



Plan for Limited Reopening of Masses in Washington State

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Plan for Limited Reopening of Masses¹ in the State of Washington

Date of Implementation: To Be Determined

Introduction

These directives and guidelines are prepared specifically for the limited reopening of Masses, including funeral and weddings. Continue to follow previously released instructions and guidance for the other sacraments. Prudential judgments about other parish activities are not governed by these instructions but should be taken into account. Any other parish activities must always observe public directives, especially physical distancing.

In order to open Masses, parishes must follow the directives and work within the guidelines outlined in this document. These directives and guidelines will remain in force until further notice or changes by the State allow for or require revision. It is important to remember that these directives and guidelines are not intended to be permanent adjustments to normal practice but temporary responses to the pandemic.

Reopening will not mean an immediate return to our practices prior to suspension of public Masses. Your patience, understanding and cooperation are appreciated.

Due to different circumstances at each parish, reopening for Masses is left to the prudential judgment of the pastor. Charity and understanding are asked of all the faithful as parishes begin to reopen Masses. One parish may not be able to offer the same opportunities as a neighboring parish due to size, space limitations or other circumstances (e.g. local COVID positive cases, underlying health condition of pastor, etc.). In all cases, a pastor should communicate clearly and frequently with his parishioners about his plan, and other details about reopening Masses. Additionally, Area Vicars or Deans will be asked to provide support and help monitor reopening of Masses in their Vicariates or Deaneries. Coordination by Vicariate or Deanery is important. Pastors in a Vicariate or Deanery should communicate their plans for reopening to their area Vicar or Dean.

The Vicar for Clergy Office will serve as a resource to pastors and parishes as they prepare their plans to reopen Masses. To request assistance, discuss plans, share ideas or ask questions please contact the appropriate contact in your diocese. You must have final authorization from the Chancery before initiating any celebration of public Mass.

¹ N.B. The Archdiocese of Seattle incorporated (even verbatim), adapted and added to a **draft document of the Archdiocese of Portland**, which we took as our own working document. We are thankful for their good work, much of which is found verbatim in this document.

General principles

- A general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will remain in place.
- Anyone attending Mass does so at their own risk. Vulnerable, at-risk and otherwise concerned persons should remain home. Those who attend should be made aware of government regulations regarding potential mandatory quarantine if a fellow attendee subsequently tests positive for COVID-19.
- Anyone who has even the slightest symptoms or feelings of sickness must remain home. It is strongly encouraged that each person conduct a voluntary self-assessment of their health as a pre-condition for attending Mass (see Appendix A for a sample self-assessment).
- Livestreaming of Masses will continue.
- Restrictions and guidelines here pertain to all Masses, including weddings, funerals, etc.
- When feasible, fresh air should be introduced into any indoor spaces where people are assembled. If possible, you should utilize U.V. filters with a higher MERV rating.
- All other applicable policies and safety procedures are to be strictly observed.

Strict physical distancing

- Parishes will be expected to meet any requirements of their local health departments.
- Physical distancing policy should be posted on the church doors.
- Mass attendance will be limited in accordance with government directives. For services taking place in modified Phase 1 and Phase 2 counties, indoor services are permitted with 25% capacity or 200 people, whichever is less. In health guidance for services taking place in Phase 1 counties, only outdoor services are permitted, with no more than 100 attendees. Phase 3 permits an indoor capacity of 50% or 400 people, whichever is less.
- Physical distancing must be practiced at all times on Church property (minimum of six feet apart, except members of the same household). This will mean roping off areas (at least every other pew, etc.) to make sure this is maintained; and closely monitoring and facilitating ingress and egress, so that whether the faithful are coming in, are in place, are coming up to Communion or exiting, 6 feet distance is maintained between discreet household units.
- It may be necessary to appoint a hospitality minister to ensure physical distancing. Except for members of the same household, the faithful must always remain at least six feet apart during the Mass, including during the Communion Procession.

- Use of face masks/coverings is required during religious services by the order of the governor (<https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19Phase1and2ReligiousAndFaithBasedGuidance.pdf>) and the Washington State Secretary of Health (https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Secretary_of_Health_Order_20-03_Statewide_Face_Coverings.pdf). Children under 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings. If individuals arrive without a face mask, the hospitality minister or usher should provide one. If they refuse to wear a mask, please ask if they have a medical reason for not wearing one. Please note you cannot ask *what* the medical condition is. If they do have a medical condition, please place them in a section where they have 10-12 feet of distance rather than 6 feet of distance. If they do not have a medical reason for not wearing a mask, ask them to consider attending Mass through livestream. If they insist on attending in person and not complying with the stated requirement or if they have a medical reason for not wearing a mask, please place them at the back of the church with at least 10-12 feet of physical distancing. Please invite them to a conversation, perhaps with someone on the COVID-19 taskforce at a mutually agreed upon time later that week.
 - Each parish may want to limit the number of people who may attend Mass while refusing to wear a mask. When that limited quota is filled, then no additional such persons may attend that Mass.
 - If a substantial number of congregants are uncooperative with the mask requirement, then permission to celebrate public Mass may be withdrawn from the parish in question. It may be advisable for parishioners to know that a safe and sanitary environment is a necessary pre-condition for the public celebration of the Mass.

Limited reopening of Masses

- Pastors and administrators will make every effort to follow state and archdiocesan guidelines. At the same time, pastors and administrators will have the final decision on what can and may be done in their specific churches when reopening masses.
- If a parish is unable for practical or other reasons to strictly maintain physical distancing and perform the cleaning requirements as indicated in this document, the parish cannot open Masses.
- Charity and understanding are asked of all the faithful as parishes begin to reopen Masses. One parish may not be able to offer the same opportunities as a neighboring parish due to size, space limitations or other circumstances (e.g. local COVID positive cases).
- Masses should normally be conducted in the church. The reopening should take place in strict accord with the directives and numbers allowed by the State. (Please note: It is a historically well-established practice to celebrate outdoor Masses for various groups like migrant workers, youth camps, and other large group events. These and similar parish

Masses may continue to be celebrated with physical distancing and other appropriate precautions.)

- Pastors must communicate clearly and effectively with their parishioners about their plans for reopening (or not reopening) Masses.
 - It is strongly encouraged that pastors use positive messaging to emphasize their desire to “return to normal,” and to acknowledge that many may feel that these restrictions are excessive, and that the government and/or church is “overreacting.” Pastors should reiterate that we are deeply committed to prudence in public health and for the common good while balancing that with Catholics’ desire and right to the Sacraments. It is for this reason that all parishes must follow these guidelines during this time.
- Priests may offer two Masses during weekdays (morning and evening), and may offer five Masses on the weekends – normally two Saturday Vigils beginning as early as 4:00pm, and three Sunday Masses, for example - to allow as many people as possible in a given period to have the opportunity to attend Holy Mass and receive the Eucharist.
- The Mass schedule should be published and clearly indicate that attendance is by reservation only. The normal approval process for adding/dropping or otherwise changing the parish Mass schedule is suspended until public gathering restrictions are eliminated or until further notice. Please send your Mass schedule, including the changes, to your area Vicar or Dean.
- The faithful are strongly encouraged to sign-up for Mass at only one parish.
- Pastors and staff should develop a sign-up system for attending Holy Mass. Simple is best. It is recommended that parishes solicit the names of all the faithful in their community who would like to attend Holy Mass. A database or list should be kept. The first and last name of each person who wishes to attend should be collected, along with the best contact info for them.
 - Using positive messaging will likely discourage members of our parishes from signing up for Mass at multiple parishes to attempt to “beat the system,” to attend Mass every Sunday.
- A first-come, first-served system as well as exclusively online or email sign-up systems should be avoided. These methods might exclude many who otherwise would wish to attend (e.g. those disabled, without Internet access or technical savvy). Multiple and easily accessible ways of sign-up should be employed.
 - For example, through a combination of methods including online sign-ups, email, phone calls and written sign-ups. Or, a phone call only sign-up method could work.
- Individuals/families will be eligible to sign up to attend Mass only once in a given period as determined by the pastor (one week, two weeks, three weeks or four weeks), depending upon the size of the community. This is to allow as many people in the parish

as possible the opportunity to attend Mass. Since the faithful are dispensed from the precept to attend Sunday Mass, they are not obliged to attend Mass on Sundays.

- The pastor will determine how best to assign specific names to specific Mass times. Every sense of fairness must be maintained. Aside from those with special needs, any preferential treatment should be avoided.
- Parishes are discouraged from verifying whether an individual who signs-up for their Mass rotation is registered or otherwise from their parish. Mass organizers should remember that the maximum number allowed may include the priest, liturgical ministers, livestream videographers and anyone else present during Mass. For this reason, the total number of ministers/volunteers should be reduced to a bare minimum. A record of the list of those who signed-up and attended each Mass must be maintained. In the event of a COVID positive case, the parish will be asked to assist public officials with tracing and contacting everyone who may have been exposed.
 - If this occurs, before disclosing Mass attendance information to public officials or others, the pastoral leader must contact the appropriate person in the Office of the Vicar for Clergy to ensure that the information protects the rights of the faithful, and that this information is being requested by a proper authority.
 - The list of those who attended Mass must be destroyed two weeks (14 days) after the liturgy occurs, as the data ceases to be helpful to public officials after that time.

Masses should be of shorter duration

- Time spent in proximity increases risk of transmission. For this reason, pastors and priest celebrants are asked to employ legitimate options as given in the Roman Missal to keep Masses to a shorter duration. This may also make it easier for priests to offer additional Masses.
- Considerations may include:
 - Announcements could be eliminated or kept brief,
 - a priest celebrant could enter from and exit directly to the sacristy,
 - if a cantor is used, sing only one verse of songs,
 - use a shorter Penitential Act,
 - use shorter version of readings when an option,
 - reduce the time of the homily,
 - limit the general intercessions,
 - temporarily suspend the use of incense during the liturgy (this will also reduce potential irritation that could cause people to cough),

- purify the Sacred vessels after Mass, etc.

Liturgical practices currently proscribed will remain proscribed

- No Sign of Peace
- No distribution of the Precious Blood
- No holy water in fonts
- Sunday Masses can only be offered beginning at 4:00 pm on Saturday through Midnight on Sunday.

Additional, temporary liturgical restrictions

- No collection will be taken during the Mass (instead, baskets can be placed near the entrance or in another accessible location).
- No presentation of the gifts by the faithful.
- The invitation to the faithful to exchange a sign of peace should be omitted.
- Children's liturgy of the Word must be discontinued during this time.
- Congregational singing is highly discouraged at this time.
- Choirs are not permitted at this time. If any singing is done, use cantors only. (Please note: Singers/musicians count against the total number allowed at Mass. Congregational singing should be avoided.)
- If cantors are present, they should remain at least thirty feet away from the people in front of them. This minimizes the potential spread of infection through projected respiratory droplets. At this time, all parishes should be using the *minimal* number of liturgical ministers possible to celebrate Mass. Every liturgical minister (including deacons) must wear a mask and observe physical distancing during the Mass. The only exceptions for wearing a mask are:
 - For the priest celebrant.
 - When a lector or deacon is reading the Sacred Scriptures, at which time they must be 12 feet away from anyone else.
 - When a cantor is singing the Psalms, at which time they must be 30 feet away from anyone else. It is highly recommended that cantors wear masks at all times; it should be an exception that the cantor does not wear a mask.
- A pastoral leader should be diligent in planning to prevent the faithful from absent-mindedly singing. (Note: This temporary restriction may be modified depending upon further study on the effects of singing and virus transmission.)

- A cantor might sing only the proper antiphons of the Mass.
 - A cantor should sing all the way through the Responsorial Psalm without the response parts (see GIRM #61).
 - Music that is not conducive to congregational singing might be selected (prelude-type pieces).
 - Instrumental-only music is a good option in the Easter Season and Ordinary Time.
 - The presider should not chant the Mass parts, as the faithful know the sung responses, and will likely respond in chant.
- A pastor may decide to continue a livestream Mass with more typical music that encourages congregational singing for virtual participants, but – in this case – that Mass must continue to be restricted to the current 8-in-person limit and those assisting with the Mass must wear face masks.

Celebration of the Mass²

- A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind cannot celebrate public masses or administer sacraments. The same holds for other ministers who might serve at a Mass (deacon, servers, lectors) as well as for sacristans, ushers, etc.

The priest celebrant should not wear masks or gloves during the celebration of Mass. Instead, they should remain more than 12 feet from the congregation AND from any other liturgical ministers during the entirety of the Mass. In such circumstances, there is no substantial risk of infection.

- A further consideration: the Mass is imbued with powerful sacramental and liturgical symbolism. Wearing a mask and gloves especially by the celebrant, would be a detrimental counter-sign in this context, and it is not warranted by considerations of hygiene if the priest remains a proper distance from the congregation and from other liturgical ministers. (An analogy: public health officials and government leaders do not wear masks during press conferences, given the nature of those public appearances and the distance between the officials and the audience/press, although they do wear them in private meetings.)
- The other ministers (deacon, servers, lectors) should maintain a 12-foot distance from the priest and 6-feet from each other. *Suggestions for how to observe physical distancing for liturgical ministers:*
 - A minimal number of liturgical ministers should be involved in any Mass.

² Taken from <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>

- Lectors can be seated in the congregation and come to lectern at the proper time.
 - The lectern should be located at least 20 feet from the priest presider's chair.
 - The priest could place the missal on a stand at the chair or even on the altar when he recites the presidential prayers, rather than having a server hold the book.
 - The deacon should be seated in a distant area of the sanctuary from where the priest is seated.
 - Maintain a proper distance in the sacristy and during the entrance and recessional processions.
 - If necessary given the configuration of the church, consider modifying the procession's route in order to maintain the necessary distance from members of the congregation.
 - The offertory procession (bringing up the gifts) should be omitted.
 - A deacon (if present) or a server may bring the missal, chalice, paten/ciborium, and cruets of wine and water to the altar, while the priest remains at the chair. (Alternatively, the priest could do this himself.)
 - After the deacon or server moves away, the priest could come to the altar and arrange the items on the altar.
 - The lavabo should be done by the priest alone, without assistance, either at a credence table near the altar or at the side of the altar itself. After the priest returns to the center of the altar, a server could then remove the lavabo items.
- The only Eucharistic elements that should be immediately in front of the priest during the Eucharistic prayer and Consecration are the Eucharist elements that he himself will consume.
 - If hosts for the communion of the faithful are to be consecrated, they should be in a Ciborium with lid and placed on a second corporal towards the side of the altar. The priest should remove the lid on the Ciborium with distribution Hosts just before the Consecration and replace the lid on the Ciborium immediately after the prayer of Consecration. Any other chalices should be consecrated and also be placed on this second corporal. This allows the priest to proffer the words of consecration directly over the host he will consume, with the other hosts on the altar but not directly in front of the priest as he speaks the Eucharistic prayer.

Distribution of Holy Communion: procedures for the celebrant

The Mass is celebrated in the normal way, as reverently and devoutly and possible. The following restrictions and considerations must be taken into account.

- The priest is not permitted to wear masks or gloves during Mass. Instead, he must practice exceptional physical distancing throughout the liturgy (12 feet).

- At the start of Mass, or at a suitable point during Mass, the priest should explain that those who desire to receive Holy Communion may do so after the conclusion of the Mass.
- The Precious Blood should not be distributed to the faithful, nor should the faithful receive the Eucharist by intinction.
- A sufficient quantity of hosts for distribution to the faithful should be consecrated at the Mass.
- The priest (and, if present, the deacon) would consume the Eucharist in the normal way, but would not immediately proceed to distribute Communion to the servers or the faithful. Rather, the newly-consecrated hosts would be left on the altar until the conclusion of the Mass.
- After the concluding blessing and the dismissal, the priest (and deacon, if present) remain in the sanctuary. At the chair, the priest removes his chasuble and the deacon removes his dalmatic, which are only worn during the celebration of Mass itself.
- The priest (and any other ministers distributing Holy Communion) are required to don a face mask and then practice good hand-hygiene (washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using an alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately before taking up the ciborium or ciboria.
 - Please note: If the priest who has celebrated the Mass is in a higher-risk group, a different priest, arriving at the conclusion of Mass, might distribute Holy Communion in his place.
- Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the faithful is wearing gloves. Hand hygiene is effective against the virus. In these circumstances, gloves are not needed if the priest performs hand hygiene.
- The Eucharistic Minister will carry the ciborium to a communion station where a table with sanitizer is accessible if needed.

Distribution of Holy Communion: procedures for the faithful

- The faithful should be instructed about the manner of Distribution of Holy Communion. Namely:
 - They should remove any face coverings before presenting themselves for Holy Communion.
 - They may not wear gloves to receive Holy Communion.

- During this time, it is temporarily the policy of the Archdiocese to ask the faithful, out of concern for others, to receive Communion *in the hand only*.
 - The exception to this policy is the celebration of the Mass in the Extraordinary Form, for which Communion in the hand is not allowed by liturgical law. Therefore, Extraordinary Form Masses may continue to communicate on the tongue, carefully following all the guidelines, including sanitizing after giving communion if the Priest suspects he made contact with the mouth or tongue of the communicant, or feels that the communicant's saliva or mucus may have transferred to his hand.
 - Proper catechesis on how to receive Communion may be necessary (with hand extended in a fully flat manner so as minimize potential bodily contact when the Host is placed).
- The celebrant should remind the faithful that they must keep 6 feet apart from members of other households as they approach for Holy Communion.
- The celebrant or liturgical ministers should invite pews to approach one by one to maintain physical distance, and approach single file only.
- The faithful receive Holy Communion in the normal way (bowing before receiving, consuming the host immediately, etc.). The exchange, "Body of Christ" / "Amen" can take place while there is 6' distance between the Communion Minister and the congregant.
- Any persons for whom it is physically difficult to approach for communion may be brought Communion in their pews, and should indicate in some way that they will not be coming forward, but desire to receive.
- If a Eucharistic Minister senses that his or her fingers have made contact with a person's hands, that minister must pause, and use hand sanitizer. (The priest may also arrange for an ablution cup to be placed on an accessible table, and may purify his fingers in the ablution cup before using hand sanitizer.)
 - A Eucharistic Minister may repeat this process as often as judged necessary during the distribution of Holy Communion. It is not necessary, however, for him to use hand sanitizer between each communicant, unless the minister makes actual contact.
 - **The person whose hand has been touched by the Eucharistic Minister needs to be instructed to sanitize their hands as well; sanitization stations needs to be positioned near each Communion line for this purpose.

- At the conclusion of the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest (and any other ministers) return the remaining hosts to the tabernacle.

Entrances and exits

- Churches should designate one place of entrance when possible (at least one entrance should be accessible) in order to control the numbers of people coming in. Once the maximum is reached, no one else can be allowed entrance. Door monitor(s) will be needed. (Please keep in mind that all emergency egress doors must not be locked while the church is occupied.)
 - Only those on the list can enter.
 - Maximum number allowed must never be exceeded. Maximum number may include the priest, ministers, livestream videographers and anyone else in the space during Mass.
 - Parishes should publicize its maximum number on the website, on the sign-up sheets and on the doors of the church.
- If the capacity for a Mass is filled, people who simply show-up for Mass and must then be turned away at the entrance should be given a number to call or otherwise given a way to add their name(s) to the sign-up list for Mass. Please be pastorally sensitive but firm in turning them away.
 - To promote hospitality and pastoral sensitivity, those “checking in” members of the assembly are encouraged to have a clipboard on which they can take down the contact information for someone they have to turn away, to then pass on to an organizer for follow up. A sign-board or handout that explains how to “sign up” for Mass is commendable, so that those turned away can find proper instructions to sign up.
- When possible, entrance doors should be propped open as people enter so the faithful do not need to touch the handles or doors to enter. They can be closed when Mass begins.
- When possible, exit doors should be propped open after Mass to allow the faithful to exit without touching the doors or handles. Multiple exits should be used at the end of Mass to expedite departure and minimize chances of people encountering one another. In all cases, physical distancing must be observed. The assembly should be dismissed in a structured way that is clearly communicated and facilitated.
- Celebrant must maintain physical distance and wear a mask *if* greeting people before or after Mass.

Cleaning and sanitizing

- Cleaning and sanitizing of common use areas will take place after every Mass.
- Hand sanitizer should be provided at the entrances, and the faithful should be asked to sanitize their hands as they enter. (Note: It is also recommended that hand sanitizers be located near each Communion station so people can sanitize their hands in the event that there is physical contact in the distribution of the Host.)
- Any spaces in high-use areas, including and especially bathrooms, are to be sanitized after each Mass.
- Pews and other surfaces the faithful may have touched will be sanitized after each Mass.
- Parishioners should be educated on basic principles of hygiene (i.e., non-touching of face, etc.) and sanitization procedures should they violate these principles.
- Restroom use and cleaning policy must be developed by each parish (e.g. one at a time use only; cleaned and sanitized immediately following each Mass.)
- Parish cry-rooms may need to be closed or restricted to one family. If they are used, they will need to be carefully cleaned after use.
- Pastors will need to organize volunteers to clean and sanitize the pews and other common use areas, including restrooms, immediately after Mass.
- After they have been purified, Communion vessels should be washed with soap and water following each Mass.

Practical considerations

The following are suggestions and guidelines for the pastor and parishes:

- All missalettes, pew cards, pencils and other loose items in the pews must be removed.
- As noted above, collection baskets cannot be passed from person to person or otherwise presented to the faithful. Collection baskets can be placed in an accessible location (e.g. near the entrance of the church) with someone assigned to monitor them.
- Worship aids – that might contain bulletin information – are permitted, as the risk of contracting coronavirus from handling paper is considered small.
 - Worship aids should not contain the lyrics of any sung parts.
 - Worship Aids should **not** be passed out by ushers, but placed on tables and spread out for entering members of the assembly to “self-serve.”
 - It is prohibited to reuse worship aids/bulletins. Members of the assembly should be encouraged to take the worship aids/bulletin home, and any “used” worship aids left in the pews must be collected and disposed of after every Mass.

- The place(s) where a worship aid is offered is to be considered a “high-traffic/high-use space” and should be sanitized after each Mass.
- Children’s liturgy of the Word must be discontinued during this time.
- Parish child-care during Masses should be discontinued until further notice.
- Have adequate stock of hand sanitizer and other cleaning supplies available.
- Physical distancing policy should be posted on the church doors.
- Ensure liturgical ministers observe physical distancing to the extent possible when performing their ministries.
- Restrict seating to every alternate pew (or row of seats) to maintain distancing. Seating to be used should be clearly marked.
- Social gatherings before or after Mass (including coffee & donuts) should not take place. Providing access to the celebration of Holy Mass and reception of Holy Communion during Mass is the purpose for reopening Masses.
- Pastors are encouraged to prepare a written or videotaped “welcome back” message that includes some details, including practical information, about the reopening transition.
- The pastor must ensure effective and clear communication with his parishioners about the process used for sign-ups and other details about reopening Masses.
- In some cases, a smaller parish in a Vicariate or Deanery may be in position to assist a larger parish by allowing people from the larger parish to sign-up for some of its Masses. This should be coordinated by the pastors in consultation with the area Vicar or Dean.

Appendix A

Sample Health Self-Assessment

SCREENING QUESTIONS

The following is a simple screening questionnaire that can be used in the church/office setting to screen persons for COVID-19. In order to successfully pass screening, a person must be able to answer “No” to each of these 6 questions. A “Yes” to even one question is a failed screening. In the last 14 days, have you:

1. Traveled internationally?
2. Been exposed to a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 without the correct PPE?
3. Had a temperature at least 100.0°F?
4. Had new or increased shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
5. Had a new cough?
6. Had at least two of the following symptoms together:
 - o Chills
 - o Muscle pain
 - o Headache
 - o Sore throat
 - o New loss of taste or smell

Pastors are encouraged to establish a system to arrange that those who self-select to not attend because of symptoms can be granted front-of-the-line access as soon as they feel better to incentivize an abundance of caution (leaving a few “slots” open for every Mass during every scheduled period, putting into place a standby system, or arranging a form of a “swap system” could accommodate this).

Appendix B

Pastoral Position: Wearing of face masks during the Sacred Liturgy

Why not recommend that a priest wear a mask or face covering while celebrating Mass?

- Mask recommendations from the CDC and other public health authorities presume that one will be in a setting where 6-foot distancing is impractical to maintain at all times (e.g., in the aisles or at the checkout counter of a grocery store, on the sidewalk of a city street, etc.).
- The guidelines for resuming public Masses instructs priests to avoid being within 6 feet of others during the celebration of Mass. For example, the server is not to hold the book for the priest during the collect, nor wash the priest's fingers before the liturgy of the Eucharist.
- A priest standing at the chair or at the altar in a church will be much further than 6 feet from the congregation.
- Under such circumstances, placing a mask on the priest provides only minimal additional safeguards against infection, according to the medical and public health experts who developed these guidelines.
- At the same time, wearing a mask is a striking visual element, which obscures the human face of the priest and renders the liturgy less personal. Symbolically, it suggests a threat of danger or of infection at the most profound moments of the Mass, when the priest is acting in the person of Christ. Yet the public health benefit to this counter-symbolism is minimal in this context, given that the physical distance between the priest at the altar or at the chair is more than 6 feet.

An unrelated additional area of pastoral concern is that the Reading of Lips is essential for some hearing impaired parishioners.

Appendix C

Mass Readiness Checklist

Mass Readiness Checklist

Mass schedule

- Determine weekdays & weekends Mass times – as well as which ones will be livestreamed
- Schedule should be published with reminder that parishioners must sign-up
- Adequate time should be allowed between Masses for cleaning
- Inform the area dean or vicar of the Mass schedule

Sign-up system

- Create an equitable system for assigning names to Masses that ensures as many as possible have adequate chance to sign-up
- Promote multiple avenues for sign-up
- Keep a database or other record of sign-ups– as well as Mass attendance
- Record first and last name of each person as well as contact number
- Assurance that process allows everyone who signs up the opportunity for Mass before cycle repeats

Clear communication with parishioners

- Sign-up procedures communicated to parishioners via multiple channels including the website, email newsletter, flocknote, phone tree and mail
- Create a “Welcome Back” video that outlines key changes
- Create written overview of key changes so people are prepared when they arrive at Mass

Physical distancing plan in place

- Designate one entrance; with exceptions for Handicap entrance
- Rope off every other pew/row of seats to ensure physical distancing
- Clearly publish total number of people allowed given physical distancing and designate available seating
- Select a Hospitality minister or usher to remind people of physical distancing when needed

Cleaning protocols in place

- Clearly outline cleaning protocols (pews, restrooms, commonly touched surfaces)
- Ensure adequate cleaning supplies on hand
- Ensure enough time/volunteers to clean between Masses
- Develop restocking protocols

Recruit Volunteers

- Door monitor (Hospitality minister)
- Sign-up list manager (must wear mask)
- People to clean
- Liturgical ministers
- Collection monitor

Before Mass

- All loose items removed from pews (hymnals, pencils, cards, missalettes, etc.)
- Place worship aids on table for people to grab when entering the church
- Church is cleaned
- No holy water in fonts
- Hand sanitizer/cleaning wipes available
- Collection baskets placed in accessible location (someone to monitor)
- Designated entrance propped open
- Door monitor/ sign-up list manager in place with mask on

After Mass

- Prop exit doors open
- Do not hand out bulletins or other materials
- Wipe down/clean pews and common use areas including restrooms, door handles, push plates, knobs, etc.

Addendum A

Summary of Changes Made July 14, 2020

Plan for Limited Reopening of Masses in Washington State was originally submitted to the governor on May 15, 2020

p. 4

Strict Physical Distancing

3rd bullet point under this heading changed to:

- Mass attendance will be limited in accordance with government directives. For services taking place in modified Phase 1 and Phase 2 counties, indoor services are permitted with 25% capacity or 200 people, whichever is less. In health guidance for services taking place in Phase 1 counties, only outdoor services are permitted, with no more than 100 attendees. Phase 3 permits an indoor capacity of 50% or 400 people, whichever is less.

p. 5

First bullet point changed to:

- Use of face masks/coverings is required during religious services by the order of the governor (<https://www.governor.wa.gov/sites/default/files/COVID19Phase1and2ReligiousAndFaithBasedGuidance.pdf>) and the Washington State Secretary of Health (https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/Secretary_of_Health_Order_20-03_Statewide_Face_Coverings.pdf). Children under 5 years old are not required to wear face coverings. If individuals arrive without a face mask, the hospitality minister or usher should provide one. If they refuse to wear a mask, please ask if they have a medical reason for not wearing one. Please note you cannot ask *what* the medical condition is. If they do have a medical condition, please place them in a section where they have 10-12 feet of distance rather than 6 feet of distance. If they do not have a medical reason for not wearing a mask, ask them to consider attending Mass through livestream. If they insist on attending in person and not complying with the stated requirement or if they have a medical reason for not wearing a mask, please place them at the back of the church with at least 10-12 feet of physical distancing. Please invite them to a conversation, perhaps with someone on the COVID-19 taskforce at a mutually agreed upon time later that week.
 - Each parish may want to limit the number of people who may attend Mass while refusing to wear a mask. When that limited quota is filled, then no additional such persons may attend that Mass.
 - If a substantial number of congregants are uncooperative with the mask requirement, then permission to celebrate public Mass may be withdrawn from the parish in question. It may be advisable for parishioners to know that a safe and sanitary environment is a necessary pre-condition for the public celebration of the Mass.

p. 5

Limited reopening of Masses

1st bullet

- Pastors and administrators will make every effort to follow state and archdiocesan guidelines. At the same time, pastors and administrators will have the final decision on what can and may be done in their specific churches when reopening masses.

(Original: Pastors/Administrators of parishes will have the final decision on what can and may be done in their specific churches when reopening Masses.)

p. 8

Additional, temporary liturgical restrictions

7th bullet

Added:

- At this time, all parishes should be using the *minimal* number of liturgical ministers possible to celebrate Mass. Every liturgical minister (including deacons) must wear a mask and observe physical distancing during the Mass. The only exceptions for wearing a mask are:
 - For the priest celebrant.
 - When a lector or deacon is reading the Sacred Scriptures, at which time they must be 12 feet away from anyone else.
 - When a cantor is singing the Psalms, at which time they must be 30 feet away from anyone else. It is highly recommended that cantors wear masks at all times; it should be an exception that the cantor does not wear a mask.

p. 9

Celebration of the Mass

1st bullet changed to:

- A priest with a respiratory infection of any kind cannot celebrate public masses nor administer sacraments.