



Sacramental Guidelines for Reopening

FUNERALS

These guidelines for celebrating funerals in a church reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and church authorities.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for groups of 10 worshippers or less in the church at any time exclusive of all ministers, funeral directors and usher or greeter.

Parishes should adapt as necessary, however, **being careful not to violate social distancing, face covering and sanitizing guidelines.**

Parishes or pastors may **not** alter the number of allowed worshippers, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

Preparation

1. The floor of the church should have tape marks observing proper social distance, designating where the faithful are to stand during a procession (e.g., Communion).
2. In addition, all pews/seating are to be clearly marked or designated such that there is a six-foot perimeter in all directions for that seat (consistent with social distancing). Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as “family pews.”
3. A “greeter” or some agent of the parish should meet the participants outside the church or in the vestibule and hand out masks (if they have not brought their own) and require the use of hand sanitizer. The greeter should also remind worshippers that if they are ill or have a fever they should not enter.
4. Entry and exit doors are to be adequately designated and monitored. Entry doors are to be propped or held open before the celebration, and exit doors are to be propped or held open at the end of the celebration to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.
5. If a worship aid is to be used, the aid must be disposable and not reused for other services. A simple xerox copy will suffice. NOTE: Parishes must have proper licensing for reproducing music in any worship aid.
6. Masks should be worn for the entire time the participants are in the church even when responding to prayers. The sole exception is for reception of Communion when the mask should be lowered but replaced immediately after consumption of the sacred Host. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.

Celebration of the Funeral

1. Holy water and the pall should be placed at the entrance of the church, near where the coffin will be stationed for the Introductory Rites. If there is no server they should be accessible by the priest at the appropriate times. If there is a server, it is to be an adult. The funeral director can assist with the pall if needed.

2. Family members and other participants should be at the appropriate social distance.
3. For the procession to the front, the celebrant should invite participants to observe social distancing, using the markers on the floor of the aisle.
4. The funeral bier can be processed to the front by the funeral director and one other person who is participating (one at the front of the bier, one at the back).
5. Participants are to sit in the designated/marked seats, keeping appropriate social distance. The priest or funeral director should remind mourners of this.
6. For the Liturgy of the Word, the reader may lower his/her mask for the proclamation of the reading. This applies, as well, to the person announcing the petitions in the Universal Prayer/Prayer of the Faithful.
7. The procession with the gifts is omitted. The gifts are to be on the credence or side table and the priest (or deacon if there is one) can bring them to the altar.
8. Holy Communion is to be distributed only under the form of the consecrated host, and only in the hand, with the priest sanitizing his hands immediately before and immediately after distributing Communion.
9. For the distribution of Holy Communion, a single-file line is necessary to maintain social distancing.
10. During the Communion procession, communicants are to be instructed to use the markers on the floor of the aisle to maintain social distance. The help of an usher or greeter, directing pew by pew as may be customary, will be very helpful.
11. At the front of the aisle, there is to be a table with hand sanitizer. Each communicant is to use it to sanitize his/her hands before receiving Communion.
12. Before he begins distributing communion, and before he dons his face shield or mask and goggles, the priest should announce to worshippers that the following is the procedure for reception of Communion:
 - a. Move forward in single file maintaining six feet between each person, looking for markers on the floor.
 - b. Sanitize hands from table or from sanitizer offered by usher.
 - c. Do NOT touch your face, clothing or any other surface after sanitizing your hands.
 - d. As you approach the priest after you have sanitized your hands, receive the Host in your hand ONLY.
 - e. Step six feet to the side, remove strap from one ear of your mask or face covering, letting it hang from the other ear and uncovering your mouth, consume the Host.
 - f. Replace the mask over your mouth and nose and return to your seat.
13. The priest moves to a side table, sanitizes his hands and dons his face shield or mask and goggles. Explain your use of the face shield/mask and goggles as a protection for the congregation and yourself.
14. For the Rite of Commendation, if incense is used (it is optional) the priest will prepare the censer himself. This could be done at the side table after the Prayer After Communion.
15. For the procession out of church, the participants should be dismissed row by row, allowing for appropriate social distance on the way out.

Post Rite and Cleaning

1. The pews used for the funeral are to be cleaned after the celebration.
2. All vessels used during the funeral should be sanitized with a wipe after the service. (Please note that rinsing vessels or instruments in water alone does NOT kill the virus and is thus not sufficient.)
3. The ritual book should be sanitized/wiped.
4. The individual sanitizing should immediately sanitize their own hands after finishing the cleaning of the vessels and book.
5. The greeter/usher should replenish supplies as needed.