

Guidelines: Worship Together Safely

Archdiocese of Cincinnati

Revised 5/14/21

- **Beginning with the Sunday Masses of June 6, 2021 (including the anticipatory Mass on Saturday, June 5), Archbishop Schnurr is reinstating the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Mass for the faithful of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.**

- **In all circumstances, the regulations put forth by state and local public health authorities must be observed.**
 - Since our guidance throughout this pandemic has been to follow the regulations of public health authorities, there will be no mask mandate for churches of the archdiocese after the statewide mandate is lifted.

 - Until the statewide mask mandate is lifted, consistent with the State of Ohio's April 8, 2021, order on the wearing of masks in public places, it is expected that masks are worn at all times in church. Priests, deacons, readers, and cantors may (if socially distant from others) remove their mask while speaking or singing, but masks must be worn while in procession throughout the church and especially during the distribution of Holy Communion.

 - Pastors may increase the potential capacity of church buildings, subject to any limitations by local health authorities (e.g. county board of health, city health department).
 - In order to accommodate those parishioners who would prefer to be socially distanced, a recommendation would be to offer at least one section of socially distanced seating for at least one Mass each Sunday. Other areas of the church could

be returned to full capacity subject to any limitations as noted above.

- Pastors should clearly communicate this change to the faithful, clearly indicate any seating section(s) which are for socially distanced spacing, and – going forward - adjust the amount of this seating based on the preference of the faithful and pastoral judgment.
- The CDC guidelines for cleaning public facilities may be helpful in maintaining safe and healthy facilities.

Specific Guidelines to be Observed:

- Water in baptismal and holy water fonts should be refreshed regularly.
- Hymnals and missalettes may again be placed in pews.
 - Consider continuing to post a digital worship aid online even if you don't print one.
- The ministry of choirs, ensembles, and wind instruments may gradually be restored, but may need to continue in a reduced capacity for the foreseeable future.
 - See detailed guidance and strategies below.
- The gifts of bread and wine should be kept from public areas, brought directly from the credence table to the altar.
- No collection baskets may be passed from hand to hand; consider a monitored collection point (i.e. an usher monitoring a single basket near the main doors of the church) to minimize contact.
- The bread to be consecrated for the Communion of the faithful may be placed on a corporal at the edge of the altar, not directly in front of the priest celebrant. Alternatively, the use of covered ciboria would likewise be appropriate.
- There should be no physical contact between members of other households during the Our Father or the Sign of Peace.

- Discreet use of hand sanitizer by ministers of Holy Communion should continue.
- No Holy Communion from the chalice by the faithful; concelebrating priests should Communicate by intinction. Holy Communion in the hand is strongly encouraged.
- Vessels should be cleansed after each Mass with hot, soapy water.
- Other than as Viaticum to the critically ill, Holy Communion should, whenever possible, be given in the context of Mass. If however this is not possible, Holy Communion may be given outside of Mass, according to the approved rites.
- If necessary to ensure social distancing and conform to public health regulations, Mass (including a nuptial or funeral Mass) may be celebrated outside of the parish church, but preferably on parish grounds. Specific permission must be sought in advance from the Vicar General (sangi@catholicaoc.org)

Ongoing strategies to consider:

HEALTH SAFETY

- Ensure proper ventilation in public spaces.
- Make hand sanitizer available at each entrance.
- Reduce the number of touchpoints as people enter by propping open doors or having one person open doors.
- Clean restrooms frequently, even between Sunday liturgies.
- Ensure safe and healthy holy water
 - Refresh the water regularly
 - For taking home, have holy water available that has NOT been touched by others in the fonts
 - For baptism, water should be used that has NOT been touched by the faithful in self-blessing

LITURGICAL MINISTRY

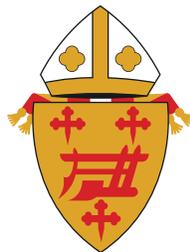
- Count the number of attendees at Mass to anticipate future crowds.
- Suspend Children's Liturgy of the Word unless this can be done with appropriate (3') social distancing.

- Avoid social activities (e.g. coffee and donuts) unless this can be done with proper social distancing and food safety protocols.

MUSIC MINISTRY

- Choirs and other singers should sing with masks at all times.
 - The only exception would be the psalmist or cantor, provided he/she is at least 12 feet away from anyone else
- Wind instruments can be used, provided proper bell covers and distances are maintained. (Strings and percussion may obviously continue.)
- Rehearsals should take place in large, well-ventilated areas. Rehearsals should not last more than 45 minutes in any one location.
 - Rehearsals themselves can last longer but should move to a different location.
 - On a practical level, this allows the singer/instrumentalist a “mask break” as singing with a mask is tiring after a period of time, and “fresh air”.
- Congregational singing can occur. The following order of importance should be kept in mind (cf. *Sing to the Lord*, #115):
 - Dialogue between priest and congregation
 - Ordinary (Eucharistic acclamations, Gospel acclamation)
 - Antiphons and psalms
 - Litanies (*Kyrie, Agnus Dei, Universal Prayer*)
 - Propers/Hymns and other songs

With questions or concerns, please contact the Office for Divine Worship & Sacraments, worship@catholicaoc.org, 513.263.6609.



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