



Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon **OFFICE OF THE BISHOP**

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September 16, 2020
Memorial of Saints Cornelius and Cyprian

DIRECTIVES FOR RESUMPTION OF SACRAMENTS IN COVID-19

Dear Pastors, Parish Life Directors, and Faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

The purpose of the directives of May 15, May 29, and compiled directives of June 12, 2020, was to provide a roadmap for a gradual return of the People of God to font and table, reconciliation and healing. As we have now entered Phase Three of the plan for resumption of Sacraments the following is an updated compilation of the directives that have been released. As you will note, the Government of Saskatchewan regularly updates their guidelines. These directives apply to all worship spaces, even those not in a parochial setting, i.e. chapels, oratories, and any other liturgical worship space. Note these relate primarily to the Liturgy and Sacraments. Please refer to the [Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#) to find additional information and guidelines with respect to events outside the liturgy.

Profound gratitude is expressed to all who persevered in faith and charity during these times of challenge, offering live streaming of your Liturgy and prayer life and the many, many other creative ways you have reached out to your people.

Compiled Directives for Covid-19

1. The faithful continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays.
2. The total number of people participating in the Liturgy or service in the Church proper cannot exceed 30 per cent of seating capacity or 150 people, whichever is less.
3. Churches can be open for prayer. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament may take place provided one person remains present throughout.
4. The Sacrament of Reconciliation can be offered in accordance with the following:
 - a. Confessionals may be used if satisfying the requirements of personal distancing.
 - b. Alternative spaces should be made ready that allow for protection of the seal of the sacrament as well as personal distancing.
5. Baptisms may take place in accordance with the following:
 - a. All of the directives concerning capacity and social distancing should be observed.

- b. The priest is to wear a mask when close proximity is necessary for the baptism.
 - c. Fonts are to remain empty until further notice. Water should be blessed in a separate receptacle (large pitcher) and poured over each candidate.
 - d. Anointing may be done with a cotton swab or purify hands between each anointing.
6. Holy water fonts are to remain empty until further notice.
 7. Hand sanitizer and/or alternate sanitizing options should be available throughout the church.
 8. Couples or families from the same household may sit together and are to maintain a personal distancing of two meters (six-feet) between their family and other families or individuals while in the church.
 9. Appropriate and adequate signage should be posted indicating the requirement of distancing and maximum numbers.
 10. Pews, door handles and knobs, restrooms and high traffic areas of the church are to be wiped down and sanitized, with the removal of trash and other items from the pews, at regular intervals.
 11. Those who are symptomatic, who have potentially been exposed to another with the virus, or have travelled out of country within the last 14 days, are not permitted to enter the church, in accordance with national, provincial and local health directives.

MASS PROVISIONS

BEFORE MASS

1. The faithful continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays.
 - a. Those who are at risk because of an underlying health issue or who are 65 or older are strongly encouraged, for their own health, to avoid the risk of attending public celebrations of the Mass.
 - b. We encourage parishes to continue to live-stream Mass as they have been doing so those unable to attend in person can maintain a spiritual connection with their local parish.
2. In order to maintain personal distancing and reduce the spread of the virus, parishes will need to enact the following:
 - a. For the purposes of social distancing, Masses should take place in the larger church and not small chapels.
 - b. Parishes may need to consider temporarily adjusting or adding to their Mass schedule.
 - c. Parishes are permitted to only allow the maximum permitted number of persons to access / enter the church, including the priest and ministry volunteers. This may require communicating to the people in advance of the Liturgy.
 - d. For larger parishes, a system of registration prior to Mass to determine who may attend may be used.

- e. There should be a guarantee of two meters (six feet) distance between households attending Liturgy. Considerations should be made given the layout of each particular church.
2. Appropriate cleaning of high use areas within the church is to be done before and after each service.
3. All hymnals and missalettes are to be removed from the pews and stored for the duration of the pandemic. No other materials may be left in the pews. The faithful are encouraged to bring their own liturgical resources for use during the celebration of Mass. Single-use materials can be considered.
4. Doors may be propped or held open to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.
5. An announcement may need to be made before Mass about personal distancing, the collection, reception of Communion, and other protocols.
6. **The faithful are strongly encouraged to wear a face mask throughout Mass.**

DURING MASS

1. Please refer to the Re-open Saskatchewan Plan for full guidelines for Places of Worship.
2. Staff, ushers or other volunteers should assist where needed. As previously indicated, attendance will be limited to assure compliance with social distancing requirements.
3. Families are to maintain six-foot distancing between their family and other families or individuals throughout the celebration of Mass.
4. **When singing, participants must wear masks.**
5. **Where leaders are required to sing, they must increase distance with the congregation to prevent transmission of respiratory droplets.**
6. **Kissing of the Lectionary or the Book of the Gospels is to cease at this time. Another form of veneration of the Gospels can be substituted – such as a reverent bow.**
7. The procession at the Preparation of the Gifts is temporarily suspended. Collection baskets (or any other materials) are not to be passed from one family to another, nor shall ushers take up the collection from the congregation. Stationary baskets are to be used for donations from the assembly and are to be monitored by the ushers until the donations are collected and handled according to the proper protocols.
8. The Sign of Peace may be omitted entirely, or done with a simple gesture, such as a reverent bow, there is to be no physical contact.
9. It is recommended that separate chalices be prepared for each concelebrating priest and/or deacon.
10. Mass is to be celebrated without altar servers.
11. A priest or deacon considered high-risk is permitted to refrain from distributing Holy Communion and may delegate distribution to an extraordinary minister of Communion where necessary. Extraordinary Ministers of Communion may also be used where necessary due to time and the number of communicants. Proper distancing and Communion lines will need to be considered.

12. The distribution of Communion is to take place after the Communion Prayer and Final Blessing following Mass, which has the following advantages:
 - a. Allows for additional precautions while maintaining liturgical integrity of the Mass;
 - b. Provides additional time for navigating and distributing Communion while allowing any livestreams to cease for privacy and in the interest of time; and
 - c. Gives freedom to the faithful to determine whether or not they receive.To carry this out please note the following:
 - d. A sufficient number of hosts should be consecrated during the Mass in a separate covered ciborium placed on a corporal at a distance on the altar.
 - e. The priest would consume the Eucharist in the usual way and return the newly consecrated hosts to the tabernacle (where practical).
13. For the distribution of Communion, ushers or other volunteers may assist to ensure six-foot distancing in the Communion line. Floor markings may be placed six feet apart in the aisles to facilitate proper social distancing during Communion.
14. The priest must wear a mask and must sanitize his hands immediately before and after distributing Communion. Physical contact should be avoided when placing the host in the communicant's hands. Sanitize intermittently as necessary.
15. Distribution of Holy Communion from the chalice is prohibited to the assembly. For those who are gluten intolerant, special arrangements are to be made with the pastor.
16. The communicant is not permitted to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. A deacon or concelebrating priest may receive by intinction.
17. **Those who choose to receive on the tongue must be the last to receive and must do so under the following conditions:**
 - a. Those receiving on the tongue, after responding 'Amen', are asked to open their mouth widely and extend their tongue far enough so that the Sacred Host can be placed on the tongue. This is to prevent the host from falling and in order for the priest to avoid any contact with the communicant.
 - b. The priest must disinfect between communicants with the exception of those receiving from the same household which should be done as follows:
 - i. Dilute fingers in bowl of water (so as not to profane the Eucharist by rubbing sanitizer/mixing with crumbs from the Host);
 - ii. Dry hand on towel (if need be); and
 - iii. Sanitize prior to proceeding to give Communion to the next household.
 - c. Note, the general right of the faithful to receive Communion on the tongue will be reinstated once necessary safeguarding measures with respect to this pandemic have lessened.
18. Those who refrain from receiving communion still unite themselves with the sacrifice of Christ. Non-communicants are kindly asked to remain in their places rather than process to request a blessing.
19. The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving.
20. **Because Holy Communion occurs at the end of Mass, special attention needs to be given to devotion to the Holy Eucharist. In particular, persons who receive Holy Communion should take some deliberate quiet devotional time before proceeding to exit the Church and/or encouraging others following the Mass.**

AFTER MASS

1. Families and individuals should depart the church in an organized manner and observing six feet of distance between other households. Ushers or ministers of hospitality may need to direct this process.
2. Ushers are not to hand out bulletins or other materials.
3. Clergy and other ministers may only greet parishioners as they exit the church if they can maintain social distancing and avoid physical contact.
4. There are to be no receptions or social gatherings (e.g., coffee and doughnuts) following Mass.
5. Pews and other high traffic areas of the church are to be wiped down before the next service, with the removal of trash and other items from the pews.
6. Restroom facilities and door handles, push plates, and knobs are to be sanitized after each service.

PROVISIONS FOR OTHER SACRAMENTS

CONFIRMATIONS AND FIRST COMMUNIONS

Confirmations and First Communion postponed by the directive of March 15, 2020, can be scheduled.

1. With these directives, I hereby grant delegation to all pastors/administrators to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation (along with First Eucharist) for those baptized Catholic as infants or children whose Confirmation was postponed due to the pandemic until December 31, 2020, only.
2. Pastors/administrators and their pastoral leadership team, should determine when and how First Communion and Confirmation should be scheduled and celebrated so that they are in total compliance with all the provisions of Phase Three and all those who were to receive First Communion and Confirmation during the time of postponement will do so by December 31, 2020.
3. In order to comply with limited capacity and personal distancing, it is recommended that a limited number of those to receive Confirmation and First Communion be scheduled during Sunday Masses or other designated times until all have celebrated the Sacraments. (See Mass Provisions above.)
4. Pastors may choose to defer Confirmations and First Eucharist Celebrations for this year and have them take place with the 2021 Celebrations.
5. Due to the separation of First Communion and Confirmation as announced in the Age of Sacrament of Confirmation letter dated July 8, 2020, pastors can also choose to carryout First Eucharist Celebrations but defer Confirmations to 2021.

RITE OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (paragraphs 26-30) envisions exceptional circumstances when the normal celebration of initiation at the Easter Vigil may not take place.

During the time of delay, it is crucial that catechists, sponsors and godparents remain in contact with the catechumens and candidates. Accordingly, when Phase Three begins, and adhering to all Phase Three provisions, the following applies:

1. At least one Scrutiny should be celebrated, either at Sunday Mass or at another time when convenient.
2. The Rites of Initiation are to be celebrated in their entirety according to RCIA.
3. It is not permitted to separate the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism - Confirmation - First Eucharist) for catechumens (elect) being fully initiated.
4. The celebration of full initiation must occur at Mass on a Sunday (or Saturday evening). The Mass of the occurring Sunday is to be used. During Ordinary Time, but not on a Solemnity (e.g. The Most Holy Trinity or The Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ), the Ritual Mass "Christian Initiation: Baptism" with its appropriate readings may be used.
5. *Lucernarium* and Liturgy of the Word of the Easter Vigil are unique to the Vigil and are not to be celebrated outside of the Easter Vigil itself.

CONFIRMATION OF ADULT CATHOLICS

The delegation for pastors to confirm adult (18+) Catholics baptized as children is extended to the end of this calendar year.

For the year 2020 only, I hereby grant delegation to pastors to confirm adult baptized Catholics (18+).

RECEPTION INTO FULL COMMUNION

Priests may celebrate the "Reception Into Full Communion" at any appropriate time during the year, preferably on a Sunday, according to RCIA, 487. Delegation to confirm is not required.

Note that the "Confirmation of Adult Catholics" and the "Reception Into Full Communion" should not be done at the same liturgical celebration as the full initiation of the catechumens.

RITE OF ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS

Due to the pandemic, the requirement for a full year catechumenate may be shortened for 2021 only. The Rite of Acceptance should be celebrated as soon as possible after public worship resumes, at least six months before Easter, 2021.

Conclusion and Reference Documents

Prior directives and updates can be found on our website at the following link:
[Covid-19 Updates for the Diocese of Saskatoon](#)

Additional information from the Government of Saskatchewan can be found here:
[Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#)
[COVID-19 Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Facilities](#)
[Self-Assessment Tool](#)

Again, I thank pastors, parish communities and faithful of the Diocese of Saskatoon for their patience and consideration throughout this time. Everyone has done an extraordinary job in continuing ministry and reaching out to keep prayerful communication with so many.

Sincerely, in Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "+ Mark A. Hagemoen". The signature is written in a cursive style.

✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon