



**UPDATE ON THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRED LITURGY**  
**OFFICE FOR DIVINE WORSHIP**  
**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA**  
**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2022**

The celebration of the Sacred Liturgy—the praise and worship of God by his people—is the greatest work of the Church carried out in all the parishes and institutions throughout the Archdiocese. With a genuine regard for the Mystery of Faith, it is also imperative that we continue to observe reasonable personal and corporate measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 and its variants.

- **Everyone is reminded of the irreplaceable need to be in-person for the celebration of Sunday Mass.** At this point, it is no longer necessary to provide for the live streaming of all liturgical celebrations.
  - Those who are sick, have a health risk, or are a primary caregiver, are excused from the obligation to attend Mass on Sunday. Those who are legitimately excused should observe the Lord’s Day by reading the Word of God and spending some time in prayer
- The celebration of Holy Mass and all the Sacraments are to be carried out according to what is described in the liturgical books **without exception**. For Mass, however, in all circumstances:
  - The distribution of the Body of Christ is distributed as usual, whether in the hand or on the tongue, without distinctions.
    - *The use of sanitizers **during** the distribution of Holy Communion are to be discontinued.*
    - *If a Communion Minister chooses to sanitize before the distribution of Holy Communion, this should take place in the pew prior to approaching the altar after the Invitation to Holy Communion. The priest or deacon may do so as well at the side (credence) table and not at the altar.*
    - *The purification of fingers after the distribution of Holy Communion should first take place with water at the side (credence) table before using a sanitizer.*
  - The Invitation and the use of the Sign of Peace continue to be suspended until further notice. Alternate signs of peace should not be arbitrarily introduced.
  - The distribution of the Precious Blood continues to be suspended until further notice.
  - Priest concelebrants and assisting deacons receive the Blood of Christ typically by intinction until further notice.
- **On Ash Wednesday, the Blessing and Distribution of Ashes takes place as described in the Roman Missal. Ashes may be placed on the forehead without any concern.**
- For additional guidance and directives for Christian Initiation and the celebration of the Sacraments for Lent, the Sacred Paschal Triduum and Easter, please see the March 2022 edition of

the Monthly Mailing, <https://www.odwphiladelphia.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/March-2022-Priest-Mailing.pdf>.

- An update for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy for Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord and the Sacred Paschal Triduum will follow as soon as possible.
- In the City of Philadelphia, the faithful are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering/mask, whether vaccinated or not, in the body of the church. There is no absolute mandate for everyone to wear a face covering in any church in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Any signs indicating this should be removed.
  - The priest, deacon, and liturgical ministers **are not** to wear a face covering or mask in the sanctuary.
  - If a face covering or mask is worn by the faithful, it is to be removed **before** the reception of the Body of Christ at the Communion of the Mass.

Thank you so very much for your generous assistance in observing these directives. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at [fr.dgill@archphila.org](mailto:fr.dgill@archphila.org).

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