



DIOCESE *of* LACROSSE

Guidelines for the Public Celebration of Masses Effective May 18, 2021

Local ordinances that are more restrictive than the following guidelines should be followed (e.g., regarding face coverings, physical distancing, large gatherings, etc.).

Preparations before Mass:

1. Out of concern and safety for others, anyone with fever or flu-like symptoms should not attend Mass.
2. Capacity at Mass should be determined according to recommended social distancing and safety precautions. The recommended distance varies according to vaccination status or personal choice. Therefore, provision should be made at every Mass to accommodate these safety precautions. Barriers between pews should only be removed gradually to accommodate social distancing recommendations: for example, part of the church may need to be without barriers to accommodate the number of people, yet barriers should remain in other areas for those for whom distancing remains an important safety measure.
3. "Vaccinated-only" Masses are not allowed; checking vaccination status of Mass attendees is also not permitted. However, pastors might consider designating a Mass time for those seeking more stringent precautions.
4. Wearing face coverings and maintaining social distance is highly encouraged for unvaccinated persons.
5. Hand sanitizer should be available for those who wish to use it.
6. Holy water fonts may be filled at the discretion of the pastor.
7. It is permitted to have Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, greeters, ushers, and other volunteers to assist at the Mass, as necessary. Ministers should practice proper social distancing and safety procedures.
8. A cantor, accompanist, and choir are allowed. The choir should practice proper social distancing and safety procedures.

9. Sacristans and those who prepare communion elements must carefully wash their hands prior to touching the breads and pouring the wine.
10. All vessels containing bread and wine are to remain covered until the distribution of Holy Communion (except from the epiclesis to after the consecration during Eucharistic Prayer).
11. Separate chalices should be used for the celebrant, each concelebrant, and deacon, or the practice of intinction should be observed, for clergy not fully vaccinated.
12. All liturgical ministers must wash/sanitize their hands before and after Mass.

During Mass:

13. Ministers may process through the body of the church at the beginning and end of Mass.
14. For a monetary collection, baskets or other appropriate containers could be placed at church exits or elsewhere in the building for people to drop envelopes or donations (with proper security). As an alternative, baskets with long handles are allowed; collection baskets are not to be passed person-to-person. Ushers must immediately wash or sanitize their hands after the collection.
15. Presentation of gifts is allowed. Hand sanitizer should be made available for use by those presenting the gifts.
16. For now, the Sign of Peace will continue to be omitted. Consequently, when the celebrant says, "The peace of the Lord be with you always," and the people respond, "And with your spirit," the celebrant forgoes the usual invitation to offer a Sign of Peace and moves immediately to the "Lamb of God."
17. All communion ministers must sanitize their hands before and after the distribution of holy communion.
18. Communion will continue to be given to the faithful under the form of bread alone. Communion is encouraged to be received in the hand. If inadvertent contact is made between minister and communicant, the minister is to purify his or her hands before continuing to distribute Communion.

After Mass:

19. Frequently touched surfaces in the church (pews/pew tops, door handles, microphones, etc.) should be cleaned and/or sanitized per CDC recommendations. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
20. Other gatherings associated with Mass (e.g., coffee & donuts, funeral luncheons) can be held following current safety precautions.
21. The ordinary process of counting the offertory collection can be resumed.