

## **Guidelines for Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon to Accompany the Phased Approach for Resumption of Sacraments**

All gatherings are limited to the specified number by the government. Currently this is 10 people (including the priest and volunteers) but will be slowly expanded throughout the phases. Each Pastor and Parish needs to determine how best to observe these restrictions until larger gatherings are permitted. All gathered activities adhering to the social distancing measures, including at least a 2 metre (6 foot) space between individuals. Couples or families from the same household may sit together.

Until otherwise notified...

### **Liturgical Gatherings:**

- The dispensation by the Bishop for the obligation to attend Sunday and other Holy Days of Obligation remains in force;
- All must stay home who: are ill or suspect you may be sick; you have a member of your household who is ill; have pre-existing health conditions or are high-risk to the Co-Vid19 virus; have travelled outside the country in the past 14 days;
- Each Pastor will determine the scheduling of attendees to liturgical celebrations so as to assure compliance to the number of attendees and to fairly facilitate that all families and parishioners have an opportunity to gather in a timely manner;
- Seating should be designated - with adequate space between participants; entry during these celebrations is permitted to those scheduled to be there so that the numbers gathered do not exceed the limit;
- Thorough disinfecting and cleaning of the Church especially in these designated areas - is routinely done between celebrations and visits of persons to the church.

### **Liturgical Guidelines at Mass:**

- Exchange of Peace (optional in the ritual) is omitted, or done with reverent bow;
- Hymnals and other liturgical leaflets etc. (if not already done so) are to be removed and not used during the liturgies;
- Mass is to be celebrated without altar servers and extraordinary ministers of communion;
- All sacred vessels - as well as being purified - must also be thoroughly cleaned and sterilized between every service;
- Communion is only to be given to the lay faithful under the appearance of bread (i.e. the host): Communion from the chalice for the lay faithful (optional in the ritual) is prohibited;
- In addition to the main paten and host need to communicate himself, the priest places in a separate ciborium exactly the number of hosts needed to consecrate for the communion of the faithful in attendance. The lid is left on the ciborium throughout the liturgy until the time of communion. At the offertory this can be placed at distance from the main paten and chalice of the priest on the corporal. The

consecrated Eucharist should be placed in the tabernacle and retrieved after the Mass for distribution to the faithful.

- The giving of communion will take place after Mass.
- The priest retrieves the consecrated hosts, takes off the lid then purifies his hands in water first in a specific lavabo (finger-bowl with water in it). He then thoroughly cleans his hands with hand-sanitizer.
- He begins with *“Behold the Lamb of God. Behold him who takes away the sins of the world. Blessed are those called to the supper of the Lamb.”* He then leads the people in saying: *“Lord, I am not worthy that you should enter under my roof, but only say the word, and my soul shall be healed.”*
- He proceeds to give communion to the faithful who present themselves. The people approach maintaining the 2-metre distance between each other to receive communion. The priest is to take care to gently grasp one edge of the host and to distribute by laying the opposite edge and releasing the host. If any contact is made during this the priest must purify his hands and sanitize them before resuming (a table with a bowl and disinfectant can be situated near the place of giving communion). As larger gatherings are permitted, this should be done more frequently throughout the distribution of communion - especially between communion given to people of different households. The lavabo bowl where the priest purifies his fingers after contact with the hosts should be poured out after Mass into the Sacramentarium.

#### **All other Sacraments:**

- if not postponed, they are to be celebrated in a minimal gathering if determined as feasible by the Pastor along with the participant(s);
- Physical distance is maintained as stated and the numbers gathered are never to exceed the established limit. All unnecessary contact is prohibited.

#### **Other Continuing Directives:**

— — —  
**Last Rites (Confession, Apostolic Pardon, Anointing and Viaticum)** to Hospitals, Care Homes, and the infirmed homebound:

In grave need and in danger of death the priest is to attend to the faithful with prudence and care, both mindful of the physical precautions as well as the care of the soul. All Catholics are to receive Viaticum prior to death (Can. 921 §1) - this 'food for the journey' is indeed foreseen as the right of the faithful and should not be withheld from them in any circumstance. It should not be so delayed such that the person is no longer able to consume the host, or however small a particle thereof.

Along with this ideally the lay faithful - if they are able - are to make a Confession and/or receive the Apostolic Pardon. They may be anointed too prior to viaticum.

In these circumstances of the Pandemic - priests must follow any of the health care directives including if permitted, the gowning up, wearing of a mask and gloves, etc. as proscribed upon entry into a health facility. If they are not given entrance to the facility this needs to be followed.

The following notes can be added:

Confession and/or Apostolic Pardon can be done at a safe and notable distance without physical contact. The requirement for validity is that we both physically 'hear' their confession and they 'hear' the absolution and pardon - this therefore can be done over and above the 2 metre distance and even on the other side of a curtain/barrier. Also this may be done in a general form of absolution if the circumstance requires. In the event that the person is not able to respond, he would proceed from a distance with the absolution and apostolic pardon.

Anointing may be omitted - but if it is to be done the following notes should assist in safely administering this Sacrament and carefully disposing of the sacramentals involved following. The exterior of the oil stock (the metallic container) should be thoroughly sterilized prior to arriving and leaving from each anointing. The priest is to bring with him a burnable and sealable plastic bag/container (e.g. a zip lock). Using a cotton-ball, the priest dips only once in the stock, seals the stock with his other hand, placing it aside. If outside things cannot be brought in, this needs to be done prior to entry into the room. He anoints using the emergency formula upon the head, then the hands with the accompanying prayers: "Through this holy anointing may the Lord in his love and mercy help you with the grace of the Holy Spirit... May the Lord who frees you from sin save you and raise you up."

Following the rites to be performed, the cotton-ball used with the OI should be placed in the plastic bag - to be burned after by the priest. If these guidelines cannot be followed or the health facility restricts you from physically approaching the body - the Anointing should be omitted.

Viaticum ideally would be celebrated - if the person can receive Holy Communion prior to death. Once again - the same precautions are made as noted above: Follow the guidelines of the hospital.

Communion should only be given on an individual case-by-case basis. It should only be administered during this time for a grave or serious spiritual need - most notably, in danger of death. Again, a single host should be brought for this purpose. The pyx (the metallic container) prior needs to be thoroughly cleaned and sanitized (interiorly and exteriorly). Following Communion, it needs to be purified then sanitized again after each use. Do not risk cross contamination by bringing hosts to multiple people from the same pyx.

The priest may use the emergency formula and abbreviated rites in all cases according to his judgment. The presence of family should be restricted and in compliance with the rules of the hospital or Care home - it would be advisable therefore that the Last Rites be celebrated only with the individual soul. Afterwards, the priest may be with the immediate family following the appropriate precautions of gathering in small groups with physical distancing. In individual home visits - it should be restricted to only the one receiving the visit and possibly the spouse if present. The priest is to go alone, with no outside parishioners or guests.

---

**Items concerning Adoration (w/ or w/o exposition), Confessions, open-air and from a distance:**

To summarize some questions that have arisen in the past week(s). Priests and parishes are trying to find creative ways to make visible the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration (from safe distance, even through glass from outside) as well as finding ways to hear confessions (at times from another side of a door etc.).

A few points - Exposition (in a monstrance) along with Adoration is a liturgical rite - and it requires the continual presence of someone there. Even if this means the priest himself remains - the Blessed Sacrament is not to be left exposed without at least one person immediately present. The video streaming of exposition and adoration still requires the physical presence of at least the priest or another there. If the priest is to set up a way - safely for the faithful to view the tabernacle (i.e. not the exposed blessed sacrament) for private prayer and adoration this would be preferable. Keeping in mind that there can never be gatherings exceeding the stated number of people. Depending on the layout of the Church - this may be done from the safety of their own car such that there is not contact between those spending time in prayer. To facilitate this - an altar of repose may be set up that could be visible but not accessible in any way from the outside public (i.e. on the other side of a window or locked doors). This is a temporary altar of repose and likely this should not involve exposition (but the use of a secondary tabernacle) that simply can be viewed in adoration. The Pastor should best determine how this can be done reverently, safely, and practically based on his own facility.

**Hearing confessions** and the granting of absolution must be physically done (cannot be done over phone, internet etc.). The distance between the penitent and priest can be safely made through adequate physical distance of 2 metres or more, and this could include also a physical barrier between them (e.g. on the other side of a door, curtain etc.). Each Pastor ought to determine the safest way to fulfill these necessary precautions. Some have suggested the idea of sitting outside for 'open-air' confessions or at the entrance of the church or curb-side. Confession never is restricted to the physical Church - so this foreseeably could work going forward with adequate weather. Regardless, the necessary physical distance must be remained - if the penitent can remain in their car as well as - this could be done appropriately. The priest ought to adequately post or notify to other cars and penitents to keep sufficient distance both for prevention of infection but also the privacy and protection of the sacramental seal of confession.