



**Diocese of Belleville**  
**Office of the Apostolic Administrator**

May 13, 2020  
Our Lady of Fatima

The Fiftieth Anniversary of My Ordination to the Priesthood.

Dear Priests and Deacons of the Diocese of Belleville,  
Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

.Peace be with you!

On this day in Eastertide, when I recall the overcast skies when John Cardinal Cody ordained me a priest forever at St. Mary of the Lake Seminary in Mundelein, Illinois, I am happy to share with you a very positive development. **In consultation with Governor Jay Pritzker and Illinois health officials, the Bishops of the Province of Chicago believe we can initiate the beginning of the gradual return to an active liturgical life in our parishes.** I know how anxious you and the people you serve have been, during these weeks of sheltering in place, to return to the sanctuaries of our churches for the celebration of the Sunday Eucharist and the other sacraments, which are a source of the spiritual strength we all need in the face of suffering, anxiety, and death caused by the novel coronavirus and the COVID-19 disease it causes.

I know that the Christian Faithful in the Diocese of Belleville have very mixed feelings about the directives of federal and state government officials asking all of us to follow very strict precautions to safeguard our health and the health of our family members in the face of the ongoing pandemic that has transformed many aspect of our daily lives in a matter of weeks. I know that some wonder how the Bishops of Illinois can even plan for the reopening of our churches while the 7-day rolling average of new cases in the state is more than 2,400 per day and more than 13% of people who are tested in our state prove to be newly infected.

Others of you feel that since the number of coronavirus cases in the southern part of the state has been much lower than the very high numbers in the Chicago area, there may not have been a need for our parishes to follow such strict precautions that deprived us of our Holy Week and Easter celebrations and disrupted the schedule of our confirmations, weddings, funerals, graduations and other important parish events. Others have written to me indicating that, as people of faith, we should have greater trust in God and confidently assemble for Mass trusting that Jesus Himself will protect us from harm. But we must always remember that God has given us the great gifts of intelligence and reason and He expects us to use these gifts to make wise and prudent decisions. As your Bishop, it has been my responsibility to ask you to do everything possible to follow faithfully the best available disease-mitigation practices to contain the pandemic's rampage through our communities.

The Bishops of Illinois are today presenting a Plan for gradual reopening our churches and returning to our liturgical life that we know is imperfect. I am sure you will understand that this Plan will necessarily unfold in stages or phases. It will be influenced by what healthcare professionals tell us about the movement of the invisible virus. The situation remains fluid and potentially dangerous. For the present, I ask the priests to continue to livestream the celebration of the Eucharist and other prayer experiences, while the necessary preparations for the Plan are put into place.

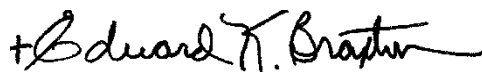
We expect the current situation may continue for several weeks, while we await updates on testing and the effectiveness of “social distancing.” Our Plan for reopening our Churches for public worship must include every precaution to ensure public gatherings do not create a second wave of contagion, thereby undoing the gains we have made by adhering to the directives developed by experts in infectious diseases.

The Bishops have reached an agreement with the Governor on a multi-phase Plan for reopening our churches for the celebration of the sacraments, private prayer, adoration and Mass. **Attached you will find an Executive Summary and the details of the full Plan.** Please study this document carefully and begin to implement preparations for Phase I immediately. The instructions contained in the Plan take precedence over any other recommendations, including the Thomistic Institute. I am aware that the Plan is somewhat detailed, and I realize that some parishes will find it challenging to follow every detail. I can only ask you to make every effort to follow the Plan. In the end, you can only do what is possible. It is for the Pastor and his co-workers in ministry to make prudent judgments, even when there are parts of the Plan that you may find difficult to do. Nevertheless, it is imperative for all parishes to avoid departing from these directives. Our Office of Worship will assist to the extent that it can.

Please note that in Phase I, we will begin with 10 people gathering for sacraments and adoration. This does **NOT** include the celebration of Sunday or weekday Masses. That will only begin after the parishioners are confident that they know how to manage social distancing and church cleansing in a pastoral and effective manner. Once the celebration of Sunday Eucharists begins, the Bishops have decided to keep the current dispensation in place AND, out of necessity, permit the faithful to fulfil their obligation at a weekday Mass. I realize that every parish may not be able to move through these Phases at the same pace. It may be particularly challenging to determine which 10 parishioners can participate, to select a sign-up method to assist in contact tracing. (Everyone is not online.) I am very sensitive to the fact that the health conditions of some priests make them very vulnerable. Though they may wish to follow the Plan in their parishes, it may be unwise for them to do so without consulting their physicians. Our priests and deacons must go forward doing all they can to safeguard their health and the health of their parishioners.

On the day of my Ordination, the Cardinal anointed my hands with Sacred Chrism, thereby blessing my insignificant hands for the work of nurturing the Church at the altar and on the streets. Like all of you, I long for the day when we can all fold our hands in prayer in the House of the Lord. Our Lady of Fatima, Pray for us! *Oremus pro invicem.*

Prayerfully and appreciatively yours in Christ,



The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton, Ph.D., S.T.D.  
Apostolic Administrator  
Diocese of Belleville

**P.S. This letter and the Executive Summary of the Plan should be posted to your Parish Websites and shared with all the parishioners in every way possible. Send these documents to your Parish Pastoral Council members, your Trustees, your Parish Liturgy Committee, your ushers and greeters, and others. Make every effort to communicate this to ALL of your people in a pastorally sensitive way. I have asked the Vicars Forane to try to arrange conference call meetings with Pastors in his Vicariate. Encourage everyone to observe carefully this Plan, while being creative and sensitive in providing the Christian Faithful safe and faith-filled experiences of the Church’s life of prayer.**



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*Diocese of Belleville*  
*Office of the Apostolic Administrator*

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This document is an Executive Summary of the multi-phased protocols and procedures, known as the Plan, for reopening churches and resuming public participation in the sacramental life of the Church for the Catholic dioceses in Illinois. The full Plan is provided at the end of this Executive Summary. The Plan has been developed by the bishops of the Chicago Province in consultation with and the approval of state and local public health officials and civil authorities.

Four guiding principles undergird the multi-phased Plan:

1. Everything possible should be done to provide people the solace of the church's sacramental life in a timely and reasonable way.
2. The current situation in Illinois remains dangerous and fragile. While much has been achieved, there remains the potential that the gains could be lost by a second more virulent wave.
3. Trust needs to be established that the top priority in any Plan is the safety and wellbeing of people. We cannot take for granted that people will return just because churches are reopened.
4. Calling people to exercise faithful citizenship will be key. Each Catholic will need to take personal responsibility for the common good as well as their own safety.

With these principles in mind, a Plan to prudently and gradually resume the full scope of public sacramental celebrations, liturgies and faith practices, has been designed. The Plan envisions a set of required measures and phases. There will be an ongoing review of the Plan so that adjustments are made in accord with new data. The basics of the Plan are as follows:

1. A robust **communications** effort to inform parishes and parishioners of the Plan and any updates to it.
2. Each parish needs to **recruit** non-vulnerable volunteers at the parish level to assist the pastor in implementing the Plan.
3. The selected volunteers are to complete **training** by way of a webinar. The training will begin the week of May 18.
4. A required **certification** of readiness to reopen will be required of each parish at each phase. Each parish is to complete an implementation template confirming completion of all action steps and demonstrating that there are a sufficient number of trained volunteers to execute it.

5. **Phase I** allows for parishes to reopen for Baptism, Reconciliation, Weddings and Funerals with a limit of 10 attendees.
6. **Phase IA** allows for parishes to reopen for private prayer and adoration with a limit of 10 attendees. Given the training schedule noted above, it is anticipated that all parishes, if they choose to do so, could be opened by May 23 for Phase I and by May 30 for Phase IA.
7. **Phase II** allows for reopening for weekday and weekend Masses for larger groups depending on the guidelines from the state and the capacity of the church building.
8. Through ongoing discussions with pastors, health care professionals and civil authorities, there will be a **review** of the Plan at each stage with an eye to making adjustments in accord with new data.

## **MULTI-PHASED PLAN FOR REOPENING CHURCHES**

### **PHASE I: Limited Sacramental Celebrations and Private Prayer**

#### ***Parish Actions and Responsibilities***

- The pastor will need the assistance of the parish community, as he will be required to create a parish leadership team consisting of 6 people, including himself, to co-manage operations and to supervise cleaning, set-up and greeting.
- The parish business manager or someone designated by the pastor will serve as the compliance manager for the parish and assist with the submission of necessary compliance forms.
- The entire team of leaders is required to attend training and submit an implementation template for reopening, which needs to be reviewed and certified by the archdiocese or respective diocese.
- The parish will need to maintain an on-going procurement program for safety and cleaning supplies.
- Based on go-forward approval, each parish will have the prerogative to offer Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, and Reconciliation in the church within the current limit of 10 attendees excluding ministers and on-site staff (“Phase I”).
- With additional preparation, each parish may optionally offer Eucharistic Adoration and private prayer times (“Phase IA”). In choosing to do so, parish leadership teams must comply with all published bishops’ guidelines outlining precautions preparing for, during and after the rite(s).

NOTE: During Phase I, parishes will not be allowed to offer either daily or Sunday Mass, even with 10 or fewer attendees. The resumption of public Mass, regardless of the number of attendees, is a more complex process, which requires the input of lessons that will be learned from Phase I. To that end, parishes and archdiocese or diocese will collaborate to gather data to improve the protocols and processes of the Plan before we move to worship services in Phase II.

#### ***Archdiocesan/ Diocesan Actions and Responsibilities***

The archdiocese or diocese, depending on capacity, will provide the following services to support the parishes and pastors:

- Provide parishes information on securing supplies or a list of preferred vendors for supplies throughout the phases of the Plan.

- Conduct required training webinars for clergy, parish leaders and volunteers, to assist the pastor in managing the Plan in each phase. The Archdiocese of Chicago will develop a standard webinar based on these guidelines and make it available to the other dioceses in the Chicago Province.
- Create and distribute to parishes a video message from the local bishop to explain the Plan for reopening churches.
- Evaluate and certify parish proposals for opening during the phases. Create a dedicated email box that will be monitored by staff to answer questions or otherwise support parishes that feel they cannot open safely without additional help.
- Gather and evaluate data from parishes on their Phase I and IA experience to adapt Phase II protocols for larger numbers, which will include public Mass.
- Work with government officials to explore possible increases in crowd size taking into consideration the capacity of church buildings.

## **PHASE II: Resumption of Public Masses**

### ***Parish Actions and Responsibilities***

In Phase II parishes may apply for certification to offer daily and Sunday Mass. Parishes will also continue to celebrate Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals and Adoration. Given the more complex nature of celebrations of the Mass, entering Phase II will require parishes to:

- Expand the number of parish team members if civil authorities permit an increase in the crowd size for Phase II.
- Maintain an on-going procurement program for safety and cleaning supplies.
- Continue recruitment and training of new, non-vulnerable volunteers as needed.
- Develop logistical procedures in accord with the guidelines of the Plan to manage more frequent and larger services that cover actions before, during and after the rites.
- Implement a safe and secure attendance reservation/ ticketing system to maintain order and facilitate possible contact tracing of infection.
- Submit a detailed proposal for implementing Phase II.

### ***Archdiocesan Actions and Responsibilities***

To support the parishes in the preparation and implementation of Phase II, the Archdiocese or diocese will:

- Establish and update requirements for all services and rites according to the standards of government officials, health care experts and church authorities.
- Review and certify all parish proposals for reopening with celebration of Mass.
- Provide additional required webinars and training, as needed.
- Create and distribute to parishes a video message from the local bishop to explain procedures for attendance at Mass in Phase II.
- Conduct random assessments over time to ensure continued compliance with published requirements.

- Gather feedback from parishioners across the Archdiocese or diocese on how well the safety protocols are working and how comfortable they are with church precautions for their safety.
- Continually monitor feedback on execution and resources to assist in problem solving through ongoing communication with parish leadership, state and local authorities and public health officials.



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## *Diocese of Belleville*

### **Baptisms**

These guidelines for celebrating Baptism in a Church reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and Church authorities as of May 1, 2020.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for groups of 10 or less in the church at any time, exclusive of ministers.

Parishes should adapt only as necessary however being careful not to violate social distancing, face covering and sanitizing practices.

Parishes or pastors may **not** alter number of allowed worshippers, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### **Preparation**

1. Use of a temporary receptacle for the water is advised. Placed in front of altar if possible, but in a space in which people are not forced to gather tightly.
2. The floor of the church should have tape marks around the font/receptacle indicating where parents should stand observing the required social distancing from the priest.
3. If the family and guests are to be met at the door of the Church, marks indicating 6 to 8 ft distance should be on the floor of the entryway indicating where all should stand.
4. The first or second row of pews (depending on distance from the font/receptacle area) should be marked for parents, godparents and other guests. Marks should be placed at least 6-8 feet apart for these guests indicating where they should sit. Further, there

needs to be 6-8 feet distance in front and behind guests if multiple pews need to be used.

5. Masks must be worn by all participating in the baptism including Godparents and other witnesses. Masks should be worn for the entire service by all participating with the exception of the baby if under 2 years old. Given the IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties should be advised to stay at home, but if there is a need to attend, can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.
6. The font/receptacle must be thoroughly cleaned and wiped with bleach wipes prior to every use. It must be allowed to dry before using.
7. Fresh water must be used for each individual baptism
8. A table should be set up near the receptacle to hold supplies needed and should be sanitized before every use. It is recommended that the table be covered with a glass top to allow for easy cleaning and disinfecting after the baptism.
9. Both the Oil of the Catechumen and the Chrism should be pre-dipped on small cotton swabs or Q-tips and placed on glass plates on the table for use. Do not use oil stocks directly.
10. The face shield for the priest should be placed on the table.
11. Hand sanitizer for the priest and parents should be placed on the table as well.
12. If possible, the priest/deacon should wear a "washable" stole and alb.
13. If a guide to the service is to be given to godparents or guests, the guide must be disposable and not reused for other services. A simple xerox copy will suffice.
14. A list of preparation requirements should be given/sent to parents at least 5 days before the baptism. These include:
  - Make sure all participants bring face masks,
  - Remind all guests to check temperatures the morning of service and stay home if someone has become symptomatic,
  - Those in a vulnerable population should be encouraged not to attend,
  - Photo opportunities inside the Church will be limited to one photo.
  - Please respect the limit on the number of guests that may participate. The total number including the priest/deacon and the child is 10.
15. The family and guests should take their temperatures and check themselves for symptoms the day of the baptism and alert the pastor if they have become symptomatic.

### **Rite of Baptism**

1. In an abundance of caution, a properly trained "greeter" or the priest/deacon or some agent of the parish, should meet the family and guests outside the Church or in the vestibule and hand out masks if they have not brought their own; require use of hand sanitizer and remind guests that anyone who is ill or has a temperature or been exposed directly to Covid-19 in the last 14 days should not enter the church nor participate in the service.
2. The priest and guest should don masks at the beginning of the service before the Greeting rite begins. The priest and guest should have sanitized their hands already. If not, it must be done before the Greeting Rite begins.



3. Priest should remind all present to please follow the precautions that are in place including keeping the mask on; sitting in designated pews at designated markers, etc. He should remind godparents and guests that they should stay in their designated seats for the entire service. (There is no requirement that the godparents “as witnesses” need to be in close proximity to the child and parents).
4. Maintain social distancing for the Greeting. The priest should sanitize hands before he signs the baby on the forehead and sanitize again after.
5. For the Liturgy of the Word parents should be seated together in the first pew, or in reserved marked seats, again observing social distancing from others present. Priest can remove his mask for Liturgy of the Word.
6. After the priest concludes the Liturgy of the Word, parents should be invited with child to move forward to font/receptacle to positions marked on the floor.
7. Priest/deacon should now don a face shield. Let parents and guests know this is for the safety of both the child and the priest.
8. Priest should keep mask on while performing the actual blessing of water through the presentation of the candle because of proximity to infant and parents.
9. After presentation of garment and lighting of candle, parents should return to their designated pew. Priest can then remove mask for concluding rite.

#### **Post Rite and Cleaning**

1. The parish will need to establish guidelines for any photo opportunities within the Church. This may be very difficult due to social distancing. All, including the priest/deacon, **must** remain masked for any pictures. The preference is for pictures to be taken outside the Church.
2. For the sake of safety, it is not allowed to schedule back to back baptisms given the need for having one group leave the Church, another enter, new set up, cleaning etc. The parish will need to judge its timing based on all requirements and order. Minimally one hour between service should be scheduled at the start. As a parish and ministers become more familiar with the time that is needed, they may adjust this.
3. All pews, instruments, receptacles used during the rite must be sanitized after the service. All of above must be completely clean and dry before reuse.
4. Church door handles and plates must be cleaned after each Baptism once all have left the church.
5. If unlocked and used, church restrooms should be cleaned immediately after all have left the building.
6. Those cleaning the space should wear masks and gloves.
7. Blessed water, and cotton swabs with holy oils should be disposed of properly. Gloves should be worn during the disposal.
8. Please remember masks distributed to family and guests may not be collected and reused by the parish.
9. Greeter or pastor should take an inventory of supplies after the service and replenish accordingly.



## Celebration of Matrimony

These guidelines for the celebration of Matrimony reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and Church authorities as of May 1, 2020.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for groups of 10 or less in the church at any time, excluding ministers.

Parishes should adapt only as necessary however being careful not to violate social distancing, face covering and sanitizing practices.

Parishes or pastors may **NOT** alter the number of persons allowed, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### Preparation

16. A small table (preferably with a glass top for easy cleaning) should be placed in the sanctuary in such a place that is easily accessible to the priest during the liturgy. Holy water, a plate with the rings and a plate with the *arras*, if used, should be placed on the table before the liturgy begins.
17. A particular section of church seating is to be designated for seating that will allow for people to sit, maintaining appropriate social distance (see more below). Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as “family pews.”
18. If there is a photographer, he/she is to strictly maintain proper social distance from all other participants throughout the liturgy. The photographer must be masked at all times.
19. Entry and exit doors are to be adequately designated and monitored. Entry doors are to be propped or held open before Mass, and exit doors are to be propped or held open at the end of Mass to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.
20. The floor of the church should have tape marks all observing proper social distance, designating where the faithful are to stand during any procession (e.g., Communion).
21. In addition, all pews / seating are to be clearly marked or designated such that there is a 6-foot perimeter in all directions for every individual seat. One pew or row of seating is to be left vacant between pews or rows used for seating congregants such that six feet of distance can be maintained in all directions. Seating should also be offset or staggered by row such that no two people sit directly in line with each other in adjacent seating areas. Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as “family pews.”
22. A “greeter” or some agent of the parish, should meet the participants outside the Church or in the vestibule and hand out masks if they have not brought their own; require the use of hand sanitizer. They should remind worshippers that anyone who is ill or having symptoms of illness should not enter the Church.
23. Worship aids are not allowed.

24. The Greeter is to assist people in maintaining proper social distance and other guidelines as necessary.
25. Masks should be worn for the entire time the faithful and guests are in the church. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.
26. Determine procedures for people using the restrooms. It is suggested that only one person use the restrooms at a time.

### **Celebration of the Liturgy**

10. The presider should make use of a lectern or stand for the missal or may even place the missal on the altar for the presidential prayers. NOTE: If a server is used, it should be an adult.
11. Participants, including ministers, are to sit in the designated / marked seats, keeping appropriate social distance. To emphasize: all should be wearing masks. Priest/deacon may remove his mask when he is speaking.
12. All participants should be in their places before the liturgy begins. The priest should also be in place at the front of the sanctuary.
13. For the opening procession, markers on the floor of the aisle should be used to maintain social distance. The couple, or the bride and her parent(s) processes to the front and meet the priest and the groom. The two witnesses are in their places in the front pews and remain there for the entire liturgy. (There is no need for witnesses to move forward during the service.)
14. For the liturgy of the word, the reader may lower his/her mask for the proclamation of the reading. This applies, as well, to the person announcing the petitions in the Universal Prayer / Prayer of the Faithful.
15. For the Order of Matrimony, markers on the floor, maintaining appropriate social distance from the priest, should indicate where the bride and groom are to stand. (The priest would stand 6 feet away either in front of the bride and groom, as may be customary, or off to the side.)
16. For the blessing of the rings, the priest goes to the table prepared beforehand, blesses the rings and then extends the plate holding the rings to the bride and groom without making physical contact. If used, the blessing and giving of the *arras* are done in the same manner.
17. The procession with the gifts is omitted. The gifts are to be on the credence or side table and the priest (or deacon if there is one) can bring them to the altar.
18. The blessing and placing of the *lazzo* or veil is not to be included.
19. For the nuptial blessing the priest is to maintain appropriate social distance from the couple.
20. If there is a deacon, a separate chalice shall be consecrated for him.
21. Holy Communion is to be distributed only under the form of the consecrated host, and only in the hand, with the priest sanitizing his hands immediately before and immediately after distributing Communion.
22. For the distribution of Holy Communion, a single-file line is necessary to maintain social distancing.

23. During the Communion procession, communicants are to be instructed to use the markers on the floor of the aisle to maintain social distance. The help of an usher or greeter, directing pew by pew, as may be customary will be very helpful.
24. At the front of the aisle, there is to be a table with hand sanitizer. Each communicant is to use it to sanitize his/her hands before receiving Communion.
25. Before he begins distributing communion, and before he dons his face shield or mask and goggles, the priest should announce to worshippers that the following is the procedure for reception of Communion:
  - a. Move forward in single file maintaining 6 feet between each person (look for markers on the floor).
  - b. Sanitize hands from table or from sanitizer offered by usher.
  - c. Do NOT touch your face, clothing or any other surface after sanitizing your hands
  - d. As you approach the priest after you have sanitized your hands, receive the Host in your hand ONLY.
  - e. Step six feet to the side, remove strap from one ear of your mask or face covering, letting it hang from the other ear and uncovering your mouth, consume the Host.
  - f. Replace the mask over your mouth and nose and return to your seat.
26. The priest moves to a side table, sanitizes his hands and dons his face shield or mask and goggles. Explain your use of the face shield/mask and goggles as a protection for the congregation and yourself.
27. For the procession out of church, the participants should be dismissed row by row, allowing for appropriate social distance on the way out.

#### **Post Celebration and Cleaning**

1. Pews and other high traffic areas of the church are to be cleaned using sanitizing wipes, with the removal of trash and other items from the pews.
2. Those performing the cleaning must wear gloves and a face mask.
3. All side tables and vessels/ instruments used in the service must be sanitized/wiped clean and left to dry before reuse. (Please note rinsing with water alone is NOT sufficient to kill a virus.)
4. In the unlikely event that a worshipper or minister coughs or sneezes in proximity to the celebrant, the vestments used for this service must be sent for cleaning and NOT reused until cleaned.
5. After the celebration, the ritual books should be sanitized / wiped.
6. If photographs are to be taken after the service inside the church, it is recommended that all but the bride and groom wear masks. Minimally, if the priest/deacon is to be photographed with the wedding party he must keep his mask on. A recommendation to take the pictures outside the church where more space is available should be made to the wedding party before the service.

## Funerals

These guidelines for celebrating funerals in a church reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals, and Church authorities as of May 1, 2020.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for groups of 10 worshipers or less in the church at any time exclusive of all ministers, funeral directors and usher or greeter.

Parishes should adapt as necessary however being careful not to violate social distancing, face covering and sanitizing guidelines.

Parishes or pastors may **not** alter number of allowed worshippers, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### Preparation

27. The floor of the church should have tape marks all observing proper social distance, designating where the faithful are to stand during a procession (e.g., Communion).
28. In addition, all pews / seating are to be clearly marked or designated such that there is a 6-foot perimeter in all directions for that seat (consistent with social distancing). Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as "family pews."
29. A "greeter" or some agent of the parish, should meet the participants outside the Church or in the vestibule and hand out masks if they have not brought their own and require the use of hand sanitizer. The Greeter should also remind worshippers that if they are ill or have a fever they should not enter.
30. Entry and exit doors are to be adequately designated and monitored. Entry doors are to be propped or held open before the celebration, and exit doors are to be propped or held open at the end of the celebration to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.
31. If a worship aid is to be used, the aid must be disposable and not reused for other services. A simple xerox copy will suffice. NOTE: Parishes must have proper licensing for reproducing music in any worship aid.
32. Masks should be worn for the entire time the participants are in the church even when responding to prayers. The sole exception is for reception of Communion when the mask should be lowered but replaced immediately after consumption of the sacred Host. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.

## **Celebration of the funeral**

28. Holy water and the pall should be placed at the entrance of the church, near where the coffin will be stationed for the Introductory Rites. If there is no server they should be accessible by the priest at the appropriate times. If there is a server, it is to be an adult. The funeral director can assist with the pall if needed.
29. Family members and other participants should be at the appropriate social distance.
30. For the procession to the front, the celebrant should invite participants to observe social distancing, using the markers on the floor of the aisle.
31. The funeral bier can be processed to the front by the funeral director and one other person who is participating (one at the front of the bier, one at the back).
32. Participants are to sit in the designated / marked seats, keeping appropriate social distance. The priest or funeral director should remind mourners of this.
33. For the liturgy of the word, the reader may lower his/her mask for the proclamation of the reading. This applies, as well, to the person announcing the petitions in the Universal Prayer / Prayer of the Faithful.
34. The procession with the gifts is omitted. The gifts are to be on the credence or side table and the priest (or deacon if there is one) can bring them to the altar.
35. Holy Communion is to be distributed only under the form of the consecrated host, and only in the hand, with the priest sanitizing his hands immediately before and immediately after distributing Communion.
36. For the distribution of Holy Communion, a single-file line is necessary to maintain social distancing.
37. During the Communion procession, communicants are to be instructed to use the markers on the floor of the aisle to maintain social distance. The help of an usher or greeter, directing pew by pew, as may be customary will be very helpful.
38. At the front of the aisle, there is to be a table with hand sanitizer. Each communicant is to use it to sanitize his/her hands before receiving Communion.
39. Before he begins distributing communion, and before he dons his face shield or mask and goggles, the priest should announce to worshippers that the following is the procedure for reception of Communion:
  - a. Move forward in single file maintaining 6 feet between each person (look for markers on the floor).
  - b. Sanitize hands from table or from sanitizer offered by usher.
  - c. Do NOT touch your face, clothing or any other surface after sanitizing your hands
  - d. As you approach the priest after you have sanitized your hands, receive the Host in your hand ONLY.
  - e. Step six feet to the side, remove strap from one ear of your mask or face covering, letting it hang from the other ear and uncovering your mouth, consume the Host.
  - f. Replace the mask over your mouth and nose and return to your seat.
40. The priest moves to a side table, sanitizes his hands and dons his face shield or mask and goggles. Explain your use of the face shield/mask and goggles as a protection for the congregation and yourself.
41. For the Rite of Commendation, if incense is used (it is optional) the priest will prepare the censor himself. This could be done at the side table after the Prayer After Communion.
42. For the procession out of church, the participants should be dismissed row by row, allowing for appropriate social distance on the way out.

### **Post Rite and Cleaning**

7. The pews used for the funeral are to be cleaned after the celebration.
8. All vessels used during the funeral should be sanitized with a wipe after the service. (Please note that rinsing vessels or instruments in water alone does NOT kill the virus and is thus not sufficient.)
9. The ritual book should be sanitized / wiped.
10. The individual sanitizing should immediately sanitize their own hands after finishing the cleaning of the vessels and book.
11. The Greeter/Usher should replenish supplies as needed.



## Sacrament of Reconciliation

These guidelines for celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation in church reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and Church authorities as of May 1, 2020.

These guidelines are based on the current requirements for groups of 10 or less in the church at any time exclusive of all ministers and an usher or greeter.

Parishes should adapt only as necessary however being careful not to violate social distancing and sanitizing practices.

Parishes or pastors may **NOT** alter number of allowed persons, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### Preparation

33. The floor of the church should have tape marks designating where penitents are to wait in line (or designated markings in the pews), all observing proper social distance in all directions.
34. A "Greeter" or some agent of the parish, should meet the penitents outside the Church or in the vestibule and hand out masks if they have not brought their own; require use of hand sanitizer. The Greeter should also remind individuals that if they have a fever or are ill, they should not enter.
35. Greeters are to maintain social distancing of penitents waiting to enter the church.
36. Masks should be worn for the entire time the penitents are in the church. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.

### Rite of Reconciliation / Confession

43. The priest should don a mask for the entire time he is hearing confessions.
44. In order to maintain social distancing, the traditional "Confessional" is not to be used. Instead, a space or spaces in the church should be designated to celebrate the rite, such as is often done during celebrations of Communal Reconciliation (Form II).
45. The priest's chair should be set, with a "screen" to his right or left (e.g., a suspended piece of fabric, a cloth panel, etc.) in order to provide for anonymity, with a chair for the penitent on the other side of the "screen" opposite the priest's chair (maintain social distance).
46. Another chair should be placed at least 6 ft in front of the priest's chair, facing him, for those who wish to celebrate the rite face to face.
47. An appropriate distance should be provided from those waiting to receive the sacrament, in order to maintain confidentiality of the penitents who are celebrating the rite (i.e., confessing).

48. In giving the penance, the priest should request that the penance be fulfilled outside the church. That is, that no penitent remains in the church after confession to fulfill the penance.

**Post Rite and Cleaning**

12. After each penitent leaves, an assisting minister, Greeter or the priest shall sanitize the chair used.
13. Pews used while penitents waited need to be cleaned and wiped.

## EXPOSITION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

These guidelines for the Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament in Church reflect updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and Church authorities as of May 15, 2020.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for groups of 10 worshippers or less in the church at any time, exclusive of all ministers.

Parishes or pastors may **not** alter number of allowed worshippers, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### Preparation

1. When announcing to the parish a time of Exposition the following should be clearly stated to the faithful to set expectations:
  - a. No more than 10 worshippers will be allowed into the church at any given time. This includes the initial opening service and closing Benediction.
  - b. If other parishioners are waiting, worshippers should limit their prayer time to 20 minutes. A greeter may respectfully remind them after 20 minutes that others are waiting and ask them to exit after the blessing by the priest or deacon.
  - c. Anyone with illness or noticeable symptoms will be respectfully asked not to enter the church at this time.
  - d. Masks should be worn for the entire time the faithful and guests are in the church. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.
  - e. Worshippers may not sit together unless they are domiciled together.
  - f. A Greeter will guide worshippers to seating that will be clearly marked.
  - g. Once seated, worshippers are asked not to change seats or move around the church.
2. The total number of adorers allowed in the church is not to exceed 10.
3. Exposition should take place in the main church and not a side chapel, even one dedicated to Adoration because of social distancing and spacing requirements.
4. Pews / chairs should be visibly marked as to where participants can sit, maintaining social distance of at least 6 feet. Staggered seating is best. Keep in mind that 6 ft must be maintained in front, back and on either side of worshipper. Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as "family pews."
5. A greeter is to meet participants in the narthex or vestibule and be on duty for the entire time of the Exposition
  - Ensure that every participant is wearing a protective face mask
  - Ensure that every participant sanitizes his/her hands before entering the church
  - Remind worshippers that if they have a fever or are ill, they should not enter the church

- Ensure that each participant knows that once he/she takes a seat they are to remain in that seat for the time they are in the church
  - Ensure that those who are waiting in line maintain proper social distance
  - As one worshipper leaves the church the greeter will allow another person in. However, a different seating area should be used, or the Greeter should wipe down the seating area before reused by a different adorer. The Greeter should wear gloves if they are wiping down seating and sanitizing their hands afterwards.
6. The priest or deacon should wear a mask during the service whenever he is not speaking. This is to provide a good example and not confuse the worshippers about masking.

## **Exposition**

1. The Blessed Sacrament is brought from the tabernacle and placed in the monstrance on the altar.
2. The priest or deacon should sanitize his hands immediately before touching the Host or the luna.
3. The priest or deacon then places incense in the censor, kneels and incenses the Holy Eucharist. The rest of the assembly kneels as well.
4. After the incensation, he returns to the chair.
7. During the adoration, the presider may proclaim one or more of the readings of the day, ensuring a period of substantial silence in between readings.
8. If appropriate, the priest or deacon may give a homily. He may remove his mask for this.

## **9. Time of Adoration**

10. During the time of adoration the priest or deacon should remain with those coming to the church for adoration or be substituted by another priest or deacon so that the people always have a minister present. As each succeeding group of ten enter the Church there should be a reading of the scripture of the day by the priest or deacon and a short homily may be given, all the while leaving time for a period of silent adoration. At no time can the Blessed Sacrament be left alone. At the end of the scheduled time for each group present for adoration, the priest or deacon can bless the assembly with the monstrance.

## **11. Benediction**

At the end of the scheduled time for the church to be open for adoration, benediction takes place followed by the reposition of the Blessed Sacrament. For Benediction the priest or deacon goes to the altar, genuflects and then kneels. Taking the censor, he incenses the Blessed Sacrament. He then stands and says the prayer. The priest or deacon then puts on the humeral veil, genuflects, and takes the monstrance. He then makes the sign of the cross with it over the people in silence. He then returns the monstrance to the altar, sanitizes his hands, genuflects and removes the luna and reposes it in the tabernacle.

**Post Service**

1. After the liturgy the luna should be wiped down
2. All pews or chairs used during the time of adoration should be disinfected following the service and left to dry.
3. Masks should be disposed of and not reused.
4. Church door handles and door plates must be cleaned after all have left the Church. If they have been opened restrooms should be cleaned immediately after the service has concluded and people have left.
5. Greeter/Usher should replenish any supplies as needed.

## **Church Opening for Private Prayer and Devotion**

These guidelines for private prayer and devotion in Church reflect updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and Church authorities as of May 1, 2020.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for numbers of 10 or less in the church at any time, this is exclusive of all ministers and either an usher or greeter.

Parishes should adapt only as necessary however being careful not to violate social distancing, face covering and sanitizing practices.

Parishes or pastors may **not** alter number of allowed worshippers, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### **Preparation**

1. Determine the schedule for opening the church for private prayer. Remember the church may not be left unattended during this time. To maintain appropriate health and safety precautions, there must be a “greeter” or usher on duty at all times.
2. When announcing to the parish a time for private prayer and devotion in the church, the following should be clearly stated to the faithful to set expectations:
  - a. The exact times the church will be open for prayer.
  - b. No more than 10 worshippers will be allowed into the church at any given time.
  - c. If other parishioners are waiting, worshippers should limit their prayer time to 20 minutes. After waiting 20 minutes, a greeter may respectfully remind them that others are waiting and ask them to exit.
  - d. Worshippers should bring their own masks or cloth facial coverings which will need to be worn throughout their time in adoration. This requirement is not enforced for those with difficulty breathing through a facial covering. However, these individuals will be seated at a much greater distance from others.
  - e. Worshippers may not sit together unless they are domiciled together.
  - f. A Greeter will guide worshippers to seating that will be clearly marked.
  - g. Once seated, worshippers are asked not to change seats or move around the church.

## **Time of Private Prayer**

1. The total number of worshipers allowed in the church is not to exceed 10.
2. Private prayer should take place in the main church and not a side chapel because of social distancing and spacing requirements.
3. Pews / chairs should be visibly marked as to where participants can sit, maintaining social distance of at least 6 feet. Staggered seating is best. Keep in mind that 6 ft must be maintained in front, back and on either side of worshipper. Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as “family pews.”
4. A greeter is to meet participants in the narthex or vestibule and be on duty for the entire time the church is open for prayer. The Greeter’s duties include:
  - Ensure that every participant is wearing a protective face mask
  - Ensure that every participant sanitizes his/her hands before entering the church
  - Remind worshippers that if they are ill or have a temperature they should not enter.
  - Ensure that each participant knows that once he/she takes a seat they are to remain in that seat for the time they are in the church
  - Ensure that those who are waiting in line maintain proper social distance
  - As one worshipper leaves the church the greeter will allow another person in. However, a different seating area should be used, or the Greeter should wipe down the seating area before reused by a different adorer. The Greeter should wear gloves if they are wiping down seating and sanitizing their hands afterwards.
5. The greeter should give worshippers a five-minute warning before the church will close for the day.

## **Cleaning**

1. After the time of private prayer, any area of the church used for seating must be wiped down and sanitized as well as collecting any paper materials left behind.
2. The individual cleaning must wear mask and gloves.
3. Greeter should replenish supplies as needed.