

Diocese of Winona-Rochester (*Revised May 29, 2021*)

Guidelines for the Public Celebration of Masses

and Other Liturgical Celebrations

I. DIRECTIVES for the safe celebration of Mass:

*Preparations before Mass:*

1. The faithful should be aware that the obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains dispensed until further notice.
2. Priests should not celebrate more than three Masses on Sunday (Can. 905 §2). Permission to celebrate more than three Masses must be requested.
3. Mass may be celebrated outdoors on church property.
4. Those attending Mass are encouraged to wear masks. However, pastors or local municipalities may choose to require masks indoors.
5. Signage must be placed on entrance doors reminding anyone with fever or flu-like symptoms not to enter the church, and that there still will be a risk for anyone who attends a public Mass to contract the coronavirus. Parishes should post signs at the entrances advising people as they enter that masks are encouraged.
6. Parishes may have missals, hymnals, prayer cards or other paper resources in the pews. Parishes may also provide missals or missalettes for parishioners to take home and bring to church.
7. Hand sanitizer should be available at all church entrances and exits.
8. The sprinkling rite at the beginning of Mass, Holy Water fonts, and baptismal fonts may be used. Bottled Holy Water may also be made available for parishioners to take home.
9. Consider limiting the number of ushers, greeters, altar servers and/or volunteers needed for each Mass.
10. A choir, cantor, and accompanist are allowed, provided they are 12 feet from other parishioners. Congregational singing may take place. Woodwind and brass instruments may be used sparingly.
11. Sacristans, servers, and those who prepare Communion elements must carefully wash their hands prior to touching the bread and pouring the wine; a facemask and gloves are recommended.
12. Separate chalices should be used for the celebrant, each concelebrant, and deacon. Each cleric should purify his own chalice.

13. All liturgical ministers must wash/sanitize their hands before and after Mass.
14. Photos may be taken before, during, and after Liturgies, at the pastor's discretion. Any posed photography should be planned so as to limit the time when people are standing at a close distance.
15. Parishes must develop and implement a COVID-19 preparedness plan according to the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) [COVID-19 Universal Guidance for All Businesses and Entities](#).
16. Receptions or social gatherings may take place.

*During Mass:*

17. For a monetary collection, baskets or other appropriate containers could be placed at church exits or elsewhere in the building for people to drop envelopes or donations. As an alternative, baskets with long handles are allowed; collection baskets are not to be passed person-to-person. Ushers taking the collection are encouraged to wear masks and gloves. Ushers must immediately wash or sanitize their hands after the collection.
18. The presentation of gifts may resume.
19. The Sign of Peace is omitted entirely. Consequently, during Mass, when the celebrant says, "The peace of the Lord be with you always," and the people respond, "And with your spirit," the celebrant forgoes the usual invitation to offer a Sign of Peace and moves immediately to the "Lamb of God."
20. The faithful should be reminded that at this time no one is obliged to receive Communion, and that Christ is encountered in those gathered in his name, in the proclamation of the Word, and especially by joining themselves to the offering of Christ to God the Father during the Eucharistic Prayer. The benefits of Spiritual Communion should continue to be promoted.
21. All Communion ministers must sanitize their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
22. If possible, hand sanitizer should be available in the aisle(s) for use by people prior to receiving Communion.
23. Encourage Communion to be received only in the hand for the health and safety of both the minister and faithful. Any communicant wearing gloves must remove them prior to receiving. Those who receive in the hand should consume their consecrated host in the presence of the minister. If someone insists on receiving Communion on the tongue, an EMHC should be designated for this purpose. If no EMHC is available or willing, communicants should receive on the hand, or make a Spiritual Communion.
24. Communion is to be distributed at its normal time.

25. Communion will not be distributed to the faithful from the chalice; pastors may make exceptions on an individual basis according to their prudential judgement, for example, for those with celiac disease who cannot partake of the host, preparing a chalice beforehand as needed.

26. If inadvertent contact is made between minister and communicant's tongue, the minister is to purify his hands before continuing to distribute Communion. It may be prudent to have a small table with the proper items for sanitizing nearby.

*After Mass:*

27. Parish bulletins may be passed out by ushers after Mass, or be available for people to pick up themselves by the door. As an alternative to handing out bulletins, parish bulletins should be posted to the parish website or emailed to parishioners.

28. After being purified according to the rubrics, all Communion vessels are to be thoroughly and properly cleaned after Mass with hot, soapy water.

29. Frequently touched surfaces in the church (door handles, microphones, etc.) should be regularly cleaned and sanitized, according to a set schedule in the parish's preparedness plan.