



## Catholic Diocese of Evansville

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Date: March 17, 2020

To: Priests, Deacons

From: Matt Miller, Office of Worship

RE: Guidelines, Recommendations and Best Practices - Coronavirus Prevention Measures

In light of the most recent changes, here are more suggestions/best practices/guidelines. Unless noted, all of these should be considered in effect until further notice:

### General

- The most vulnerable populations should avoid participating in any of these events.

### Weddings

- All marriages would be celebrated outside of Mass.
  - *Order of Celebrating Matrimony*, Chapter II, ...without Mass.
- Music should be limited if not eliminated.
- Holy Communion should not be given.
- Only one reading, Responsorial Psalm and Gospel should be used.
- Participation limited to officiant (priest/deacon), engaged couple, wedding party (bridesmaids and groomsmen), immediate family (no more than 10 total).

### Funerals

- Funeral Liturgy
  - Funeral liturgy outside Mass may be celebrated at the church or at the funeral home.
    - *Order of Christian Funerals*; Part I: Funeral Rites; Funeral Liturgy; 4. Funeral Liturgy outside Mass (nos. 177-203).
  - Participation limited to celebrant, immediate family (no more than 10 total).
  - Only one reading, Responsorial Psalm and Gospel should be used.
  - Music should be limited if not eliminated.
  - Holy Communion should not be given.
- Rite of Committal
  - Rite with or without Final Commendation may be celebrated with immediate family.
    - OCF nos. 204-233.
- No Vigil and Related Rites unless done privately before the formal visitation time begins.
- Memorial Mass should be celebrated at a later date.

## Baptism of Children

- All baptisms of children would be celebrated outside Mass.
  - *Order of Baptism of Children*, Chapter II, Order of Baptism of One Child (nos. 72-106).
- Unless it is the case of siblings, only one child should be baptized per celebration.
- New water should be used for each baptism liturgy.
- Pouring the water over the child, rather than immersion, should be done.
  - Participation limited to celebrant (priest/deacon), child, parents, godparents, and immediate family (no more than 10 total).
  - Music should be limited if not eliminated.
  - In Rite of Receiving the Child, only the parents should be invited to make the Sign of the Cross on the child.
  - Only one reading should be used.
  - Anointing before Baptism may be omitted.
  - Anointing after Baptism w/ sacred Chrism should not be omitted.
  - “Ephphatha” may be omitted.

## Anointing of the Sick

- When possible contagion or infection is present, the priest may use another instrument such as a ball of cotton (CIC 1000.2). A latex glove may also be worn (if there are no concerns of latex allergy for priest or recipient).
  - These should be burned or buried after use.
- The priest should only perform one anointing to avoid placing a possibly contaminated thumb or instrument back into the oil stock.
- The laying on of hands in blessing should also be part of the administration when at all possible.
- Priests in the high-risk group (i.e., over 60) should refrain from celebrating the sacrament when infection is possible.
- Priest with comorbidity (i.e., when two or more chronic illnesses are present) should refrain from celebrating the sacrament when infection is possible.

## Adoration Chapels/Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament

- If at all possible, exposition should be moved from smaller chapels into the main body of the church in order to give more space and less chance for contact.

## Reconciliation

- Temporarily move out of the confessional if it is in a tight space and provide the Sacrament of Reconciliation in a larger room where a confidential conversation can still be held.
- If possible, use a screen to block the air flow between the priest and penitent.
- The penitent should always have the option of confessing their sins anonymously.
  - There are other ways to accomplish this if a screen is not possible (i.e., penitent sits behind priest).
- Communal Reconciliation (Rite of Penance, Chapter II) should be suspended until further notice.
- No permissions for General Absolution (Chapter III) have been given.

## RCIA

- Per RCIA no. 34, the bishop will dispense from participating in two of the Scrutinies.
- Per RCIA no. 26, the bishop will grant permission for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation at a time outside of the Easter Vigil.

- Preferably on a Sunday in the Easter season, but may also be outside of Easter
- In danger of death, the person should be initiated using “Christian Initiation of a Person in Danger of Death” (RCIA nos. 375-399).

### Confirmations

- Confirmations scheduled through the end of May are postponed until further notice.
- Bishop may grant faculty for pastors to celebrate Confirmation at their parishes.

### Mass Intentions

- Mass intentions can and should be fulfilled at Masses without a congregation as much as possible.

### Continued – Pastoral Care of the Sick/Homebound

- It is up to the discretion of each pastor/parish as to how to best minister to those in hospitals, nursing homes, or the homebound in their parish.
- Protocols established by hospitals and nursing homes should be followed.
- While it is now necessary to limit or temporarily suspend routine visits to the homebound or nursing homes, every effort should be made to provide the sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick as well as viaticum for those who are in need.

### Continued Best Practices

- Respectfully, but repeatedly, remind people (in newsletters, social media, etc.) that if they are feeling ill, they should stay home to avoid spreading the disease (this is good advice year-round).
- Respectfully, but repeatedly, assure the faithful that if they are sick or are experiencing symptoms of sickness they are not obliged to attend Mass, and even that out of charity they ought not to attend.
- Priests, deacons, and other ministers are urged to practice good hygiene, regardless of the rite being celebrated. One should wash their hands before and after, or using an alcohol based anti-bacterial solution.
- Churches may want to consider offering hand sanitizer at the entrances to help limit the spread of the virus.
- Vaccinations, good hygiene, avoiding sick people, and staying home if you are sick are the best ways to avoid transmitting the virus.

The local health department will let us know if further actions need to be taken, and then you will be notified as quickly as possible.

Please continue to remember all of the sick in prayer:

- Please celebrate a Mass for the sick on an appropriate weekday in the coming weeks. Options would include from *Roman Missal*, Masses and Prayers for Various Needs and Occasions, III. For Various Occasions, 45. For the Sick; or from *Masses of the Blessed Virgin Mary*, no. 44, The Blessed Virgin Mary, Health of the Sick.
- Include an intercession for the sick in the Prayer of the Faithful (see below).
- A prayer composed by Pope Francis is also included below for your consideration.

## NEW - Act of Spiritual Communion

During this time, the faithful should be encouraged to make an act of spiritual communion. When unable to receive the Eucharist, one can pray for Jesus to enter their heart spiritually, that they may be filled with the graces they miss in the sacrament. A prayer attributed to Saint Alphonsus de Liguori is included below.

My Jesus,  
I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament.  
I love You above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul.  
Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally,  
come at least spiritually into my heart.  
I embrace You as if You were already there  
and unite myself wholly to You.  
Never permit me to be separated from You.  
Amen. – Saint Alphonsus de Liguori

## Sample Intercessions

- For those who are suffering in the current outbreak of sickness that they might be healed; let us pray to the Lord.
- For scientists, health professionals, public officials, and all who are serving the common good in this difficult and uncertain time, that they will be filled with wisdom and understanding; let us pray to the Lord.
- That in times of illness our merciful and loving Father will strengthen our faith and trust in his goodness and divine providence; let us pray to the Lord.
- That our compassionate Father would touch all affected by the current outbreak with healing and peace; let us pray to the Lord.

## Prayer of Pope Francis

O Mary, you shine continuously on our journey as a sign of salvation and hope.  
We entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.  
At the foot of the Cross you participated in Jesus' pain, with steadfast faith.  
You, Salvation of the Roman People, know what we need.  
We are certain that you will provide, so that, as you did at Cana of Galilee,  
joy and feasting might return after this moment of trial.  
Help us, Mother of Divine Love,  
to conform ourselves to the Father's will and to do what Jesus tells us:  
He who took our sufferings upon Himself, and bore our sorrows to bring us,  
through the Cross, to the joy of the Resurrection. Amen.

We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.  
Do not despise our pleas – we who are put to the test – and deliver us from every danger, O glorious and blessed Virgin.

## **What You Can Do to Stay Healthy**

### **For More Information:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/current.htm>

Indiana State Department of Health Weekly Influenza Reports <https://www.in.gov/isdh/22104.htm>

United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/sacred-art-and-music/influenza-and-the-liturgy.cfm>