



Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

123 Nelson Rd
Saskatoon SK S7S 1H1
www.rcdos.ca

Phone: 306-242-1500
Fax: 306-244-6010
Toll free: 877-661-5005



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Friday of the Tenth Week in Ordinary Time

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 June 11, 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 has recently updated the guidelines for places of worship to allow for attendance of 30% capacity to a maximum of 150 people, whichever is less.

In issuing these directives, it is hoped that most parishes will now be offering public Masses in some way. However, it is understood that the possibility still exists that every parish may not be able to offer Mass open to the public due to, but not limited to:

- factors including the vulnerability of the priest himself;
- an inability to safely provide the additional personnel needed;
- an inability to sufficiently sanitize worship spaces between uses; and/or
- other circumstances.

Should this be the case, the pastor is asked to contact the Office of the Bishop.

Given the immediate significant increase in capacity, while still under distancing and cleaning guidelines, it is understood parishes may need time to organize or fulfill a new arrangement.

These guidelines apply to all worship spaces, even those not in a parochial setting, i.e. chapels, oratories, and any other liturgical worship space.

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. Bishop Hagemoen continues to dispense the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays.
2. Churches can be open for prayer. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament may take place provided one person remains present throughout.
3. 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.
4. 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. Anointings may be done with a cotton swab or purify hands between each anointing.
5. Holy water fonts are to remain empty until further notice.
6. Hand sanitizer and/or alternate sanitizing options should be available throughout the church.
7. 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.
8. Appropriate and adequate signage should be posted indicating the requirement of distancing and maximum numbers.
9. 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.
10. 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. Bishop Hagemoen continues to dispense the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday.
 - 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. Alternating pews should be blocked off. Other considerations should be made given the layout of each particular church.
3. Appropriate cleaning of high use areas within the church is to be done before and after each service.
 - a. Pews utilized by the assembly should be wiped down before Mass.
 - b. 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.
4. Holy water fonts are to remain empty until further notice.
5. The faithful are encouraged, but not required to wear a mask.
6. Doors may be propped or held open to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.
7. An announcement may need to be made before Mass about personal distancing, the collection, reception of Communion, and other protocols.

DURING MASS

1. Staff, ushers or other volunteers should assist with directing people to pews specifically marked. As previously indicated, attendance will be limited to assure compliance with social distancing requirements.
2. Please refer to the Re-open Saskatchewan Plan for full distancing guidelines for Places of Worship. Families are to maintain six-foot distancing between their family and other families or individuals throughout the celebration of Mass.
 - a. One or two pews are to be left vacant in between rows such that six feet of distance can be maintained in all directions.
 - b. Music ministers are to maintain physical distance greater than six-feet between each other and the congregation to prevent transmission of respiratory droplets.
3. The entrance/recession processions should only be done if social distancing can be maintained.

4. 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.
5. 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.
6. It is recommended that separate chalices be prepared for each concelebrating priest and/or deacon.
7. Mass is to be celebrated without altar servers.
8. 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.
9. 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).
10. 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.
11. 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.
12. 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.
13. The communicant is not permitted to self-communicate, even by means of intinction. A deacon or concelebrating priest may receive by intinction.
14. 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.
 - 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.
15. 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.
 16. The faithful may depart after making a brief prayer of thanksgiving.

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 Communions postponed by the directive of March 15, 2020, can now be scheduled.

1. With these directives, **Bishop Hagemoen hereby grants 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 Communions 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. Catechetical programs for those scheduled to receive Confirmation and First Communion the following year should commence at the usual time respecting and complying with any provisions in effect at that time.
6. Please note that there may be a further announcement by June 2020 regarding possible change re: the age of Confirmation in our diocese, which may also affect parish planning for this Sacrament in the near future.

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 will be extended to the end of this calendar year.

For the year 2020 only, Bishop Hagemoen hereby grants 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

For more information regarding the resumption of Sacraments during this pandemic you may refer to the Guidelines for Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon provided by the Diocesan Liturgy Committee of May 15, 2020, which are amended accordingly with this update.

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

Additional reference and information from the Government of Saskatchewan can be found here:

[Most recent 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,



✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen
Bishop of Saskatoon