Diocese of Norwich

Liturgical Guidelines – May 19, 2021

In light of the full reopening of our churches, and the continued desire to follow sound liturgical principles as well as the most current scientific guidance to ensure the continued safety of the faithful, **the following guidelines are to be applied in all parishes of the Diocese of Norwich until further notice.**

# Sunday Obligation

The general dispensation from attendance at Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will be ended as of Sunday, 23 May, 2021 – the Solemnity of Pentecost.

Given the reality that the pandemic has not completely subsided, some persons may be prevented from attending Mass for legitimate reasons, including:

1. those suffering from serious pre-existing conditions that may make them more susceptible to falling ill from COVID-19;
2. those who are ill and homebound;
3. a caregiver in close contact with someone who:
4. has tested positive for any contagious disease, including COVID-19;
5. is in quarantine due to exposure to any contagion or residing with someone who is in quarantine.

# General Guidelines

1. Masks are required to be worn by the faithful while inside the church and any church building (school, parish offices, etc.).
2. No social distancing will be required within the church.
3. All pews will be available for seating.
4. Pastors may consider designating a “social distance” section for those who are more vulnerable.
5. Any requirement for individuals to register in order to attend Mass is to be discontinued.
6. Church bulletins, as well as printed materials (books, holy cards, leaflets, etc.) are permitted.
7. Pastors are encouraged to continue livestreaming at least one (1) Sunday Mass.
8. Holy Water Fonts should be filled and restored to use.
9. Pastors are to ensure that the church, bathrooms, parish facilities, etc. are cleaned on a regular basis.
10. A sign at the entrances to the church reminding people to wear masks is recommended.
11. Parish or private functions for which parish halls, etc. may be rented must follow State guidelines.
12. There are no restrictions for these events in addition to the State mandates.
13. The State is planning to provide additional guidelines for indoor and outdoor activities later this month.

# Liturgical Guidelines for the Celebration of Mass

1. Hymnals, Missals, Missalettes, etc. may be placed in pews.
2. Choirs and instrumentalists are allowed. The wearing of masks and social distancing for choirs and instrumentalists is recommended.
3. Congregational singing with masks is allowed.
4. Masks must be worn by anyone taking part in the entrance procession or recessional. Clergy may greet parishioners before or after Mass while wearing a mask.
5. Altar servers are allowed, however, the use of altar servers to hold the Missal for the celebrant should be avoided.
6. There are no restrictions on the use of readers.
7. Holy Communion is to be distributed by clergy (priests/deacons) ONLY. An extra-ordinary minister of Holy Communion may only take the place of priest/deacon who is “high risk” due to age or underlying health condition in distributing Holy Communion, provided the extra-ordinary minister of Holy Communion is not also “high risk.”
8. Masks are required by everyone in the sanctuary except the celebrant and anyone speaking to the congregation.
9. Collection baskets with handles passed by ushers are permitted.
10. The offertory procession is permitted.
11. The exchange of the sign of peace remains suspended.
12. Cibora should remain covered until the distribution of Holy Communion.
13. Liturgical processions, e.g., May Crowning, Corpus Christi, etc. are allowed, provided that participants wear masks.

# Procedures for the Distribution of Holy Communion

1. Holy Communion is to be given only under one species – consecrated Hosts.
2. Social distancing is not required for Communion lines, therefore, two Communion lines in the center aisle are permitted.
3. The faithful are to be reminded that masks are to be removed immediately before receiving Holy Communion and then replaced immediately after receiving.
4. Those distributing Holy Communion must wear a mask.
5. Hands should be sanitized before distributing Holy Communion and after the final person receives.
6. Sanitizing fingers between communicants is required whenever contact is made with a communicant.
7. The use of any plexiglass barriers is to be discontinued.
8. The faithful are to be reminded that they may choose to receive either in the hand or on the tongue. Those who choose to receive on the tongue may not be discouraged or forbidden to do so.
9. The Celebrant’s chalice must not be shared.
10. Concelebrants should receive by means of intinction.
11. Deacons should only receive the consecrated Host.

# Guidelines for other Liturgical and Sacramental Celebrations

## The Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. Masks for priest and penitent are required.
2. Social distancing is no longer required. The use of traditional confessionals should be restored if not already in use.
3. Sanitization procedures between individual penitents are not required.

## Weddings and Funerals

1. The above guidelines for Mass apply also to weddings and funerals.
2. The bride and groom are not required to wear masks.