

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

MEMORANDUM

Date: March 24, 2022
To: All Clergy, Parishes, and Institutions of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
From: Reverend Tom Margevičius, Director, Office of Worship
Re: **Liturgical Protocols as the Pandemic Subsides**

I. Overview.

The [Centers for Disease Control](#), tracking COVID pandemic trends, now classify the entire Twin Cities area with a Community Level risk of “Low.” It is still advisable to practice good hygiene, keep indoor spaces well ventilated, and (when showing symptoms) isolate and get tested. However, urging all to wear masks, keep social distance, and avoid large gatherings is no longer required. Consequently, as of Friday April 1, 2022 the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis is rescinding all pandemic restrictions for liturgical celebrations. If individual persons or parishes believe it is prudent to retain some restrictions, or to phase them out incrementally, they are permitted to do so. Further, if the pandemic resumes its virulence, it may be necessary to reinstate some protocols.

II. General Protocols. Starting April 1, 2022, this will be our approach:

- A. Parish Preparedness Plans** for COVID are no longer required to be maintained.
- B. Facemasks** are not required for either liturgical ministers or those in the assembly.
- C. Social Distance** of six feet or more between persons is not required.
- D. Use of Hand Sanitizer** remains a sanitary practice but is not required before or after engaging in activities such as distributing Communion or handling vessels.
- E. Processing Gifts at Offertory** is permitted.
- F. Singing by Cantors, the Choir, and the Assembly** is permitted.
- G. Shaking Hands at the Sign of Peace** is permitted; the faithful are reminded, however, to respect the level of comfort of neighbors who prefer not to touch.
- H. Drinking from the Common Chalice at Communion** seems to be less a concern for COVID than for other infectious diseases, since the coronavirus is transmitted less by contact or common vessels than by respiration. Nevertheless, use of the common chalice remains sensitive, and even outside of pandemic times entails some risk. Pastors who desire to reinstate the practice should do so thoughtfully, in consultation with the pastoral leadership team. The Archdiocese no longer discourages drinking from the common chalice, especially insofar as those uncomfortable with it may simply forego receiving Communion this way.

- I. **Anointing with oil**, whether celebrating the sacrament of Anointing, Baptism, or Confirmation, may be done by applying the oil directly to the skin with the thumb. However, cotton swabs are still permitted and do not affect sacramental validity. It is prudent to sanitize hands after all anointings are completed.
 - J. **Holy Water Stoups and multiple uses of the font for Baptisms** are permitted. Parishes are nevertheless encouraged to empty stoups and fonts regularly to clean, disinfect, and refill them with fresh water, to be blessed anew each time.
 - K. **Archdiocesan Confirmations** will proceed as scheduled without restrictions. Should a Pastor determine it to be in the best interests of his faithful who have ongoing concerns about COVID to confirm his own students in his own church, he may write the Archbishop to request this faculty.
 - L. **Outdoor Liturgies.** Except for processions such as on Palm Sunday and Corpus Christi, the celebration of Mass, Penance, and Matrimony should no longer regularly occur outside of sacred spaces (cf. can. 932). Parishes that have already scheduled outdoor weddings on church grounds this year may celebrate them that way, but no new outdoor weddings are to be scheduled. A Pastor wanting an outdoor liturgy in a particular case and with serious necessity is asked to write the Archbishop requesting permission.
 - M. **Regularly Live Streaming Liturgies** benefits those unable to attend in person, yet may dissuade some who are capable of attending in person from doing so. Each Pastor is encouraged to weigh the costs and benefits of live streaming in collaboration with the pastoral team and decide what is best for the parish.
- III. **Specifics for Holy Week, the Triduum, and Easter.**
- A. **Processions for Palm Sunday, Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil** may proceed without masks, social distancing, or other restrictions. The faithful may handle palms, Easter candles, and other liturgical items without needing sanitization.
 - B. **The Archdiocesan Chrism Mass** will be celebrated at the Cathedral of Saint Paul 10:00am Holy Thursday morning, April 14, 2022. There will be no retreat beforehand, and **no lunch** after Mass. Clergy may vest in the basement of the Cathedral and participate in the liturgical procession. Priests will be escorted into the sanctuary for the Eucharistic Prayer, without the need for masks. Instead of drinking from the common chalice, priests will intinct their hosts in the Precious Blood on the altar. Holy Oils can be picked up in the Cathedral basement choir room after Mass. Parishes and institutions will be given as much oil as they indicated in the Office of Worship survey [https://forms.office.com/r/u9UupSPPyk\)y](https://forms.office.com/r/u9UupSPPyk)y). Oils can also be picked up at the Archdiocesan Catholic Center starting Easter Monday, April 18. If you have any questions, contact Cassandra Schwetz in the Office of Worship schwetzcc@archspm.org.

- C. Washing feet** during the Holy Thursday Evening Mass has never been required, and is not this year either, but it is once again permitted. Priests choosing to do it need make no adjustments to the rubrics of the *Roman Missal*, though it is prudent to sanitize hands after having washed participants' feet.
- D. Good Friday Intercessions.** In light of the war in the Ukraine, the Archbishop recommends (without requiring) that an eleventh Solemn Intercession be added (cf. *The Roman Missal*, "Good Friday of the Passion of the Lord," n. 13). Should priests choose to do so, the Archbishop asks that they use the following text (composed by the Bishops' Conference in Austria):

XI. For the war in Ukraine

Let us pray for the people in Ukraine,
and in all war zones of the world,
for those who have fled the dread of violence
and have been deprived of their homes,
for all women and men who stand up with their lives
to ward off evil and to protect the weak and the persecuted.

Let us kneel. – Let us stand.

Almighty and eternal God,
you have compassion for the lowly and the poor,
but you throw down oppressors.
As you guided Israel out of slavery in Egypt,
so in our days save all victims of war and violence.
Change the hearts of evildoers,
and let peace be victorious.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

- E. Kissing the Cross on Good Friday** is permitted this year; the faithful, however, might be encouraged to choose a more hygienic option such as simply touching the Cross, bowing before it, or genuflecting. Ministers should stand nearby with sanitizing cloths to wipe the Cross after each person who kisses it.
- F.** There are no adaptations to the celebration of **The Easter Vigil** beyond those already mentioned above (processions, holy water fonts, anointing with oil, etc.)

As ever, contact me with questions margeviciust@archspm.org. A blessed Holy Week and Easter to you all.