

THE FOLLOWING EXCERPTS FROM THE ORIGINAL DIOCESAN PROTOCOL ARE PRINTED BELOW FOR CONVENIENCE

General Guidelines/Recommendations

The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses continues until further notice. Although the faithful are dispensed from their obligation to attend Mass, they are encouraged to spend time in prayer on Sunday (such as following a livestream Mass or participating in a spiritual or corporal act of mercy).

Those who are at higher risk of COVID-19 (e.g., those who are sixty-five and older or who have underlying health conditions) are to continue staying at home. Likewise, anyone with a temperature, a cough of any sort, and anyone feeling ill, should not come to the church for a visit or for any ceremonies.

A priest, deacon, or other minister with a respiratory infection of any kind should not distribute Communion. Priests who are not comfortable distributing communion, by reason of age or health, should feel free to delegate that to another minister.

At this time, the number of Extraordinary Ministers should be kept to a minimum to assure strict adherence to required protocol.

Parishes should continue to livestream Masses if feasible or direct parishioners to a website listing of livestream links, even after public Masses resume.

Written permission is required for non-employees serving at a Mass that is being live streamed. (Permission form attached).

Outdoor Masses

Cars should be parked in one area and the Mass should be celebrated in a different area.

The faithful are encouraged to bring their own seating to relieve the parish from the burden of sanitizing seating. The seating arrangement is to be clearly marked and allow for proper distancing.

Parking Lot Masses

Parking lot Masses may take place with the faithful remaining in their vehicles until time for Communion.

Parking must be clearly marked and attendants need to be on duty to direct cars.

People must leave their car to receive Communion. Appropriate distance needs to be maintained while in line for Communion.

Under no circumstance should Communion be handed to someone inside a car.

Those administering Communion should make certain the host is consumed. Obviously, no one may take a host home to a family member.

Cars must not be allowed to leave the lot until Mass is over—and only at the direction of the parking attendants.

Handling of cars and access to Communion must be very carefully planned out.

Communion Outside of Mass

It is better to distribute communion at a time other than right after a livestreamed Mass that can't be attended. Perhaps livestream the Saturday Mass and then distribute communion on Sunday.

If possible, the communicant should receive the Sacrament of Confession before coming. Reading and meditating on the Mass readings, and an Act of Contrition is another way to prepare.

If distributing Communion in a parking lot, allow occupants of perhaps three vehicles at a time to exit their car, wearing a face mask, and keeping appropriate distance.

To the assembled group, the priest or deacon raises the Host and says “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.” The communicant responds, “O Lord, I am not worthy...”

The communicants approach the minister one at a time with masks still on, and keeping appropriate distance from other communicants.

The minister says, “The Body of Christ.” The communicant, still wearing the mask, receives the Host in the hand and says, “Amen.” Then the communicant walks a safe distance away, consumes the host, and returns to the vehicle.

When that group of communicants/cars is finished, the priest or deacon says, “May Almighty God bless you, the Father and the Son and Holy Spirit.” Then they leave and those from the next group of vehicles approaches.

As people of faith, we must always be aware of the importance of acting in a socially responsible way, to give good example to others, and to act with charity toward all.