

Archdiocese of Cincinnati
Worship in a Time of Public Health Concern (COVID-19)

Revised 3/12/20

In this present time of public health concern, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati has given the following guidance to parishes, schools, and other institutions about celebrations of public worship:

Beginning immediately, and until further notice:

- **Catholics are dispensed from their Sunday Mass obligation through the weekend of March 28-29.**
- Masses may be celebrated as currently scheduled with the following restrictions, which should be announced prior to the start of Mass:
 - No holding hands during the Our Father
 - Suspension of exchange of a sign of peace (or instruct the faithful to do so without physical contact)
 - No reception of Holy Communion from the chalice
 - No reception of Holy Communion on the tongue
- Not for penitential reasons, but for health reasons, holy water fonts in the church should be drained.
- Unconsecrated bread and wine for Mass should be kept out of public areas. In other words, they are not to be part of the offertory procession.

General Precautions that should continue to be followed:

- **Those who are sick, experiencing symptoms of illness, or are at risk, should be encouraged to not attend Mass, and, out of charity to their brothers and sisters in Christ, remain home.**
- Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should practice good hygiene, washing their hands thoroughly before Mass begins and, if possible, using an alcohol-based anti-bacterial solution discreetly before and after distributing Holy Communion.

- All vessels should be cleansed thoroughly after Mass with hot, soapy water.

Other Possible Precautions for Health and Safety:

- Priests and other liturgical ministers should limit unnecessary physical contact before, during, and after Mass and other sacramental celebrations whenever possible.
- Those attempting to visit nursing homes or hospitals should take necessary health and safety precautions, and call ahead to verify access.
- For the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance, consider the following:
 - If the reconciliation chapel/confessional is a confined space, celebrate the sacrament in another room
 - Use a screen, whenever possible, to limit close contact

All are encouraged to pray for those afflicted with serious illnesses and health-care professionals. Resources for liturgical prayer in a time of public health concern can be [found on the website of the Office for Divine Worship and Sacraments](#).

Please [contact the ODWS](#) if you have any questions.

