



DIOCESE OF CORPUS CHRISTI

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP



REVISIONS FOR DIRECTIVES AND GUIDELINES FOR OUR PARISHES

The weekend of October 24 and 25, 2020 is the last weekend for the dispensation from Sunday Mass obligation. Therefore, effective the weekend of October 31, 2020 and November 1, 2020, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is restored for the faithful in the Diocese of Corpus Christi.

Those who continue to be dispensed are those at increased risk of serious illness, compromised immune systems and those responsible for their care.

It is important for all the faithful in the diocese to know that this modification is made out of pastoral concern for the souls entrusted to my spiritual care through you, our priests. We remember that, “the celebration of the Mass, as the action of Christ and of the Church, is the center of the whole Christian life for the universal as well as the particular Church, and also for the individual faithful.” (Redemptionis Sacramentum, #36)

The following revisions and updates on pastoral activity as we move to this new phase of welcoming back the faithful are effective as of the weekend stated above:

A. GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING MASS

1. Seating capacity permitted 75% (keep at least two empty seats between parties or 6 feet social distancing).
2. Sanitizing and cleaning of church is still required (if additional Masses are offered, you must prepare additional teams to help sanitize after those new Masses).
3. Holy Water fonts are to remain empty.
4. Hand sanitizer must still be provided at the entrances of the church.
5. Additional entrances into the church may be utilized.
6. Face coverings or masks are still strongly recommended.
7. Livestreaming your Masses is optional but not encouraged (for parishioners that meet the criteria for being dispensed from being at Mass, you can encourage them to watch the Cathedral Mass on KDF-TV, goccn.org or the diocesan Facebook or YouTube outlets).

8. Individuals and families may seat themselves (ushers must assure proper spacing between families).
9. Singing is to be encouraged.
10. Missalettes and hymnals are still not permitted to be used from the pews (efforts should be made to provide an order of the Mass for the people).
11. At offertory time, ushers, wearing gloves, may pass through the church with collection baskets to receive people's offerings. Please Note: baskets are not to be passed by the people hand to hand, only the usher is to always have the basket in hand making his/her way through the congregation. Collection baskets with long stems are encouraged to be used.
12. No holding hands at the Lord's Prayer.
13. Priest/Deacon may invite people to offer each other a non-contact gesture of the Sign of Peace.
14. Communion is still to be distributed on the hand.
15. Priests, Deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must still follow protocol for distributing communion. (Wearing a face covering or mask and sanitizing hands before distribution).

B. GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING MINISTERS

Altar servers, readers, extraordinary ministers of holy communion should all be encouraged and invited to return and participate in their ministry.

ATTIRE USED BY MINISTERS:

1. **Altar servers:** Each server is to have his/her own robes (cassock/surplus or alb/scapular). Parishes are to arrange for servers to check-out his/her own robe. If the parish can make it possible for servers to purchase their own robes, this would be the best approach. Servers are to take these robes home and be responsible for washing them and assuring their cleanliness.

A parish that wants to continue allowing servers to use robes kept at the parish is responsible for assuring that they are laundered after each use. A robe used by one server at a Mass cannot be re-used by another server at a Mass that follows.

2. **Readers/Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion:** The usage of albs for these ministries are now discouraged. EMHC and readers are to be encouraged to wear "proper Sunday attire" to function in these ministries. Albs are not to be stored in closets for these ministers to use at Masses. If the usage of albs is to continue, each minister is to have his/her own alb. The practice of using common albs (meaning, what ever is in the closet) is to be discontinued.

C. GENERAL INFORMATION CONCERNING OTHER SACRAMENTS AND LITURGIES

1. BAPTISM:

Baptisms are to be celebrated. Water blessed from one Baptism celebration cannot be used for the next celebration. Blessed water is to be disposed of properly.

2. CONFESSIONS:

Regularly scheduled confession times are to be reinstated.

The utilization of confessionals that are only designed to offer “face to face” confessions is still not permitted. Confessionals that separate the priest from the penitent completely are permitted; however, these must be sanitized after each confession. Remember that the area that the penitents enter is a common area and their safety and health must be taken into consideration. Please assure that disinfectant spray is available for use after each one leaves.

Confessions heard outside of the confessionals are to be continued as you have established.

3. ANOINTING OF THE SICK:

Priests should return to offering the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick to those in need. It is encouraged that people come to the church to receive this sacrament. If there is a group of people that would be anointed at a particular time, the priest needs to take care to sanitize his hands after each anointing.

In the case of those who are hospitalized, the local pastor/parochial vicar is asked to contact the hospital priest chaplain to anoint their parishioner who is presently admitted to that particular hospital. For calls received to anoint residents at nursing homes, the priest is to check with local nursing home protocols concerning visits.

In cases where the person is dying at home, the priest is to take the precautions necessary to assure the family of protocols being followed. The priest should wear a face covering or mask and have hand sanitizer to be used after the anointing takes place.

4. FUNERALS:

When calls are received from funeral homes attempting to schedule funerals, every parish is to accommodate these families. They are not to be turned away. Please inform funeral homes that churches are at a 75% capacity restriction.

5. WEDDINGS:

The celebration of Matrimony may take place. Please inform your couples that churches are at a 75% capacity restriction.

If there are any questions that you may have, please feel free to contact Fr. Pete Elizardo via email at pelizardo@diocesec.org.