



**THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS
WITH THE ANTICIPATED LIFTING OF COVID-19 RESTRICTIONS**

**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
FRIDAY, MAY 8, 2020**

The State of Pennsylvania plans for the gradual lifting of all restrictions due to the COVID-19 precautions in three phases—red, yellow and green--based on testing results for the virus and a consistent reduction in the number of new cases. Several variables do not allow at this point for a uniform and definite date for the lifting of these restrictions especially in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The Archdiocese proposes the following plan—Current Phase, Restricted Phase, and Open Phase as the restrictions lift. For the Current Phase, the previously published existing norms remain in force. The Restricted and Open Phases will be announced by the Archbishop through the Archdiocesan Office for Communications. Amended and updated directives will be published for the Restricted and Open Phases if needed.

GENERAL POINTS

- **Adjustments to the Celebration of the Sacred Liturgy**

The Sacred Liturgy is to be celebrated, as always, according to what is prescribed in the liturgical books. The options indicated below are to be observed by all throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The reverent, faith-filled and natural celebration of the Sacred Liturgy on the part of all should be preserved.

Priests, deacons and liturgical ministers are not expected to wear masks or gloves. Holy Communion is not to be distributed wearing gloves.

Drive up services for the purpose of the reception of Holy Communion are not permitted.

The sick and the dead, especially as a result of COVID-19, are to be remembered regularly in the Universal Prayer and other occasions of prayer. Those on the front lines, especially medical personnel, are to be remembered regularly as well.

- **The Sacrament of Confirmation**

All scheduled celebrations of the Sacrament of Confirmation for school age children have been postponed until the Fall of 2020. The Bishop celebrants will reschedule directly with Pastors. The conferral of Confirmation for adults (those who have completed fourteen years of age) planned for Pentecost Sunday, May 31, 2020 at the Cathedral Basilica will not take place this year.

- **Sanitation**

All areas of the church are to be sanitized routinely, including the Confessional areas. All sacred vessels, after the prescribed liturgical purifications by the Priest celebrant or deacon during or after Mass, are to be washed routinely with soap and water. Fresh water is to be used for each celebration of Baptism and the font cleaned following the celebration. Priests, deacons and liturgical ministers are to wash their hands prior to and following the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.

- **The Sick and People at Risk**

Those who are sick or compromised due to health conditions are not to come to church. Likewise, those who are at risk are not to exercise liturgical ministries.

- **Easter Duty**

The Archbishop dispenses all the faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia from the Easter Duty this year. This is the precept to receive Holy Communion during Easter Time.

- **Distance and Numbers**

Two features of ongoing COVID-19 precautions are social distancing and limiting the number of assemblies. During this Current Phase, the norm is six feet between people and a limit of ten to a gathering. As restrictions are lifted, any revision of the norms for social distancing and the number for gatherings will be announced and is to be seriously observed. Pastors, along with their staffs, are to work out locally the details for social distancing and the limitations for assemblies.

Choirs, scholae and liturgical music ministers should also follow the norms for social distancing and the limited number for assemblies.

- **Live Stream Services**

Parishes are encouraged to continue live stream services for Mass, other sacramental celebrations and devotions.

CURRENT PHASE as of May 8, 2020

- Churches are to remain open each day for a period of time for the faithful to pray.
 - Exposition of the Most Blessed Sacrament on the main altar is permitted with at least one adorer present.
 - Holy Water fonts are to remain empty.
- The faithful are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.
- All public Masses are suspended. The Sunday and daily Masses celebrated are to take place when the Church is not open.
 - Masses may be celebrated in seminaries, monasteries, convents and selected nursing homes.
 - In convents, if a Communion Service is taking place, then the form in the ritual book, *Holy Communion and Worship of the Eucharist outside Mass*, Chapter 1, is to be observed.
- Baptisms, Confessions, and Marriages **are to take place** as usual but with due regard for reasonable social distancing and the limitation of participants.
- Funeral Masses and Funerals outside of Mass are to take place as usual with due regard for reasonable social distancing and the limitations of participants.
- Communion Services are not to be used as a replacement for the celebration of Mass in any form.
- Priests are expected to celebrate the Sacraments for those in danger of death, and especially Holy Viaticum
 - Please see existing norms for the Sacraments of Christian Initiation and the Healing Sacraments, <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/home-page/news/>.

RESTRICTED PHASE

The beginning of the Restricted Phase will be announced by the Archbishop through the Archdiocesan Office for Communications. This beginning of the Restricted Phase may vary from county to county within the Archdiocese. Uniform announcements about the Restricted Phase will be provided for parishes and media.

- The faithful are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days.

- Public Masses are celebrated with provisions for social distancing and the limitations for assemblies as revised for this phase. Guidance will be provided.
 - Use larger church rather than the daily Mass chapel for all Masses.
 - Hymnals and missalettes are not to be used.
 - There is no procession with the Gifts during the Offertory of the Mass.
 - Ushers and Greeters are to wear gloves as they handle the collection of monies.
 - The Sign of Peace and the distribution of the Precious Blood continue to be suspended.
 - Holy Communion is to be distributed during each Mass. Out of necessity to avoid a real risk of infection with COVID-19 for the Communion minister and the communicants, Holy Communion is to be distributed in the hand at this time. When possible, a distinct Communion station may be available for those who continue to choose to receive on the tongue. In this case, the Communion minister is to purify/sanitize after each Communion.
 - Parish Bulletins and other materials should not be distributed but available for people to take themselves.
 - If the blessed palm has not already been distributed, it may also be made available.
- Baptisms, Confessions, and Marriages **are to take place** as usual but with due regard for reasonable social distancing and the limitation of participants according to revised norms.
 - The Sacraments of Christian Initiation for adults and children may take place, again with due regard for reasonable social distancing and the limitation of participants. Please see existing norms, <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/home-page/news/>.
- Funeral Masses and Funerals outside of Mass are to take place as usual with due regard for reasonable social distancing and the limitations of participants according to revised norms.
- Communion Services are not to be used as a replacement for the celebration of Mass in any form.
- Priests are expected to celebrate the Sacraments for those in danger of death, and especially Holy Viaticum.
 - Please see existing norms for the Healing Sacraments, <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/home-page/news/>.

OPEN PHASE

The beginning of the Open Phase will be announced by the Archbishop through the Archdiocesan Office for Communications. This beginning of the Open Phase may vary from county to county

within the Archdiocese. Uniform announcements about the Open Phase will be provided for parishes and media.

- The faithful are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days until restored by an announcement from the Archbishop.
- All public celebrations of Mass, all other Sacraments and Devotions are restored.
 - Hymnals and missalettes may once again be used.
 - *There is no procession with the Gifts during the Offertory of the Mass until further notice.*
 - *The use of the Sign of Peace and the distribution of the Precious Blood continues to be suspended until further notice.*
- Perpetual Exposition/Adoration Chapels may reopen.
- If this has not already taken place, the celebration of the Sacraments of Christian Initiation for the Elect is to be scheduled. First Penance, First Holy Communion, and Reception of Baptized Catholics are likewise to be scheduled. These are to be independent celebrations as envisioned by the Church's liturgical norms and should not be combined.
- Memorial Masses for those who have died during the Pandemic are to be scheduled.
- Deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may resume visits with Holy Communion to the homebound and medical facilities.

Please see the website of the Office for Divine Worship for a complete listing of liturgical updates during the COVID-19 Pandemic, information on the ARISE initiative of the Archdiocese, and other resources, <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/home-page/news/>.

Thank you so very much for your generous assistance during this period of recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic in the life of our local church. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at fr.dgill@archphila.org.

In Christ,
Father Dennis Gill,
Director, Office for Divine Worship