



## Office of Liturgy + Liturgical Advisory

Thursday, October 22, 2020 + Memorial of Saint John Paul II, Pope

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### I: Modifications to the COVID 19 Guidelines and Protocols for Liturgical Celebrations

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We have had several months with certain protocols in place; those parishes that have taken these protocols and observed them carefully and seriously are to be commended. Now, with the approaching celebrations of All Saints, Commemoration of our Faithful Departed, and Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, some considerable time was taken to review our current COVID-19 *Guidelines and Protocols* and determine what modifications might be offered at this time. These indeed continue to be challenging times on so many levels; however, we – as the Church of Saginaw - are committed to keeping our people safe and at the same time maintaining the best liturgical practices that are possible under these unprecedented circumstances.

Upon assessment of your current liturgical practices, conversations with your parish leadership, and evaluation of the modifications outlined in the “Liturgical Advisory”, you may begin to make the following alterations to parish liturgical *Guidelines and Protocols*:

#### † CAPACITY:

With the winter months coming up, where it is possible to do so, our pastoral leaders are allowed to admit the number they can safely accommodate while maintaining the required sanitizing, social distancing (six feet minimum), and the required use of face coverings. This number is determined by the seating capacity of the church and is no longer limited to the previous 25% capacity. Due to church size, this means that there will continue to be occupancy restrictions in some parishes. This modification presumes high touch surfaces will continue to be disinfected after each liturgy and that hand sanitizers are available and used by all.

#### † MUSIC:

The absence of some liturgical music has been noted for many and we are making these modifications to the present *Guidelines and Protocols* to gradually resume our normal liturgical practices with regard to liturgical music. Effective immediately — with the continued expectation that all in the congregation will wear face coverings — the proper parts of the Mass may be sung by all (this includes the Gloria). This is in addition to the singing of the Entrance Antiphon (or familiar refrain of an appropriate hymn), as well as the singing of a Recessional song. However, the Creed and Our Father should not be sung. An accompanist or a cantor may play and/or sing a hymn or special music at other places in the Mass.

### † PROCESSION AND RECESSIONAL:

Using appropriate safety measures (beginning with hand sanitizers and face coverings) a small liturgical procession and recessional is permitted – especially with regard to “progressive solemnity” for the upcoming celebrations of All Saints, Commemoration of our Faithful Departed, and Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe. For example, a simple procession might include the Cross, Minister of the Word with the Book of the Gospels, the Deacon (if applicable), and the Priest-President. A more solemn procession might add incense and candles.

### † SACRISTAN AND/OR ALTAR SERVER:

If additional assistance is desirable, a Sacristan or Altar Server may now be trained and added to attending liturgical preparations, celebration and after Mass tasks (specific to our current COVID-19 *Guidelines and Protocols*). However, they should not hold the Roman Missal for the Collect or Prayer after Communion (as noted in previous *Guidelines and Protocols* a stand for the Missal or Excerpts from the Roman Missal can be placed in front of the president’s chair). They may assist by carrying the cross (or candles) in the Procession and Recessional. They may assist in setting the altar (according to the current *Guidelines and Protocols*) with proper facial coverings and sanitizing of hands. The Priest-President greeting people prior to and after Mass can be resumed with the required facial coverings, social distancing and safety accommodations.

### † THE PRESENTATION OF GIFTS:

The presentation of wine and hosts by members of the assembly may resume during the Preparation of the Altar and Gifts. Those selected (only one person per vessel) to present the gifts of bread and wine are to be wearing face coverings and must sanitize their hands before picking up the vessels (which are each covered and/or lidded) and after presenting them.

*NB: There is to be no modification to the present Guidelines and Protocols to the collection of parish stewardship (collections) at this time.*

### † COMMUNION DISTRIBUTION:

By now, all our parishes should have returned to the usual practice of people coming forward to receive Communion (observing social distancing of at least six feet). Markings can be placed on the floor as needed (given a previous Liturgical Advisory notation). Some parishes will be limited by narrow aisles, pew layout or arrangement of chairs/seating. Only where this is the case and social distancing cannot be maintained should the ministers go between the pews to distribute the Eucharist. The practice of distributing Holy Communion after Mass and as people are leaving the church should be discontinued and returned to its proper place within the liturgy as soon as possible (as already outlined in a previous Liturgical Advisory).

## † AFTER MASS:

People should be asked to exit (perhaps row by row) to the degree that is possible to keep the appropriate social distancing requirements and not gather together after Mass for visiting.

*NB: As you know, things are constantly changing. In the event of altering circumstances, we remain flexible in the case that we have to return to a more restricted approach again in the future. It is our hope that these modifications will help to bolster people's hope and desire to be gathering as a worshipping community – with the assurance that we have "Guidelines and Protocols" in place in order to keep them safe. Let us pray for each other and those whose lives have been lost or affected by this virus as we journey through this time of uncertainty.*

## II: Pastoral Considerations:

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- **SOLEMNITY OF ALL SAINTS** - If your parish is fortunate to have first, second, or third-class relics, bring them out for the weekend Masses and use them within the worship environment, placing candles before each of the relics. Perhaps you might also incorporate icons and other images of the saints throughout the worship space as well. Consider using a sung Litany of the Saints (familiar to your parish community) as the Opening Song led by the cantor and responded to by the assembly – either accompanied or a capella – and incorporating hand bells or chimes.
- **COMMEMORATION OF THE FAITHFUL DEPARTED** – Since we have not been using Books of Intention (due to COVID-19 *Guidelines and Protocols*), you might want to provide specially designed "Memorial Cards" for parishioners to fill out at home. Invite parishioners to bring them back to your parish church and placed into a designated basket to collect names of the Faithful Departed -- to be remembered at Masses throughout the month of November. This could be placed near the Baptismal Font and/or Paschal Candle (which you may want to light at parish Masses). Given the COVID-19 pandemic of this year - and the deaths of thousands around the world – you might want to formulate a special intention to be incorporated into the parish's Universal Prayer ("Prayers of the Faithful") as we remember our beloved dead.
- **WEDDINGS AND FUNERALS** – in light of these "modifications" for Sunday and Holy Day Masses, we are also reviewing the *Guidelines and Protocols* specific to the celebration of weddings and funerals. Upon completion, additional suggested modifications will be forthcoming (e.g. processions of bride/groom, bringing the casket in and out of the worship space, etc.).

- o Moreover, we are currently in consultation with a broad range of materials (BCDW, FDLC, NPM, Center for Disease Control, etc.) which we are reviewing to provide pastoral considerations and potential modifications to help in the planning for and celebration of Advent and Christmas.