MEMORANDUM

Date: April 1, 2020
To: All Priests and Deacons
From: Most Reverend Bernard A. Hebda
Re: Directives for Celebrating Holy Week and the Sacraments

Masses
- Regularly scheduled public Masses continue to be suspended at least through the Octave of Easter. The faithful of the Archdiocese continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice.
- A public Mass may be celebrated outdoors, provided the congregation remain in their vehicles with windows rolled up, and Holy Communion is distributed only to those serving at that liturgy (deacon, lector, cantor, etc.). Centers for Disease Control (CDC) requirements for social distancing must be met, and the Pastor must clear his plans with the local municipal authority and the Director of the Archdiocesan Office of Worship.
- The Faithful should be instructed about the value of participating in Holy Mass even when they cannot receive Holy Communion.
- Priests are encouraged to continue to celebrate Mass daily for the needs of the faithful, and to livestream where possible. To the extent possible, already accepted Mass intentions are to be celebrated on the scheduled day at the livestreamed liturgy.

Distribution of Holy Communion
- Communion should continue to be distributed outside of Mass to the sick and dying according to the Pastoral Care for the Sick.
- For the safety of all those involved, Communion to the sick and dying at a health care facility must follow both CDC restrictions and the protocol of the facility.
- Holy Communion may otherwise be distributed outside of Mass only in extreme pastoral need using Holy Communion and the Worship of the Eucharist Outside Mass and observing CDC requirements to minimize the probability of transmitting the virus.
- The faithful may make an appointment with the Pastor to receive Holy Communion privately once in the Easter Season (while the suspension of public Masses continues).
- Until an Archdiocesan-wide protocol can be developed for the safe and dignified distribution of Holy Communion, Communion is not to be distributed at outdoor Masses, regardless of whether the faithful remain in their cars, or at “drive through” Communion services, or in any other public fashion.
Eucharistic Adoration
- At the discretion of the Pastor, Eucharistic Adoration may continue, provided that CDC social distance requirements can be met, and the space can be thoroughly sanitized by trained personnel with appropriate regularity.
- The Blessed Sacrament may even be exposed at a window or other visible vantage point for people to adore while walking by or staying in their cars. Care must be taken that the Blessed Sacrament is never left unattended.
- A priest or deacon may carry the Blessed Sacrament in procession even in public spaces for the veneration of the faithful, provided CDC requirements for social distancing are observed. The faithful may remain in their cars with windows closed as the Blessed Sacrament passes by.
- Because larger public groups cannot guarantee meeting CDC restrictions for social distancing, priests and deacons may not organize or participate in large Eucharistic or devotional processions involving the faithful.

Live-Streamed Masses
- Parishes are encouraged to continue live streaming Masses to the faithful during the pandemic.
- A Sunday Mass may be recorded as early as noon on Saturday. The Easter Sunday liturgy, however, is not to be recorded before the Easter Vigil may be celebrated.

Holy Week/Triduum in Religious Houses.
- Permission of the Archbishop is granted for the celebration of the Triduum in Religious houses solely for those belonging to that Religious Order or community, provided that CDC requirements for social distancing are satisfied.

Palm Sunday
-Priests may bless and distribute palms provided they observe CDC requirements for social distancing. There are two suggested possibilities for this:
  - The faithful may pick up unblessed palms (observing social distancing) before Palm Sunday in anticipation of a livestreamed or televised Palm Sunday Mass and come to the Church at a designated time on Palm Sunday or during Holy Week to have their palms blessed from a safe distance; or
  - Palms may be blessed in conjunction with the celebration of the Palm Sunday Mass and afterward distributed to the faithful in a safe socially distant way, such as by a gloved person at prescribed hours handing them to parishioners (walking up, or in their vehicles); or palms may be spread on tables in or outside of the Church (weather permitting) for people to take. Hand sanitizer should be available and the faithful directed to take any palm that they touch.
• Outside of the Cathedral liturgy, the Congregation for Divine Worship has directed that the third form of Procession (Simple Entrance) from the Roman Missal be used (i.e., without a procession beginning outside the Church).

**Chrism Mass**
- The Chrism Mass will be rescheduled for a later date when it will be possible to gather the entire presbyterate for the liturgy.
- Last year’s oil stocks may in the meantime continue to be used.
- In the event of a shortage of either the Oil of Catechumens or of the Sick, the ritual books allow all priests to bless new oil. Olive oil is to be used if blessing new oil is necessary.
- In the event of a shortage of Sacred Chrism, (which may only be consecrated by a bishop), please contact Laurinda Irwin irwinl@archspm.org in the Archdiocesan Office of Worship to arrange for additional Sacred Chrism.

**Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper**
- This year, priests are authorized to celebrate this Mass without a congregation.
- The optional Washing of Feet is to be omitted.
- The usual post-Mass Eucharistic procession is to be omitted; after Mass the Blessed Sacrament is to be simply reposed in the tabernacle.

**Good Friday Celebration of the Lord’s Passion**
- Priests may celebrate this liturgy without a congregation.
- Every celebration is to include an 11th Solemn Intercession for an end to the pandemic. That text will be sent to you as a separate document.
- Only the principal celebrant venerates the Cross with a kiss; all others offer non-contact reverence such as a genuflection or bow.
- The Good Friday collection for Shrines in the Holy Land is rescheduled for Sunday, September 13, 2020.

**Holy Saturday**
- For those parishes that will be welcoming new catechumens or candidates at Easter, the Preparatory Rites of the RCIA may be celebrated in private, provided social distance restrictions are observed.
- Where it is the custom, individuals may privately bring Easter baskets to Church to be blessed, provided social distance restrictions are observed.
Easter Vigil

- The *Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults* already grants Pastors the freedom to celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation at a date other than the Easter Vigil. Pastors are encouraged to consider rescheduling these rites at a later date (perhaps the Vigil of Pentecost) so a larger number of the faithful would be able to participate in these joyful celebrations.
- Nevertheless, Pastors may initiate persons at the Easter Vigil, provided they strictly adhere to CDC social distancing requirements.
- The Congregation for Divine Worship indicates that in celebrations of the Vigil this year, the lighting of the Easter fire and procession are omitted; the Easter Candle is prepared and blessed before the liturgy and is in its place in the sanctuary at the beginning. The Vigil would thus begin with the Sign of the Cross, the Greeting, and the Exsultet, followed by the Liturgy of the Word as usual.
- Unless there is a Baptism, the blessing of the baptismal font is omitted this year. However, the Renewal of Baptismal Promises and sprinkling with holy water is retained.

Easter Sunday

- The Paschal Candle is to be in place and lit prior to the beginning of Mass, whether or not the Vigil was celebrated.
- Following the homily, the renewal of baptismal promises occurs, and persons are sprinkled with blessed Easter water.

Infant Baptism

- Until the suspension of public Masses is lifted, celebrations of infant baptism are to be delayed if possible.
- When a child’s parents or guardian nonetheless press for it, Baptism may be celebrated in the parish church, respecting the restrictions set by the CDC: no more than ten people present (including the minister), a minimum of six feet of social distance, and all surfaces and objects sanitized before and after the Baptism.
- Multiple Baptisms should not be celebrated at this time.
- The priest or deacon and godparents are not to trace the Sign of the Cross on the forehead of the child to be baptized. The parents may be invited to do this.
- Distinct sterile cotton balls should be used for the anointings with the Oil of Catechumens and with the Sacred Chrism; care should be taken the cotton ball is dipped in the oil only once, is placed in a sealable plastic bag, and that it is burned after the celebration.
- Use fresh water and dispose of all water down the sacrarium after baptizing; water is not to be reused.
Confirmation

- Archdiocesan Confirmations previously scheduled for April at the Cathedral, the Basilica, St. Ambrose, and St. Wenceslaus are cancelled. Decisions on the May and June Confirmations will be forthcoming.
- Parishes with April Confirmations have two choices:
  - Pastors and Parochial Administrators are given the faculty to celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation for those who were to be Confirmed in April at a date they deem fitting in their own parish church. Or:
  - The Office of Worship will make future dates available for Confirmations at the Cathedral and Basilica. Contact Laurinda Irwin after Easter Week to ascertain available dates.

Penance

- The celebration of the Rite of Penance should continue, respecting CDC requirements.
- Outdoor confessions (e.g., in parish parking lots with penitents remaining in their cars) are permitted, always safeguarding the dignity of the Sacrament, confidentiality, and proper social distancing.
- Cell phones are not to be used in the Sacrament of Penance, even as an instrument to amplify the voice and even if the priest and penitent are in close proximity, given that the confidentiality of the Confession cannot in those circumstances be guaranteed.
- Priests may offer General Absolution using the Rite of Penance Form III, as long as the penitents are close enough that they are or would be able to see and hear the priest. For additional details and requirements, please see the Memo issued by Fr. Margevičius on March 24.
- Parishes should make available online resources such as the Examination of Conscience and Act of Contrition.

Marriage

- The Sacrament of Matrimony may be celebrated in the parish church, provided CDC guidelines are respected.
- It is important to ascertain that the couple has obtained a Marriage License. Most MN counties have suspended service centers that dispense Marriage Licenses, but some offices are providing licenses by appointment.
- The need to respect CDC guidelines should be discussed with the bride and groom; offer to reschedule the celebration if the couple are unable to respect those guidelines or prefer a later date.
- If the couple opts to reschedule, it will be important to verify that the Marriage License has not expired (or that the State has made some provision for that eventuality). Marriage licenses are typically valid for six months from the date of issue.
Anointing of the Sick

- The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick should continue, and priests should cooperate fully with directives established by a local health care facility. This may include, for example, wearing particular personal protective equipment and other protocol.
- A sterile cotton ball or cotton swab should be used for the anointing; it should be dipped only in the Oil of the Sick; after the anointing the instrument should be placed into a sealable plastic bag and then burned.
- When it is not possible for the priest to enter a patient’s room for an anointing, prayer should, if possible, be led remotely, entrusting the sick to God, and reassuring the family of the abundance of God’s mercy.

Funerals

- Funerals may be celebrated, provided that CDC requirements for social distancing can be met.
- For information see the March 28, 2020 statement from the MN Department of Health.