



Guidance for Public Liturgies on Sunday/Weekday Mass

*Revised Directives and Guidance for the
Diocese of Youngstown ~ March 2022*

The following revised Guidance and Directives are issued considering the recent updated recommendations from the CDC, State of Ohio, and local health departments and the decline in COVID cases.

➤ **General Considerations**

- ❖ Those who are ill or have significant health risk factors should make a prudent decision about attending Mass.
- ❖ Every effort should be made to return Sunday/weekday worship to a style that promotes the full, active, and conscious participation of all in attendance as called for by the liturgy and expected by the People of God while maintaining a reasonably safe and comfortable environment.

❖ **Face Coverings:**

In light of prevailing circumstances and guidance provided by the CDC, the wearing of face coverings for those attending Mass is no longer required or mandated. It remains an option for individuals to do so if they desire.

~To alleviate confusion among the faithful and to provide a consistent understanding, parishes are asked to remove signs/notices from entrance doors, bulletin boards that state "face coverings are required/mandated," etc.

❖ **Liturgical Celebrations:**

All elements, actions, and practices that contribute, enhance, and promote worship to a style that embraces the full, active, and conscious participation of all in attendance are to be restored except for offering Holy Communion to the faithful from the Chalice (*see below*). This includes but not limited to:

- ~full and complete entrance/recessional processions;
- ~resumption of congregational singing, choirs, and ensembles;
- ~presentation of the gifts procession;
- ~Sign of Peace (*see below*);
- ~regular procedure of collection-taking through passing of baskets or by ushers. (*Offering baskets at entrance locations are to be discontinued.*)

❖ **Sign of Peace:**

The spoken invitation to the offer a Sign of Peace continues. Because transmission of the virus is not touch-based, the gesture of shaking hands can be reintroduced, however attention and respect should be afforded to those who, at this time, remain uncomfortable doing so. The gesture of bowing to others and offering words of peace to those nearby remains acceptable. Those from the same household can also offer a more expressive gesture.

In reintroducing the shaking of hands at the sign of peace, it would be pastorally sensitive to remind the faithful of respecting those who might choose not to at this time.

❖ **Distribution of Holy Communion:**

Other than as Viaticum to the critically ill, Holy Communion is to be given in the context of Mass or outside of Mass according to an approved rite (*i.e., Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion*). The distribution of Holy Communion at any other time (*i.e., immediately after Mass, before Mass etc.*) rather than during Mass is prohibited.

~Ministers of Holy Communion: Ministers of Holy Communion are no longer required to wear face-coverings during the distribution of Holy Communion. The practice of *discreetly* sanitizing hands before distributing may continue.

The placement of hand sanitizer and the action of sanitizing hands before the distribution of Holy Communion should be done discreetly and not detract from the action of the Eucharist at the altar. It is recommended that sanitizer bottles no longer be placed on or near the altar but rather only at the credence table.

~Distribution of Holy Communion on the tongue: Ministers of Holy Communion should respect the way the communicant desires to receive the host. Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist should be opened to offering Holy Communion to those who desire to receive in this way.

~Prayer for Spiritual Communion: The “*Prayer for Spiritual Communion*” is no longer to be recited at Mass.

❖ **Reception of the Precious Blood:** At the present time, the current environment suggests that reintroducing the reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice by the assembly is not prudent. However gradual reintroduction of offering the chalice might be considered at this time. This might include offering the chalice to Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist for the time being or at Mass on special occasions (*i.e. Weddings, Funerals, First Communion, Holy Thursday*). It is hoped, soon and with improving circumstances, an appropriate and proper reintroduction of the regular reception of the Precious Blood by the faithful will be possible.

Further guidance will be provided by the Office of Worship as merited.