

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

MEMORANDUM

Date: July 28, 2021
To: All Parishes and Institutions of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
From: Reverend Tom Margevičius, Director, Office of Worship
Re: Liturgical Updates for Summer 2021

I. Introduction.

The Delta variant of the coronavirus still poses a public threat. Though the situation in the Archdiocese presently appears less serious than elsewhere in the country, each parish has unique demographics and must determine its own best practices. After consulting with other dioceses, Catholic Mutual, and the Catholic Medical Association, we believe that many liturgical practices that were in place before the pandemic may be resumed, with caveats below. Once again, these Updates do not address schools, VBS, or other non-liturgical settings. As usual, email me your questions. margeviciust@archspm.org

II. Baptismal Fonts and Holy Water Stoups.

Parishes may once again fill baptismal fonts and holy water stoups. Those uncomfortable dipping their fingers into such water simply may choose not to do so. If no one has been baptized in the font, it may remain filled for the faithful to bless themselves. Baptismal fonts are to be cleaned and sanitized regularly. Holy water stoups are frequently-touched surfaces and should be cleaned and sanitized often; check with Catholic Mutual for best practices. Pour soiled holy water into the sacrarium, on potted plants, or onto church ground, but never into the sewage system.

III. The Blood of Christ.

The MN Department of Health indicates that spreading the coronavirus by drinking from a common chalice is unlikely, though there is still some risk. The Archdiocese now allows each Pastor, in consultation with his staff and advisors, to decide when to resume offering the common chalice at Mass. For example, you may resume it incrementally, starting with the deacon, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, or daily Mass attendees. Again, those uncomfortable with this need not use the common chalice.

IV. Congregational Singing.

Forceful exhalation of respiratory particles that occurs when singing renders it a risky activity for those not vaccinated. Though the Archdiocese has no restrictions on singing, see this [website](#) for recommendations from the MN Department of Health.

V. Ongoing General Safety Protocols.

- A. **If you are sick, stay at home.** Please take care of yourself, and do your part to protect others from becoming infected.
- B. **Vulnerable persons and those caring for them should stay safe.** Attend nonobligatory gatherings only to the extent that you (and those you care for) judge the risk of infection to be acceptable.
- C. **Vaccines are encouraged** by the Department of Health and the Catholic Medical Association because they have proven effectiveness. See [here](#) for information.
- D. **Facemasks are still suggested for those unvaccinated.** The Delta variant appears to be both more contagious and more severe, and like all variants, spreads primarily through respiration.
- E. **Continue to wash hands** with soap and water and use hand sanitizer. Parishes are encouraged to continue to make sanitizer widely available throughout your facility.
- F. **Do only as much as you are comfortable doing.** An individual may always practice more restrictive facemask and physical distance standards than are required.

VI. **Physical Distancing** is no longer required. Even so, some individuals may feel safer in a section of the church (or at particular Sunday Mass) that retains seating six feet apart and/or requires masks of those in a particular section. Parishes may consider retaining physical distancing at some Masses. This should be communicated clearly in your bulletin, website, and within the church building. You may also notify the Archdiocesan Office of Communications communications@archspm.org so they can advertise it for those unable to find Masses with these accommodations in their own parishes.

VII. **The Obligation to Attend Mass.** As of July 1, the bishops of all six Minnesota dioceses have reinstated the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. In addition to the normal exceptions (e.g. the sick should stay home), there are other accommodations for those affected by COVID. See this [website](#) for more information.

VIII. **Live-streamed and Pre-recorded Liturgies.** As the pandemic eases and the obligation to attend Mass in person has been reinstated, there may be less a need to broadcast liturgies. Nevertheless, those unable to attend in person find these beneficial, and parishes are welcomed to continue doing so as they determine pastorally feasible.

IX. Other Liturgical Details for Celebration of the Eucharist.

- A. **Liturgical Ministers.** There are no restrictions on how many deacons, servers, lectors, cantors, ushers, or Communion distributors may serve in the liturgy. Those unvaccinated are urged to wear masks when not cantoring or proclaiming scriptures.
- B. **Hymnals and other Reusable Liturgy Aids** may once again be placed in the pews for common usage.

- C. **Collection and Presentation of Gifts** may return to pre-pandemic practices, including passing the common basket and inviting the faithful to bring gifts forward during preparation of the altar.
 - D. **Sign of Peace and other Physical Contact.** There are no restrictions, yet those who prefer to wave or smile without physical contact are welcomed to do so.
 - E. **Distributing the Body of Christ** can be done as it was pre-pandemic, with neither vaccinated distributors nor recipients needing to wear masks. (If the church retains a special section for masked individuals, it may be best for even vaccinated distributors to wear masks in that section.) Communion distributors are encouraged to sanitize their hands before and after distribution to the faithful, but there is no requirement to sanitize after e.g. each communicant who receives on the tongue.
- X.** **Communion to the Homebound.** Ministers who are not vaccinated visiting the homebound should wear masks during these visits; others are not required to wear masks, though are encouraged to do so if the residents are more comfortable that way. All are expected to follow the protocols of the facility they are visiting.
- XI.** **Baptisms.** For baptism by immersion, the font should be freshly sanitized and filled; use water in which no one has yet been baptized. Only one person should be immersed in each filling of the font. After each immersion, empty the font, sanitize it, and refill it with fresh water to be blessed anew. For baptism by pouring, use a pitcher of blessed water and pour it over the candidate positioned above the font. Do not dip back into used water to baptize or bless anyone else; pour fresh water on each candidate. Once baptisms are completed, empty and sanitize the font before using it the next time.
- XII.** **Faculty to Confirm.** Confirmations for the liturgical year autumn 2021 – spring 2022 will return to pre-pandemic patterns. The faculty granted to Pastors and Parochial Administrators to confirm those youth in their own parish's confirmation preparation program is being **revoked September 6, 2021**. After that date, priests must once again request from the Archbishop the faculty to confirm students unable to be confirmed at a regular Archdiocesan liturgy. Refer to the current Archdiocesan [policy](#).
- XIII.** **Outdoor Weddings.** Permission to celebrate the Sacrament of Matrimony outdoors on church property is being **rescinded September 6, 2021**. Those weddings already on the parish calendar after that date may be celebrated on parish property outdoors, but parishes are not to schedule any new outdoor weddings after Labor Day. Permission for a wedding on non-church property, whether before or after Labor Day, must still be sought in writing from the Archbishop, sent to Sean McDonough's office mcdonoughs@archspm.org, explaining the reasons for this request.

ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

- XIV.** **Anointing with Holy Oil**, whether chrismating confirmandi, anointing the sick, or performing baptisms, may be done by the bare, ungloved thumb. Nevertheless, priests may continue to use a cotton ball or swab to apply the oil. Such implements are to be reverently burned after the liturgy. It is prudent to sanitize hands before and after anointing.
- XV.** **Sacrament of Reconciliation**. In his June 14 letter to priests, Archbishop Hebda officially ended the previous permission to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation using Form III (a.k.a. General Absolution). Priests are encouraged to welcome their faithful back to regular confession. There remain no COVID restrictions on the celebration of this Sacrament.
- XVI.** **Funeral Visitations and Luncheons, Wedding Receptions, Coffee and Donuts.** There are no specific guidelines from the Office of Worship regarding these non-liturgical gatherings. Contact Catholic Mutual and see these [recommendations](#) from the MN Department of Health.
- XVII.** ***Traditionis Custodes* Task Force.** As Archbishop Hebda's July 16 [letter](#) indicated, Bishop Cozzens chairs a Task Force to study Pope Francis' motu proprio *Traditionis Custodes* and recommend to the Archbishop a way forward. To that end:
- A. If your parish is currently celebrating a regular public Mass using the *Missal* of 1962, please kindly email me margeviciust@archspm.org and tell me where, how often, and at what time your parish celebrates using the 1962 *Missal*.
 - B. If you personally celebrate Mass in public using the 1962 *Missal* and would like to continue doing so, write Archbishop Hebda directly before August 15 and express your desire to continue doing so.
 - C. If you have any observations/recommendations, please forward them to any of us on the Task Force (Bishop Cozzens, Fr. Bryan Pedersen, Fr. John Gallas, Chancellor Susan Mulheron, or me).

XVIII. Upcoming Liturgical Dates.

- A. **Sts. Mary and Lazarus of Bethany** have now been added to their sister St. Martha on **July 29**. Refer to this [page](#) for current texts.
- B. **Sunday, August 15** is the Solemnity of the **Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary**. Liturgical texts for the Twentieth Sunday in Ordinary Time are not used that Sunday.
- C. **Saturday, September 11** will be the 20th anniversary of the attack on the World Trade Towers, the Pentagon, and Flight 93. The Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions (FDLC) has prepared a [guide](#) to help observe this memorial.

ARCHDIOCESE
OF
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

- D. **St. Hildegard of Bingen** has been added to the Universal Calendar as an Optional Memorial on **September 17**. For liturgical texts see [here](#).
- E. **Sunday, September 26, 2021** is the annual [World Day of Migrants and Refugees](#). There will be a Mass of Solidarity 3:00pm at the Cathedral of St. Paul, featuring members of various ethnicities. The Archbishop grants parishes permission (without requiring it) to use texts from *The Roman Missal*, Masses for Various Needs, n. 32: “For Refugees and Exiles” (instead of those from the Twenty-sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time), as well as readings from *Lectionary* nn. 927- 932.
- F. As mentioned in the 2020-2021 Archdiocesan [Liturgical Calendar](#), on **December 12, 2021**, parishes are obligated to use the liturgical texts for the **Second Sunday of Advent**, though they may honor Our Lady of Guadalupe during that Advent Mass. Pastors wishing to observe the *liturgical* Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe on a day other than December 12 (e.g. Saturday, December 11, or Monday, December 13) should write the Archbishop requesting that permission.
- G. According to a February 2017 [Newsletter](#) from the USCCB’s Committee on Divine Worship, it is the consensus of canonists that attending one **Mass Saturday evening December 25, 2021** does *not* fulfill the obligation to attend Mass for both Christmas *and* the Feast of the Holy Family, Sunday December 26. The faithful must attend two Masses. (Good luck explaining this, much less enforcing it.) Even so, Mass celebrated Saturday evening December 25 is that of Christmas During the Day (even for those attending that Mass to fulfill their Holy Family obligation).
- H. In contrast, since the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God **January 1, 2022** falls on a Saturday, the obligation to attend Mass that day is abrogated. Mass Saturday evening January 1 is the Vigil Mass of the **Epiphany, Sunday January 2, 2022**.
- I. **The Archdiocesan Liturgical Calendar** for the Liturgical Year 2021 – 2022 is being compiled. If you have any suggestions for that calendar please let me know.