



2021

LITURGICAL ADVISORY + June 2,

Optional Memorial of Saints Marcellinus & Peter

Catholic Diocese of Saginaw + Office of Liturgy + 5800 Weiss Street + Saginaw, Michigan 48603-2762

A SPECIAL MESSAGE FROM BISHOP GRUSS

Greetings and blessings to all of you. I would like to acknowledge and thank those pastoral leaders who posted in their parish bulletins and/or on their parish website, my April 16, 2021 pastoral letter that I sent out to all the Faithful of the Diocese of Saginaw. In the letter, I invited our Catholic brothers and sisters to “come home” to the Sunday celebration of the Eucharist. I likewise acknowledge and thank those Faithful who have responded to my letter of invitation and returned to Sunday Mass.

As we seek to invite and welcome our Faithful back to our parish churches, I am most grateful to all those who have carefully observed the published (often times changing) *Liturgical Guidelines and Protocols* -- in the midst of this COVID-19 Pandemic. These are in place and continually reviewed and updated to ensure that our places of worship provide a safe environment for our people to gather for the Church’s liturgical life.

As we are all aware, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services has rescinded the mask obligation for those who are two weeks beyond the full vaccination process. Additional changes for the liturgical life in our parishes can be found in this *Liturgical Advisory*. I think we can all be optimistic as we return to a more “customary” way of celebrating the Mass and our Church’s rich liturgical tradition and move toward some sense of normalcy across the State of Michigan.

I ask that you kindly examine and review the following updates and/or modifications with your parish staff (and parish leadership) and implement them according to your best pastoral practice.

In the peace and joy of the Risen Christ,

+ Robert D. Gruss

Bishop of Saginaw

HEALTH AND SAFETY REMINDERS:

- Those who are fully vaccinated may wear a face-covering and social distance but are no longer required to do so in churches.
- Those who have not been fully vaccinated are to continue wearing face-coverings and to practice social distancing to protect themselves and others in churches. Because a parish community – and our society – requires mutual trust and a commitment to the common good, each individual is asked to make the best decisions for him/herself as well as for others. Parishes do not have the responsibility to verify who is and who is not vaccinated.
- All priests, deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) must continue to wear a face covering during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Make sure hand sanitizers remain and are available at each entrance to ALL places where parishioners gather.
- Continue to reduce the number of “touching-points” as people enter by propping open doors or having a parish staff member and/or Minister of Hospitality open doors.
- Because of the minimal contagion on the surfaces of furniture and other hard-surfaces, disinfecting between the celebrations of Mass may no longer be necessary. However, those who wish to do so may certainly bring along their own disinfectant products. Thorough daily cleaning of all public places on the parish campus continues to be a high priority.

UPDATED CAPACITY:

- Churches in the Diocese of Saginaw are no longer required to limit attendance to 50 percent capacity.
- Each parish is to provide a portion of the church – with a size to be determined by the pastor – where social distancing and face-coverings are consistently maintained.
- Capacity for indoor social events is now at 50%. Capacity for outdoor gatherings has no restrictions. Any social celebrations and/or activities that involve food and beverages (e.g. coffee and doughnuts, funeral luncheons, group meals, youth ministry events, etc.) should follow any and all local health department guidance (given the fact that the Diocese of Saginaw covers 11 counties).

VENTILATION:

- As previously published, parishes are reminded to – given the changing seasons and Michigan weather conditions – ensure all heating and air-conditioning equipment are operating properly and efficiently. As is feasible, the parishes should continue to ensure adequate fresh air supply for all facilities as provided through the mechanical system(s),

as well as when appropriate and safe to allow doors and windows to be opened, even if slightly. In previous guidance, it is recommended, when feasible, to leave doors propped open. This was both to help with ventilation as well as to reduce the risk of common touch areas. In addition, it is important that the parish regularly service or have serviced their HVAC equipment/units.

MODIFICATIONS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE EUCHARIST:

- **Holy Water** may return to parish baptismal fonts with regulated, flowing water and filtration systems. In addition, holy water may return to stoups at the entrances of the church ONLY if there is a plan in place to clean and replace the holy water daily.

NB:

(1) For those who desire to take holy water home, provide containers that have been filled and blessed (and not drawn from the font or stoups).

*(2) For the **Order of Baptism of Children (OBC)** and the **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)**, the holy water used should be “fresh” (that has NOT been touched by the Faithful from the font in an act of self-blessing).*

- **Hymnals/Missalettes** may return to be either placed in the pews or distributed when entering the worship space. If not already doing so, consider posting a digital Order of Worship (particularly the songs) online --- even if you do not print one for the congregation) so those viewing live-stream may participate. Please be sure to follow all lawful copyrights and licensing procedures.
- **Choirs/Musicians** (as Ministers of Music) may gradually be restored in the formation of small ensembles of (4-6) voices and ONLY stringed and/or woodwind instruments. Consider creating an ensemble for each parish Mass and add accompanying stringed and/or woodwind instruments on a schedule of rotation. Rehearsals must take place in large, well-ventilated areas and should not last more than forty-five (45) minutes in any one location.

NB:

The Cantor and/or Psalmist may return to singing the Psalm at the Ambo.

- **Stewardship/Collections** of the peoples’ financial offerings should not involve the passing of collection baskets. Specified monitored collection baskets (for collection of

envelopes) may remain in place. In addition, if deemed pastorally appropriate, Ministers of Hospitality (Ushers) may use long handled collection baskets as long as all social distancing protocols are observed.

- **Liturgical Ministers** who would normally assist at the celebration of the Mass in the parish – Altar Servers, Lectors, Cantor and/or Psalmist and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) – may resume when they have been properly instructed AND:
 - In the case of minors, permission is given by a parent or guardian
 - Facial coverings for vaccinated individuals are no longer required in the sanctuary
 - Maintaining social distancing protocols is still important

NB:

With regard to the setting of the Altar -- during the Preparation of the Gifts (that is the placing of the corporals for the priest-presider and the vessels for the distribution of Holy Communion, paten with host, chalice, cruets, etc.), if it is deemed pastorally appropriate, those parishes who engage the ministry of a Sacristan, may desire to have him/her be the one to accomplish this necessary liturgical action (and perhaps "assisted" by the Altar Servers). In other words, this is to be completed in a reverent, timely fashion and not compounded with unnecessary movement and/or activity. This may likewise provide the opportunity for the credence table to be returned to its former (pre-COVID-19) location.

- **Processional/Recessional** may resume to the full complement of liturgical ministers (including the Cross-accompanied by candles) with facial coverings optional for liturgical ministers if they have been vaccinated. However, if the *Book of the Gospels* is not carried in by the Deacon of the Mass (who will proclaim the Gospel), it might be best to have it already placed on the Altar (prior to Mass).
- **The Lord's Prayer**, although recited as a communal prayer, it does not require the holding of hands by the entire assembly and should not be done at this time – unless they are members of the same household.
- **The Sign of Peace** obviously remains part of the "Communion Rite" (as prescribed in the *Roman Missal*). The admonition to "offer the Sign of Peace" may be given at the Eucharistic liturgy; however, the "sign" is to be offered without physical contact - unless

they are members of the same household. It should occur verbally or with a slight nod of the head to others. This will now require the adjustment of the musical introduction to the singing of the **Lamb of God**.

- **Holy Communion** remains to be distributed only under one species – the Body of Christ. Reception of Communion is recommended in the hand only. However, if reception on the tongue is allowed, it should be done AFTER those who have received in the hand.

OUTDOOR MASSES

- Outdoor Masses may still be offered to the people of the parish if deemed appropriate by the Pastor, Parochial Administrator or Director of Parish Life.



POPE FRANCIS MAKES CHANGES TO THE GENERAL ROMAN CALENDAR

(from the USCCB/Bishops' Committee on Divine Worship)

I: In two decrees (issued by the congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments) – and made public on February 2, 2021, Pope Francis has ordered the inscription of three new *Optional Memorials* in the General Roman Calendar for the latest Doctors of the Church: Saints John of Avila, Hildegard of Bingen, and Gregory of Narek – and the addition of Saints Mary and Lazarus to the existing Memorial of Saint Martha on July 29th. Information on all the new celebrations is available at [USCCB.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year-and-calendar](https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/liturgical-year-and-calendar).

II: Pope Francis also announced earlier this year the institution of *World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly*, which will take place each year on the fourth Sunday in July, close to the feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus. Recalling the upcoming feast of the Presentation of Jesus in the Temple – when the elderly Simeon and Anna encountered the child Jesus and recognized Him as the Messiah – Pope Francis said, “the Holy Spirit even today stirs up thoughts and words of wisdom in the elderly.” The voice of the elderly “is precious,” he said, “because it sings the praises of God and preserves the roots of the peoples.” The elderly, he continued, “remind us that old age is a gift and that grandparents are the link between the different generations, to pass on to the young the experience of life.” Mark your calendars now -- additional pastoral and liturgical information to follow.