

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

MEMORANDUM

Date: June 9, 2020
To: All Parishes and Institutions of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
From: Reverend Tom Margevičius, Director, Office of Worship
Re: **Latest Executive Order; Home Communion Visits; Weddings and Funerals; Clarification on Confirmation.**

I. Latest Executive Order

Governor Walz's Executive Order 20-74 indicated that as of June 10 all churches will now be permitted to congregate at **50%** of maximum seating capacity or 250 persons, whichever is less. The Archdiocese has decided to expand our numbers accordingly. For churches that seat over 1,000 persons, the latest Order has no practical effect. But small and medium-sized churches will now be able to admit more than the 25% figure of the last couple weeks. All other social distancing guidelines—keeping 6 feet from others not in the same household, encouragement to wear masks, use sanitizer, receive Communion in the hand, limit congregational singing, etc.—remain the same. The 250-person cap on outdoor events also remains in effect.

II. Home Communion Visits

During stay-at-home the Archdiocese instructed only priests and deacons not in high-risk categories (under 65, no underlying health conditions) to bring Holy Communion to the homebound. Now that restrictions are being lifted, Pastors and Parochial Administrators may cautiously begin delegating Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to bring the Eucharist to the homebound. The Ministers should also not be in high-risk categories and take extra precautions to prevent spreading the coronavirus. They should always wear a mask, frequently use hand sanitizer, and use the short form of the Rite. They may even consider distributing Communion to persons at the door, if possible, instead of entering the home.

III. Clarification on Confirmation

In May the USCCB presented a *dubium* (request for an authoritative interpretation) to the Congregation of Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments: in administering the Sacrament of Confirmation would it be valid to apply chrism by means of an instrument (e.g. a cotton swab)? On June 2, 2020 the CDWDS officially replied that were such an instrument to be used it “does not affect the validity of the Sacrament.” While physically touching the candidate remains a potent symbol that should not be casually dismissed, priests may decide that touching an oiled cotton swab to the forehead is a workable

option (especially for larger groups) since it would not require sanitizing his hands after confirming every candidate (cf. May 28 Confirmation Directives). Applying oil with an instrument is already permissible when anointing the sick (can. 1000§2), and *a fortiori* could also be said of the non-sacramental, pre- and post-baptismal anointing of children and the pre-baptismal anointing of catechumens in the RCIA.

IV. Weddings, First Communions, Funerals, etc.

Provided all social distance guidelines are observed, parishes may celebrate weddings, first communions, and funerals. There remains a 250-person or 50% capacity maximum for these liturgical events, and there still may be no serving food or drink before or after. It may be particularly challenging at funerals where people naturally want to be near and console one another; parishes would do well to coordinate with funeral home staff how best to maintain social distance standards when visitation is held in conjunction with a funeral vigil or Mass.