



## Sacramental Guidelines for Reopening

# PRIVATE PRAYER AND DEVOTION

These guidelines for private prayer and devotion in a church reflect updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and church authorities.

These guidelines are based on current requirements for numbers of 10 or less in the church at any time. This is exclusive of all ministers and either an usher or greeter.

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

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

## Preparation

1. Determine the schedule for opening the church for private prayer. Remember the church may not be left unattended during this time. **To maintain appropriate health and safety precautions, there must be a “greeter” or usher on duty at all times.**
2. When announcing to the parish a time for private prayer and devotion in the church, the following should be clearly stated to the faithful to set expectations:
  - a. The exact times the church will be open for prayer.
  - b. No more than 10 worshippers will be allowed into the church at any given time.
  - c. If other parishioners are waiting, worshippers should limit their prayer time to 20 minutes. After waiting 20 minutes, a greeter may respectfully remind them that others are waiting and ask them to exit.
  - d. Worshippers should bring their own masks or cloth facial coverings which will need to be worn throughout their time in adoration. This requirement is not enforced for those with difficulty breathing through a facial covering. However, these individuals will be seated at a much greater distance from others.
  - e. Worshippers may not sit together unless they are domiciled together.
  - f. A greeter will guide worshippers to seating that will be clearly marked.
  - g. Once seated, worshippers are asked not to change seats or move around the church.

## Time of Private Prayer

1. The total number of worshippers allowed in the church is not to exceed 10.
2. Private prayer should take place in the main church and not a side chapel because of social distancing and spacing requirements.

3. Pews/chairs should be visibly marked as to where participants can sit, maintaining social distance of at least six feet. Staggered seating is best. Keep in mind that six feet must be maintained in front, back and on either side of each worshipper. Family units who are domiciled together may sit together OR the parish may designate certain pews as “family pews.”
4. A greeter is to meet participants in the narthex or vestibule and **be on duty for the entire time the church is open for prayer**. The greeter’s duties include:
  - Ensure that every participant is wearing a protective face mask.
  - Ensure that every participant sanitizes his/her hands before entering the church.
  - Remind worshippers that if they are ill or have a temperature they should not enter.
  - Ensure that each participant knows that once he/she takes a seat they are to remain in that seat for the time they are in the church.
  - Ensure that those who are waiting in line maintain proper social distance.
  - As one worshipper leaves the church the greeter will allow another person in. However, a different seating area should be used, or the greeter should wipe down the seating area before reused by a different adorer. The greeter should wear gloves if they are wiping down seating and sanitize their hands afterwards.
5. The greeter should give worshippers a five-minute warning before the church will close for the day.

## **Cleaning**

1. After the time of private prayer, any area of the church used for seating must be wiped down and sanitized and any paper materials left behind must be collected.
2. The individual cleaning must wear mask and gloves.
3. Greeter should replenish supplies as needed.