



OFFICE of the ARCHBISHOP

## ARCHDIOCESE OF LOUISVILLE

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Dear Father,

May God bless you during this holy season of Lent! Thank you for your questions and responses to the liturgical instructions sent out on Monday. Your feedback is helpful in identifying areas that need further clarification. It may be necessary to send updates regularly in these early days as we discover what practices are working and which need refinement.

- Mass without an assembly:
  - The celebration of Mass ordinarily involves one or more ministers. This may continue to be possible for you, for example, if you are in residence or close proximity with other ministers. However, it will be necessary in many cases that a priest will celebrate Mass with no others physically present. The current pandemic is “just and reasonable cause” for this temporary departure from the norm (*GIRM* #254). Instructions for Mass without other ministers present are attached.
  - Masses which are live-streamed should have at least one other minister present.
  - It is also important that Mass be celebrated in a secure place (such as a locked church, chapel, or residence). In no way should these celebrations of Mass be open to the public, either explicitly or implicitly by way of open doors. This is a dramatic departure from norms, but one we deem necessary for the health and safety of all involved at this time of grave pastoral need.
  - Mass intentions for days when multiple Masses would have been celebrated in your parish may be combined, although the priest himself may accept only one stipend (*cic.* 945 ff). With the permission of those who made the offering, it may be prudent to reschedule intentions for after the resumption of public celebrations of the Mass.
- Opening the church for private prayer and/or Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament:
  - To avoid groups congregating at a specific time, it is best to offer Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in the tabernacle over an extended period of time, rather than Exposition and Benediction at a specific time.
  - Parishes must also monitor the church during these times, both for general safety and to ensure compliance with CDC recommendations for capacity, social distancing, and cleanliness. I acknowledge that this will not be possible for every parish. I ask pastors and those who assist them to determine if it is possible to open the church at designated times in your parish.
- Confessions:
  - Guidelines for safe social distancing will most likely require the use of a different space than your normal confessional or reconciliation room. Please ensure that this space is secure and sound-proof.
  - If you experience large numbers of penitents at the scheduled time for reconciliation, it is prudent to move to scheduling confessions “by appointment.”

- Communion :
  - Communion to the Sick, especially in cases of urgent need (viaticum), should continue as much as possible. This is increasingly challenging, as hospitals and nursing facilities are closing their doors even to clergy. Please urge those who cannot receive Holy Communion to make an act of Spiritual Communion. A sample prayer can be found on our Archdiocese COVID-19 resource page: [www.archlou.org/covid-19](http://www.archlou.org/covid-19)
  - It is also important to urge Spiritual Communion for the faithful who are not sick. Since the purpose of these liturgical guidelines is to reduce large gatherings and physical contact, Communion services are not appropriate.
  - During this time, as with the other sacraments, if reception of Holy Communion can be delayed, it should be delayed for the health and safety of all involved. In other cases, follow the guidelines for Holy Communion outside Mass. This would include at least recitation of scripture and the Lord's Prayer before distribution.
  - Some parishes have begun a practice of "drive-through" Communion. As I seek further guidance on this practice, please be aware of the proper precautions. 1) To ensure the proper reverence of the distribution of Holy Communion, a prayer such as the "Our Father" and a brief Scripture passage should be offered before distribution. 2) Social distancing and proper hygiene remain critical. Large numbers will provide challenges for both of these concerns, and so I encourage parishes to proceed cautiously. I will ask staff to seek advice.
- Celebration of the Triduum
  - It is not possible to project when public Masses may again be celebrated; however, it is wise to begin preparing in case there is no assembly for Triduum liturgies. The Office of Worship is preparing guidance on this, which will be distributed later this week.

I thank you for your patience as we continue to chart a path through unfamiliar territory. I welcome your continued feedback and creative solutions for addressing the many pastoral challenges that these liturgical adaptations present.

Fraternally yours in our Lord,



Most Reverend Joseph E. Kurtz, D.D.  
Archbishop of Louisville

Attachments (3)