask¹ for the duration of Mass. Parishes should have extra face coverings on hand outside parish entrances.
- Priests are required to wear a mask or face shield during Mass in the following scenarios: processing in and out; when a server/deacon is holding the Roman Missal for the priest; during the Eucharistic Prayer unless the communion hosts for the assembly are in a lidded ciborium or covered by a corporal or chalice pall; and while distributing Holy Communion.
- Deacons should wear face coverings during the entirety of Mass, except when preaching or proclaiming the Gospel.
- All liturgical ministers such as lectors, servers, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required to wear a face covering or shield if they cannot maintain a 15-foot distance from parishioners and other liturgical ministers in the sanctuary. Lectors can remove face coverings while proclaiming the Word of God.
- The other guidelines laid out in the general regathering guidelines document and cleaning document are assumed here.

Mass Itself

- Traffic in and out of the Church should be monitored and staggered. Doors should be propped open by a stand if possible, or by an usher or another device to prevent people from touching doors.
- Ushers should –where possible- direct people to seating. The faithful will likely need to be told they may need to surrender usual spots/patterns of seating.

¹ When this document refers to masks, medical masks, cloth face coverings, or face shields are all implied as sufficient.

- A six feet social distance should be maintained between one family/household unit and another whenever possible. Individuals [who did not arrive in the same car] should sit six feet apart.
- Three altar servers are permitted. As previously stated, servers are required to use a mask when unable to maintain 15 feet distance from parishioners and other liturgical ministers.
- Parishes should only use a single Lector/commentator per Mass.

Offertory and collection:

- Any offertory procession is suspended. The gifts should be prepared at the altar.
 - Where possible, the use of a chalice pall or other covering for the presider's chalice is encouraged.
 - A lidded ciborium is to be preferred over an open bowl for the peoples' hosts.
 - The pastor's host should be on its own paten. The ciborium with the people's hosts should be placed at a distance. If a paten/bowl for the people must be used, it should be covered with a pall.²
 - Any collection should be conducted via poll. Alternatively, a common depository (or depositories) may be placed at the entrance(s) of the Church for the faithful to place offerings in as they arrive or depart. If possible, secure any collection in a safe place, and wait to count money for 48-72 hours. When money is counted masks and gloves should be used, and volunteers should wash hands after handing the collection.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

- Any concelebrants should receive via intinction from a separate chalice from the celebrant's. If deacons receive both Sacred Species, they should receive the Precious Blood by intinction only. (The rubrics indicate the celebrant does NOT intinct.)
- For the distribution of Holy Communion: Communion ministers must wash their hands before Mass. They should use sanitizer before and after they personally receive Holy Communion and have not yet distributed Holy Communion.
 - Communion ministers should be those of 'non-risk' age. Several atypical options are available to Pastors/Administrators
 - They may elect to suspend the use of Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
 - They may themselves elect to refrain from distributing communion due to age or underlying health issue.
 - If one has reservations, no communion minister may be forced to exercise this ministry.

² This is to avoid cross contamination. The presider has to touch his host multiple times during the celebration of Mass. The pall/purificator is to prevent any contamination from a sneeze.

- Communion ministers should use sanitizer again at the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Communion ministers must use a mask or cloth face covering.
- Communion ministers should have access to either a sanitizing solution or a disinfectant wipe to sanitize fingers during the distribution of communion when contact is made with someone else's hands.
 - This could be achieved via having hand sanitizer near the communion station or a tub of wipes near the communion station
- At all times proper reverence must be shown to the Blessed Sacrament: Communion ministers--including clergy--are not permitted to wear gloves.
- In regards to the communion line: pastors should consider how best to form a socially distanced line given their church architecture.
 - Six feet of separation should be maintained between family units
 - Pastors are free to come up with more creative/restrictive considerations to control traffic flow in the Church.³ In lieu of a communion procession, pastors may elect to distribute communion by having ministers go into the nave of the church and pass through empty alternating pews.
- Bishop Joensen strongly urges and requests that the faithful only receive Holy Communion on the hand.
 - Personal piety must subordinate in this moment to the common good.
 - If someone insists on receiving on the tongue, they must wait until the end of communion.
 - All who receive on the tongue should participate in a single communion line.
 - The minister should sanitize their fingers after persons receive on the tongue.
 - In larger parishes, a solution might be to consider having one specific station for those who strongly desire to receive on the tongue.
- When approaching communion, the faithful are to:
 - bow
 - place their hands out in the usual manner
 - after responding with the usual "Amen," step to the side, pull mask down, place communion in their mouth, and pull the mask back up.
 - The consecrated Host must NOT be taken back to the pew to be consumed.
- Distribution from the chalice to the assembly is forbidden. Special exception may be made for those with extreme gluten intolerance with the consultation of the pastor.

After Mass

- Ushers should stagger traffic out of the Church to maintain the six-foot distance between family units.
- No one should hand out materials after Mass, including bulletins. No one should accept materials from parishioners. As mentioned, a depository basket/collector can be used for parishioners to drop envelopes/contributions as they leave.

³ E.g., If the pastor wishes to have ushers individually dismiss pews and not form a line per se.

- Clergy should only greet parishioners from a six-foot distance after Mass.
 - No one should shake hands, exchange hugs, or in any way make physical contact with each other.
- Receptions, socials, or ‘coffee/doughnuts’ after Mass should be limited.
- Worship space and bathrooms should be cleaned and disinfected at least once a week, and after any positive COVID test.