

**DIOCESE OF LAKE CHARLES**

P.O. Box 3223
Lake Charles, Louisiana 70602
(337) 439-7400

Office of the Bishop
28 April 2020

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

"I rejoiced when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord.'" (Psalm 122:1)

Effective May 1, 2020, I am lifting the suspension on public liturgies in the Diocese of Lake Charles. The faithful are hungry for the Eucharist. Pastors may use their discretion while respecting current guidelines regarding the number and manner of attendance (i.e. 10-person limit and social distancing) to ensure that the faithful have access to the Eucharist. Our liturgical tradition puts many options at our disposal.

As we all know, the COVID-19 virus remains a menace to the public's health. However, the State Government has indicated that, in the event of continued improvements, there will be a gradual loosening of restrictions on social gatherings. At that time, State officials hope to allow gatherings of 25% of a building's maximum occupancy. In view of this possibility and the lifting of the suspension on public liturgies, I am issuing a Directive attached to this pastoral letter. This document details what steps pastors must take in reopening churches. In preparation for this gradual process of reopening, pastors should determine, with the assistance of the local fire marshal, an accurate maximum occupancy of their respective churches. Your pastors are asked to implement these directives, and I request your kind cooperation.

On Friday, May 1, 2020, a day dedicated to St. Joseph the Worker, I will consecrate the Diocese of Lake Charles to Mary, Mother of the Church, joining Archbishop Jose Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, who will lead the nation in this same consecration.

Let our prayers remain intense for an end to this pandemic and for those infected with the virus. O Lord, grant the deceased rest and eternal peace. May Our Lady Star of the Sea, continue to pray for our safety and health, as I remain always in prayer for you and

Devotedly yours in our Lord,

✠Glen John Provost
Bishop of Lake Charles

Enclosures: Covid-19 Directive for the Reopening of Churches
Covid-19 Directive - Flyer for the Faithful



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Covid-19 Directives – April 28, 2020

The following guidelines were compiled in consultation with the Presbyteral Council of the Diocese of Lake Charles and a board of advising physicians. They are effective beginning on Friday, May 1, 2020.

1. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation remains in effect for the faithful of the Diocese of Lake Charles (priests excluded).
2. Pastors are to resume a regular schedule of parish Masses.
 - a. Opportunities for the reception of Holy Communion may be added.
3. Only those who are scheduled in advance to attend a given Mass may be present.
 - a. Attendees may be scheduled via internet (e.g. SignUpGenius app) or phone or some other form of sign-up that does not involve physical contact.
 - b. Visitors cannot be prevented from signing up.
 - c. Ushers are to have lists of those scheduled to attend and permit entry accordingly.
 - d. If there are available seats at a given Mass, walk-ins should be permitted entry.
 - e. The sick, those suspected of being sick, and those at-risk should not attend Mass.
 - f. A Mass specifically for the elderly in good health is recommended.
4. 10 people may gather for a liturgy (At a future date, it is expected that 25% of the church's maximum occupancy will be allowed to gather).
 - a. This calculation includes the celebrant and assisting ministers (e.g. deacon, server).
 - b. Available seats should be designated; seats may be assigned.
5. Those attending Mass should:
 - a. remain six feet apart (including during Communion distribution and departure)
 - b. wear face masks, except when receiving the host.
6. The following are not permitted at liturgies:
 - a. singing (a cantor and an instrumentalist permitted)
 - b. exchange of the sign of peace
 - c. Communion under both species
 - d. missalettes (should be removed)
7. Containers used for collections should not be touched by parishioners.
8. Holy water fonts are to be emptied (Pastors may provide small bottles of holy water.)
9. The Church (particularly areas touched by parishioners) is to be disinfected after each use.
10. It is strongly encouraged that communion be distributed in the manner described below without prejudice to approved ways in the General Instruction of Roman Missal Third Edition. The priest following his own reception of Holy Communion:
 - a. puts on a face mask

April 28, 2020, 11:27am

- b. washes his hands in a manner visible to congregants
- c. takes an edge of the Host
- d. touches the opposite edge of the Host to the communicant's hand
- e. releases the Host

In any manner of distribution, physical contact between the priest and the communicant is not to take place.

11. Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are not to distribute Holy Communion.
12. Holy Communion may be given to the homebound upon request. In addition to the stipulations of number 10 above, every effort should be made to give Holy Communion outside (e.g. on a porch or patio).
13. Every consideration is to be given for the care of those who are isolated. The homebound, those who live alone, and those with pre-existing health conditions most especially deserve the concern and care of the Church. Pastors and Parochial Vicars are encouraged to telephone such persons on a regular basis and assure them of the Church's closeness to them.
14. Each pastor must begin planning for first Holy Communion and for reception into the Church of those individuals who were preparing for such before the suspension of public liturgies. All plans should, for the time being, utilize the guidelines contained herein.
15. The guidelines of March 20, 2020, regarding the Sacrament of Reconciliation remain in effect.
16. Baptisms, Confirmations, Funerals and Weddings may be conducted using the norms contained herein.
17. Pastors are to disseminate the "Covid-19 Directive – Flyer for the Faithful."

For questions or clarifications, please consult the Dean of your respective Deanery.



Diocese of Lake Charles

Covid-19 Directives Flyer

Devised in consultation with Presbyteral Council and board of advising physicians

Mass Schedules Resume

The faithful remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation.



Attendees should:

- be scheduled in advance (pastors will determine scheduling method)
- remain 6 feet apart
- wear face masks, except for communion



10 persons may gather (subject to revision)

- This includes celebrant/assisting ministers.
- Available seats may be designated.
- Seats may be assigned.
- Ushers with list permit entry.

Communion

Strongly encouraged method:

The priest, after receiving communion:

- puts on a face mask
- washes his hands
- grasps edge of host
- touches opposite edge to person's hand
- releases host

Homebound may request communion.

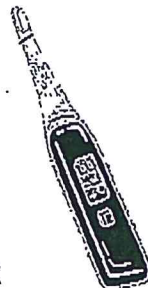
- clergy follow method above
- given outside home when possible

Other Sacraments

- Follow these norms where applicable
- Reconciliation guidelines of March 20, 2020, remain in effect.

Stay home if...

- You have **preexisting conditions**
- You are **feeling sick**
- **Suspect** you may be sick
- You have a **sick family member** at home



DIRECTIVES EFFECTIVE MAY 1, 2020

In the Church no...

- exchange of peace
- singing
- chalice distribution
- missalettes



Church is disinfected after each liturgy.