



**DIRECTIVES FOR ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS
FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY
DURING THE PENNSYLVANIA GREEN PHASE
AND THE ARCHDIOCESAN OPEN PHASE**

**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020**

All five counties of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia continue to be in the Green Phase of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The Green Phase of the Commonwealth is the Open Phase of the Archdiocese. The Green Phase of the Commonwealth continues to require precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19 and our corporate responsibility to observe them. The open phase of the Archdiocese signals a return to relative normalcy, as far as possible, with regard to the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy in our parishes and institutions. These directives are authorized by the Archbishop.

GENERAL POINTS

- The faithful continue to be dispensed by the Archbishop from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation until further notice.
 - *The faithful are to be encouraged persuasively to return to in-person Sunday Mass and the celebration of all the Sacraments, especially for those who are in good health. Since June, when the churches opened again for the celebration of Masses, there has not been a known traceable instance of contracting COVID-19 through attending Mass or receiving Holy Communion in the Archdiocese.*
 - *For the spiritual and pastoral benefit of the faithful, several weeks notice will be provided as to when the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation will be reinstated by the Archbishop. Even when the obligation is restored, the faithful are excused legitimately from the obligation when they are sick or when attending Mass would pose a serious health risk to themselves or a loved one as the pandemic persists.*
 - *Advent and Christmas provide excellent pastoral opportunities for catechesis and instruction for the return to the in-person celebration of the Sacraments.*

- Live stream services should continue for Mass and other sacramental celebrations and devotions. Live stream celebrations, Masses celebrated in real time, are always preferred over recordings. If family groups will not be in church for Christmas, encouragement should be extended to them to view the live stream celebration together.
- In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, in accord with the current directives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Centers for Disease Control, the mitigating standards of sanitation, social distancing and numbers of occupancy, as already presented in the directives published on Wednesday, June 24, 2020 continue to be in force.
 - As far as sanitation, in addition to routine general cleaning, high-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
 - As far as social distancing, typically several feet are to be observed between people who are not usually together as a group or of the same family or of the same household when seated in the nave.
 - Face coverings/masks are strongly encouraged for everyone (except those 2 years of age and younger and those who for health or other reasons cannot wear a face covering/mask) in the nave throughout the celebration of Mass and other Sacraments. *People are not to be banned from the Sacraments if they are not wearing a face covering/mask.* However, they are to observe social distancing in the nave if they are not wearing a face covering/mask.
 - As far as numbers of occupancy, up to 75% of the church or place where Mass and the Sacraments are celebrated may be occupied. In general, seating should be at least in every other pew in the nave.

THE SCHEDULE OF MASSES FOR CHRISTMAS

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, the Anticipated Mass for Sundays and the Vigil Mass for Solemnities, like the Nativity of the Lord, are celebrated no earlier than 4:00 PM. So, the first Vigil Mass on Christmas Eve can begin as early as 4:00 PM.

- Keeping in mind the observance of social distancing, pastors and their staffs may add additional Masses, including overflow Masses in other suitable parish facilities, throughout Christmas Eve and on Christmas Day.
- Monitors can be set up in facilities adjacent to the church for overflow crowds with arrangements made for the reception of Holy Communion.
- Consideration should be given this year, if this is not already the practice, to celebrate Mass during the Night (Midnight Mass) for Christmas.
- If there is a genuine need, because of the limits imposed by social distancing, the lack of additional facilities, and lack of available priests, then consideration may be given to a *Parish Vigil Mass* taking place as early as 2:00 PM.
- The Archbishop gives permission to every priest to offer as many Masses as needed on the Vigil of Christmas and Christmas day for the pastoral benefit of the faithful.

- Announcements will be provided by the Archdiocese for use in all parishes before Mass at Christmas with instructions for social distancing and the reverent reception of Holy Communion.

CELEBRATION OF MASS

The Sacred Liturgy is to be celebrated, as always, according to what is prescribed in the liturgical books as directed to the worship of Almighty God. The guidelines indicated below are to be observed by all throughout the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. The reverent, faith-filled, and natural celebration of the Sacred Liturgy on the part of all should be preserved. Reverence for the Mysteries of Christ and hospitality among the faithful endure, even with our COVID-19 precautions.

- **Liturgical Ministers**
 - At this point, all liturgical ministers—altar servers (vested), lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion (if needed) - should be exercising their ministries in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.
- **Liturgical Singing**
 - At this point, it is possible to sing all the parts of the Mass as well as to have liturgical singing for the celebration of all the Sacraments.
 - A preference should be given to singing antiphonally the Entrance and Communion, avoiding loud and forceful selections.
 - Instrumental music may be used for preludes and postludes, for the Offertory and the Recessional.
 - Typically, only a cantor and instrumentalist should be used. Quartets and small choirs, maintaining social distance, are permitted, especially for Christmas.
 - In addition to the organ and the keyboard, string instruments may be used. Caution should be observed with the use of brass instruments, with serious regard for social distancing and the safety of the instrumentalist. Woodwind instruments are prohibited at this time.
 - Hymnals and worship aids may be used, with use and distribution determined locally.¹
 - Please check the website of the Office for Divine Worship for additional information on copyright regulations for live streaming the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy.
- **For Mass**
 - Holy Water may be restored to the fonts with a plan for regular cleaning.¹
 - Incense may be used without any concern.
 - Priests, deacons and liturgical ministers are not expected to wear masks or gloves.
 - The procession with the Gifts during the Offertory is omitted.

¹ The October 2020 Centers for Disease Control update on the coronavirus states that it is spread primarily through close contact, person to person. See, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html>.

- Ushers and Greeters are to wear gloves as they handle the collection of monies in a manner locally determined.
- The Invitation and the use of the Sign of Peace and the distribution of the Precious Blood continue to be suspended.
- Holding hands during the Lord's Prayer is not to take place.
- Holy Communion:
 - Holy Communion is not to be distributed wearing gloves.
 - Holy Communion is to be distributed during the Communion Rite of each Mass.
 - The Communion procession should be single file.
 - The faithful are to be instructed to keep some distance in the Communion procession and when returning to their places. An easy way to do this is for communicants to be instructed to keep several pews between themselves and the person in front of them.
 - Holy Communion in the hand continues to be the preference. However, no one is to be denied Holy Communion on the tongue. Purification/sanitation during Holy Communion is at the discretion of the Communion minister.
 - The face covering/mask should be removed for the reception of Holy Communion.

THE SACRAMENT OF PENANCE AND RECONCILIATION

- All parishes in the Archdiocese are to provide, as usual, the scheduled occasions for Confessions. The use of a face covering/mask is highly recommended during the celebration of the Sacrament.
- The Confessionals may be used and are to be cleaned routinely.
- Confessions may also take place during the celebration of Mass, especially on Sundays.
- Consideration should be given to additional and more frequent times for Confessions during all of Advent.
- Penance Services may be scheduled during Advent with due regard for social distancing.

Please see the website of the Office for Divine Worship for a complete listing of liturgical updates during the COVID-19 Pandemic, information on the ARISE initiative of the Archdiocese, and other resources, at <http://www.odwphiladelphia.org/home-page/news/>.

Thank you so very much for your continued generous assistance throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at fr.dgill@archphila.org.

In Christ, Father Dennis Gill, Director, Office for Divine Worship



**ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE
ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY
AND THE USE OF FACE COVERINGS/MASKS**

**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP
ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
*REVISED, SATURDAY, AUGUST 1, 2020 FOR THE GREEN PHASE***

WHY ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE?

The use of face coverings/masks for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy continues to be a topic in need of regular clarification. This is especially the case with new and differing mandates with regard to face coverings/masks recently announced for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the City of Philadelphia in particular. This document responds to the many questions that surround the topic with regard to their use during the Sacred Liturgy. Hereafter, the use of the term masks also refers to face coverings.

You can find all the directives for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic at, <http://archphila.org/arise/>.

**WHAT IS THE SOURCE FOR THE ARCHDIOCESAN DIRECTIVES
FOR MASKS?**

The directives of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia with regard to masks are based on three sources: the nature of the Sacred Liturgy, directives from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

The Nature of the Sacred Liturgy

The Sacred Liturgy in all its forms—and especially the celebration of the Eucharist—is a profoundly personal and in-person encounter with a Divine Person, a Divine Event. It is the Divine Event of the death and resurrection of the Lord—not just recalling something that happened in the past but as it actually happens in the here and now. Jesus, the Son of God made man and now risen from the dead, assembles us to have a personal part, a tangible participation, in his real offering in the Eucharist. He assembles us as his brothers and sisters and as sons and daughters of his Father. In the Eucharistic assembly, then, we are called each and every time to a unique experience of communion with Jesus and with

one another which is only further deepened when we receive Holy Communion. So all the actions of the celebration—postures, gestures, dialogues—allow for a personal and in person—tangible encounter—with Christ and one another in the Eucharist. A mask is counter-indicative to this fundamental dimension of the Sacred Liturgy. Yet, some reasonable provisions can be made in response to COVID-19 without disruption or distortion of the Sacred Mysteries.

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB)

The USCCB has employed an *ad hoc* group of theologians and experts in infectious disease and public health to provide guidance for the bishops for the resumption of public Masses. The work of this group was coordinated by members of the *Thomistic Institute* at the Pontifical Faculty of the Dominican House of Studies in Washington, D.C. You can find their guidelines at this link: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments>.

- *This document calls for the faithful to wear cloth face coverings when they are in church. The face covering is to be removed for the reception of Holy Communion. Gloves are not be used in the distribution of Holy Communion nor for the reception of Holy Communion.*
- *The priest celebrant is not to wear a mask during the celebration of Mass.*

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The CDC, in its most recent guidance for houses of worship, encourages but does not require the use of cloth face coverings in church. Face coverings are considered more essential when social distancing is difficult. You can find this document at this link: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>

DIRECTIVES OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA

Therefore, in order to promote the personal encounter with the Lord and with one another which is the nature of the Sacred Liturgy as well as to provide for the confident safety of all at Mass during this restricted period, our archdiocesan guidelines state:

- Everyone (except those 2 years of age and younger) attending Mass is strongly encouraged to wear a face covering or mask throughout the celebration of Mass and the other Sacraments, except for the reception of Holy Communion. The face covering or mask should be removed for the reception of Holy Communion.
- Priests, deacons and liturgical ministers are not expected to wear masks or gloves. Holy Communion is not to be distributed wearing gloves.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF THE PRINCIPAL MITIGATING STANDARDS FOR COVID-19 AND MASKS?

The principal mitigating standards for COVID-19 are sanitation/hygiene, social distancing, and limiting the numbers assembled. These are the mitigating standards required by the CDC,

reinforced by the USCCB guidelines and reflected in our Archdiocesan Directives. Masks are not a required mitigating standard to limit the spread of COVID-19, especially as the contagion is significantly reduced at this point.

DO THE PRIEST CELEBRANT, DEACON, AND OTHER LITURGICAL MINISTERS—SERVERS, MUSIC MINISTERS, EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION—WEAR MASKS?

No. It is important that all of these persons wash their hands before and after Mass and are mindful of keeping a reasonable distance from one another without distorting the rites of the liturgical celebration. These are the primary ways sacred and liturgical ministers provide for their own safety and that of others.

For the priest, deacon, lector and cantor, the use of their voices is the principal way they carry out their particular role in the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy. They need to be clearly heard without the impediment of a mask. Also, the mask presents an immediate barrier to the personal encounter in the course of the liturgical action, especially of the priest celebrant with the members of the liturgical assembly.

THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION

There is no moment more personal, the climax of a tangible encounter, than the action of the Body of Christ, giving the Body of Christ to the Body of Christ—the distribution of Holy Communion. Those distributing Holy Communion and those receiving are not to be masked. There is no need to shout the acclamation, *The Body of Christ*, nor the response, *Amen*. These words can be said carefully without the anything coming from the mouth.

THE MANNER OF DISTRIBUTING HOLY COMMUNION

Also, the manner of distribution is likewise an aid to safety. The paten or ciborium may be held slightly to the right, away from the path of the mouth. The Communion minister raises the sacred host to eye level and then acclaim, the *Body of Christ*. The Communion minister's mouth is below the host. The communicant responds, *Amen*, before extending hands or tongue.

Shields are not to be used for the distribution of Holy Communion.

WHEN IS THE MASK REMOVED FOR THE RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION?

Communicants are to remove the mask before they extend their hands or tongue for the reception of Holy Communion. Once the sacred Body of Christ is in the communicant's hand, he/she should not be distracted from this moment of profound intimacy by the need to remove a mask. Communicants replace the mask after they receive Holy Communion.

WHAT ABOUT ALTAR SERVERS?

School age altar servers may wear masks if this is requested by their parents.

CAN LITURGICAL MINISTERS WEAR MASKS IN THE NAVE?

When the lectors and extraordinary ministers are in the nave, outside the time they are carrying out their liturgical roles, they may wear a mask. Likewise, sacristans, ushers and greeters should wear masks in the nave.

WHAT IF A LITURGICAL MINISTER IS FEARFUL NOT TO WEAR A MASK?

If there is a fear or a reluctance on the part of the deacon and liturgical ministers to carry out their roles without a mask, they should have the freedom to step aside from these liturgical duties at this time.

WHAT TO DO IF SOMEONE REFUSES TO WEAR A MASK IN CHURCH?

Masks are strongly encouraged, but not required. No one is to be refused a place in church because they do not have a mask. Only when social distancing is not being observed are masks required.

- The CDC Guidelines for Communities of Faith recommend: “Encourage use of cloth face coverings among staff and congregants. Face coverings are most essential when social distancing is difficult.”
- Governor Wolf has clarified that houses of worship are exempt from the current mandatory mask order in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The CDC Guidelines state that those who are exempt from wearing a mask are: “children younger than 2 years old, anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious, and anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance”

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

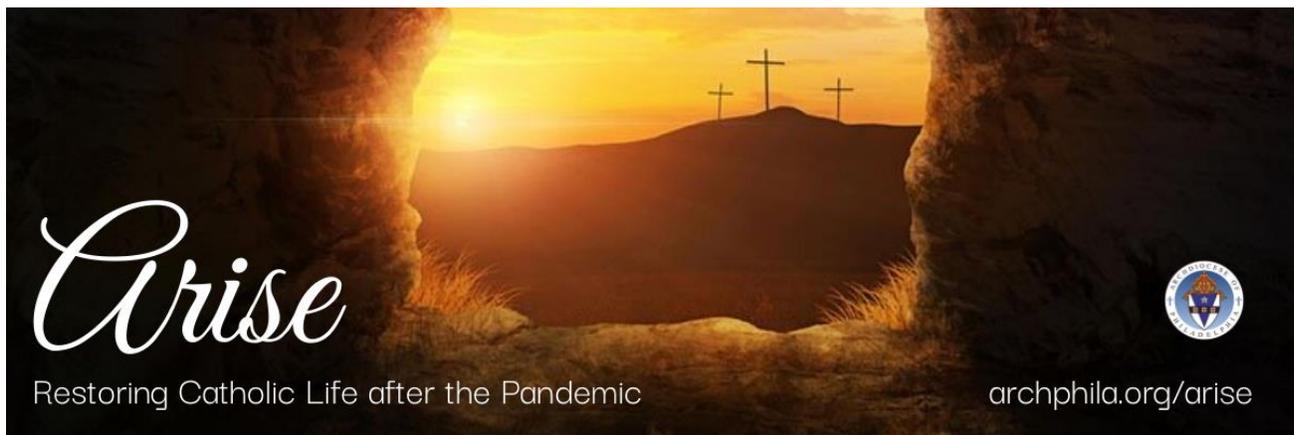
For additional information about wearing masks and persons with disabilities, please see the website: <http://opdarchphilly.org/> and this document: <http://opdarchphilly.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Mask.Children.Disabilities5.30.2020.pdf>

- ASL Interpreters do not wear masks during Mass.

SHOULD MASKS BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THOSE WHO DO NOT HAVE ONE?

If it is possible, masks may be made available for those who may not have one. Masks should not be worn by more than one person. If masks are left behind in church, they should be discarded.

Thank you and God bless,
Father Dennis Gill
Director, Office for Divine Worship



**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARISH MINISTRY
DURING THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD**

Guidelines for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and the Sacraments

- Please see the “Liturgy and Sacraments” section of: <http://archphila.org/arise/>

Guidelines related to Catholic Schools

- Please see: <https://aop Catholicschools.org/covid-19-information/>

Guidelines for CYO

- Please see: <http://www.cyophilly.com/covidprocedures/>

Guidelines related to Religious Education / PREP

- Please see: <http://phillyocf.org/webinars/>

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
NON-LITURGICAL PARISH MINISTRIES**

Our Catholic Faith is essentially incarnational. Because God became man and effected our salvation in a human body, we believe in the centrality of the in-flesh, in-person encounter between the person, Christ, and the community. For this reason, the in-person life of the Church is irreplaceable. Now that we have reached the Green Phase, parishes are encouraged to resume in-person events and meetings whenever possible.

The parish should lead the way by gently encouraging parishioners (who are not at high risk for severe illness with COVID) to make their way back into in-person parish life. We can do this by inviting parishioners to attend in-person events that are spiritually enriching and also safe, communicating clearly your mitigation practices of social distancing, sanitization and numbers.

Guidelines for “In Person” Meetings/Events

When holding in-person meetings and events in your parish, please consider these recommendations:

- Please observe social distancing and sanitization protocols for any in-person meeting.
- It is recommended that masks be worn whenever someone is mobile (i.e. coming in or out of the building, using the restroom, etc...). Once seated, masks may be removed as long as social distancing is in place. As a reminder, the Governor's mandatory mask order does not apply to religious organizations.
- Where possible, meet in rooms with the largest amount of space and ventilation.
- If the meeting or event takes place in the Catholic school, the organization's leadership must consult with the pastor and school administrator regarding additional protocols (if any) regarding COVID19 which must be followed.
- Although religious organizations are exempt from the 25 person indoor occupancy limit, it is recommended that parishes make this their protocol *when meeting in any space outside of the Church or Chapel. Exceptions to this would be when the event is taking place in large, conference-size rooms, cafeterias and gymnasiums that can accommodate large groups.* In these cases, please follow the protocol of "up to 75% capacity" with social distancing and sanitization measures in place, the same as you would in the Church.
- There may be occasions when the Church or Chapel will be used for non-liturgical, but *religious* events. If an event is taking place in the Church or Chapel, please follow the protocol of "up to 75% capacity" with social distancing and sanitization measures in place.

Religious vs. Non-Religious Functions

Governor Wolf's occupancy limits of 25 people indoors and 250 people outdoors (25/250) do not apply to religious organizations. However, *non-religious* functions taking place on parish grounds are required to adhere to these occupancy limits. Below you will find some common parish ministries and events categorized as either religious or non-religious.

Religious Functions

These ministries are considered religious because they express or directly support the essential mission of the Church. These ministries are exempt from the 25/250 occupancy limits unless noted otherwise. However, please consider following the recommendations above when planning events for these ministries.

- RCIA sessions, adult faith formation, evangelization, prayer groups
- Sacramental preparation meetings, including marriage preparation
- PREP parent meetings, Catechist meetings
- Liturgical ministry meetings and trainings (lectors, Extraordinary Ministers, altar servers, music ministry, etc...)
- Pastoral care support groups (e.g. bereavement, divorce ministry, etc...)
- Parish councils
- Knights Councils and other Catholic lay association meetings with religious content
- Other large meetings with religious content
- Youth ministry, Catholic scouting troops (i.e. troops chartered by the parish or Catholic organization like the Knights of Columbus)
- Social Ministry outreach (e.g. food cupboards, clothing distribution, etc...; NB: *The charitable works of the Church belong to her essential mission. However, Catholic Social Services recommends that all social service ministries adhere to the 25/250 person limit and CDC guidelines.*)
- CYO Sports (NB: *Please follow Archdiocesan CYO Guidelines found at <http://www.cyophilly.com/covidprocedures/>*)
- Safe Environment trainings (NB: *Office for Child and Youth Protection guidelines require adherence to the 25/250 person limit*)

Non-Religious Functions

The organizations and events below are considered non-religious and are required to adhere to the Governor's 25/250 occupancy limit.

- Catholic School parent meetings, teacher meetings, home-school association meetings (NB: *Please follow the guidelines of the Catholic Schools Office*)
- Social events and social groups
- Bingo, Festivals, Carnivals, Wedding Receptions, Baby Showers
- 12 Step groups (AA, NA, etc...) and other organizations that have separate legal status

OTHER QUESTIONS

Outdoor Masses

As a reminder, the permission of the Archbishop is required for the celebration of Mass outside of a sacred space. Please request permission through the Office for Divine Worship at fr.dgill@archphila.org.

“Hybrid” Models of Parish Ministry – In Person and Online Offerings

Where possible, parishes are encouraged to offer “hybrid” models of parish events and ministries, making accommodation for both in-person and virtual participation, especially for those who cannot participate because they are at high risk for severe illness with COVID19.

If adding a virtual component would present a distraction or disrupt the efficacy of the in-person ministry, *preference should be given to the in-person experience over the virtual*. It is not always necessary to offer a virtual component to every in-person offering. One option is to offer two separate events, one in person and one online, or to record the in-person event and share it online after the event has ended.

Some parish ministries may decide that they can only operate effectively in person, especially when personal sharing, intimacy and vulnerability are essential to the ministry. These ministries should be free to make this decision and opt not to offer a virtual option. This has the added benefit of encouraging those who may be staying away out of unreasonable fear to consider making their way back to in-person parish life.

Notifying the Parish of Possible COVID19 Exposure

In the event that someone in your parish community tests positive for COVID19 and was in contact with other parishioners (e.g. at Mass, parish meetings, etc...), parishes are asked to take steps to notify those with whom the person was in contact. Please follow the notification procedures determined by your parish's county health department. Please contact your county health department for more information.

Please also contact the Archdiocese – either Meghan Cokeley mcokeley@archphila.org or Fr. Dennis Gill fr.dgill@archphila.org – so that the Archdiocese can support you in this process.