

Diocese of Erie
Faith Formation Office
May 28, 2020

Parish Reopening Checklist

Ensure that your parish has already thought of everything! Parishes who are ready to reopen will have plans in place for most or all topics covered in the guidance column and all directives from the Bishop's decree of May 21, 2020

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

Directives from Bishop's Decree	Guidance on implementing
<p>For all gatherings inside churches, the maximum number of participants should be limited to 1/3 of the building capacity, utilizing only every third pew.</p>	<p>Consider how you will communicate building capacity to parishioners and the general public (website, paper posted on parish doors, part of parish voicemail, etc.).</p> <hr/> <p>Consider how you will help parishioners abide by building capacity. Options include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask them to sign up for the Mass they plan to attend by calling or emailing the church office. • Ask them to use a reservation/ticketing software such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Save a Seat Pastors Toolbox • Eventbrite • Signup Genius • Guess and check: Assume that parishioners will naturally spread themselves out between Masses so that the church is not over capacity. Prepare parishioners so that they are aware that this will take a few weeks to even out and that they may be asked to come back to another Mass if the church is over 1/3 full.
<p>It may be necessary in many parishes to adjust the Sunday Mass schedules to allow sufficient time to clean the church between Masses.</p> <p>In some cases, pastors may wish to offer additional Masses to allow for smaller gatherings. During this yellow phase, standing permission is given to priests to trinate on Sundays and holy days and to binate on weekdays.</p>	<p>If you will temporarily add another Mass or need to lengthen the time between masses to allow for cleaning, how do you plan to communicate the Mass schedule, especially to those without the internet?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone tree • Signs on property • Postcard to parishioners • Email blast • My parish app / flock note / text
<p>Dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and holy day Masses remains in place.</p> <p>Dispensation from the Easter Duty (obligation to receive Holy Communion during the Easter Season) is granted.</p>	<p>Consider how you will communicate the dispensations that are still in place and the value of spiritual communion (parish wide email, website and/or parish app, paper posted on parish doors, part of parish voicemail, etc.).</p> <p>How can you encourage parishioners that are high-risk to stay home?</p>

Spiritual communion should continue to be strongly encouraged.	Can they receive Eucharist in another way with less public exposure? Consider the pastor's health and readiness to move forward.
Livestreaming of Masses (both daily and Sunday) should continue wherever feasible.	Promote live streaming options for your parish. Are there parishioners that can help volunteer to make your livestream ministries more sustainable, now that you're saying public Masses again? If your parish does not have live streaming options, include other options. Some examples are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St. Peter Cathedral Church • Compilation of English speaking Holy Mass celebrations around the world
Priests and deacons only (no lay ministers) may visit the home-bound for non-emergency sacramental visits but must wear masks when doing so. Priests and deacons only (no lay ministers) may visit the home-bound for non-emergency sacramental visits but must wear masks when doing so. (cont'd)	Who will visit, and how much time will be allotted for visiting?
	How will parishioners express interest in a home visit?
	How will safety requirements (masks, social distancing, visit length, etc.) be communicated before the visit?
	If someone is immunocompromised and homebound but lives with family who is an Extraordinary Minister, may the minister bring Eucharist home to their family member?
Even in parishes where public Masses have been resumed, pastors are encouraged to provide opportunities to distribute Holy Communion outside of Mass to those parishioners who cannot or should not attend Mass, in a manner suited to the local circumstances using the approved rites to be released by the Office of Worship.	Options may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communion services • Home visits by approved ministers (priest, deacon)

GENERAL NORMS FOR ALL MASSES

Miscellaneous

Directives from Bishop's Decree	Guidance on implementing
<p>The following actions remain suspended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exchange of the sign of peace among parishioners • Distribution of the Precious Blood • Placing of holy water in fonts • Greeting of parishioners at the door before or after Mass <p>There are to be no entrance processions, no processions to present the gifts, and no</p>	<p>Communicate norms to parishioners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signs / text/ parish app / bulletin / provided video <p>Train liturgical ministers and ushers on new norms.</p> <p>Ask liturgical ministers if they are available and comfortable returning to church before scheduling them.</p>

<p>closing processions. The priest and ministers should enter and exit directly from the sacristy, and the water, wine and hosts should be prepared beforehand on a table in the sanctuary.</p> <p>Masses and other liturgies are to be kept very simple. There is to be no more than one lector, one server, one musician, one cantor. When there is music, it may be necessary limit the music to the sung Mass parts.</p>	<p>With no options to greet and visit with parishioners, consider how you can stay connected to them, i.e.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular video update messages • Letters via email, bulletin, on website • Listening via phone call • Listening to groups of parishioners, such as children, by inviting letters to the pastor or hosting a coloring contest with art that can be displayed somewhere in the church building
<p>Everyone except the liturgical ministers in the sanctuary are to wear masks and practice social distancing.</p>	<p>Who is supplying masks? If it is the people, do you plan to have extras available or not? How will this be communicated to parishioners – consider remote and proximate communication (parish email or mailing, website and/or social media, as well as reminders posted on the doors as people arrive).</p>
<p>Pews, door handles, door plates, and other common surfaces are to wiped down between Masses.</p>	<p>What will your cleaning schedule be? How many volunteers will you need? Which supplies will you need, and how do you plan to procure them?</p> <p>Reference the cleaning guide put out by Faith Formation.</p>

Entering and Leaving

Directives from Bishop's Decree	Guidance on implementing
<p>It is not the pastor's responsibility to police who is attending, but parishioners should be strongly urged to heed the protocols for participating in the Mass.</p>	<p>It is not your job to police protocols, but if you do see something, do you plan to address it? How?</p> <p>Decide who in the parish can help Mass attendees follow protocols. They may include: ministers of hospitality, ushers, Knights of Columbus, or other service ministries like the Altar Guild.</p> <p>How can these volunteers be trained to show good judgment in enforcing church capacity, masks, etc.?</p> <p>How will you manage the pastoral implications of turning people away if needed?</p>
<p>The doors to the church are to be propped open before Mass and after Mass, so that no one needs to touch the doors entering or leaving. They may need to be closed during Mass due to noise or weather.</p> <p>At the end of Mass, parishioners should depart in an orderly manner maintaining social distance and should go directly to</p>	<p>Train ushers on new norms and ways to help parishioners remember and follow them.</p>

their vehicles. There is to be no gathering in the church, in the vestibule, in the gathering space, or in the parking lot.	
In order to protect the most vulnerable among us, signs should clearly indicate at each church entrance that wearing a mask is obligatory for all who wish to enter.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sample signs • Face covering poster from the CDC • Miscellaneous posters for download from the CDC, including how to wear a face covering and how to keep others safe. • Christian themed, can be opened with free software called Canva.

Seating

Directives from Bishop's Decree	Guidance on implementing
<p>Only every third pew may be used. Others are to be blocked off.</p> <p>A household could consist of a single individual or of multiple persons. Members of the same household may sit together. Multiple households may share a pew, provided that there are at least six feet between households.</p> <p>Parishioners must be prepared not to sit in their usual pew and must be flexible enough to sit wherever there is adequate room.</p>	<p>How will rules about seating be communicated to parishioners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Letter emailed/posted on website in advance • Video announcement emailed/posted
Nothing is to be in the pews. Hymnals and other similar items are not to be used and should be placed in storage.	<p>How do you plan to substitute for hymnals?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skip music • Sing something everyone is already very familiar with • Projection Screen • Disposable worship aids (including directions for their disposal at the end of Mass)
Hand sanitizer is to be available at the church entrance for parishioners.	
Collection baskets, with or without handles, are not to be used in the pews. Place a basket near the church entrance and ask parishioners to drop their envelope in the basket on the way in.	<p>How do you plan to make the donation drop-off procedure clear?</p> <p>How do you plan to make sure that people feel their funds are secure and safely given to you?</p>

Holy Communion

Directives from Bishop's Decree	Guidance on implementing
<p>The Bishop strongly recommends Communion in the hand, but the right to receive on the tongue remains in place.</p> <p>There is to be only a single-file approaching each person distributing the Holy Communion. If possible, communicants should approach one pew at a time, parishioners allowing those in front of them to finish prior to exiting the pew themselves. (With smaller groups, this will not unduly elongate the liturgy.)</p> <p>Those approaching for Communion should sanitize their hands before entering the line to receive Communion. They are also are to continue to wear face masks as they approach. They are to remove the mask to consume the Eucharist and immediately replace the mask to return to their seat.</p>	<p>How will rules about Communion reception be communicated to parishioners?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signage • Letter emailed/posted on website in advance • Video announcement emailed/posted <p>Consider how a balanced tone of enforcement and pastoral care can impact how these messages are received.</p>
<p>For the distribution of Communion, there is to be a table next to the priest or deacon with hand sanitizer. <i>Each and every time</i> he accidentally comes into contact with a communicant's hand, and <i>each and every time</i> a communicant receives on the tongue, the priest or deacon is to use the hand sanitizer before he proceeds to the next communicant.</p>	<p>Consider the number of ordinary ministers and plan sanitizing tables next to the position of each minister.</p>