



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP / BUREAU DE L'ÉVÊQUE
P.O. BOX 907 / C.P. 907
CHARLOTTETOWN, PE
C1A 7L9

Protocol for Catholic Churches 25 May 2020 Beginning June 1, 2020 - **Funerals & Rites with 15 people**

Introduction

The Churches and chapels in the Diocese shall take every means necessary to assist in the containment of the Covid 19 virus. To this end, the Diocese has prepared and discussed a draft Protocol with the Public Health Office of PEI for the reopening of Churches for Sunday Mass. The date to re-open Churches for Sunday Mass has not yet been announced. However, beginning Monday June 1 Renew PEI Stage Three, allows for indoor gatherings of 15. Therefore, I am delegating parish priests to implement this Protocol for Phase Three. Be advised that changes to this Protocol may be required when Sunday Masses will be restored by the Public Health Department.

This Protocol shall appear at the entrance to the Church or in the foyer or both. Posting a copy on the parish website is recommended. A copy shall be posted on the Diocesan website.

Physical distancing and sanitizing

Churches and chapels shall restrict seating to every third pew. Parish priests shall ensure that the two pews in front and behind seated parishioners will be cordoned off at the aisle. This establishes the required 6' distance in front and behind congregants.

Families from the same household may sit together in a single pew.

The 6' physical spacing applies within each available pew; that is, individuals must sit 6' feet apart. Only family/household (as above) may sit together

No choir may gather in Church due to physical distancing. One cantor with instrumental accompaniment may lead congregational singing.

All songbooks, hymnals and missals shall be removed from the pews and entrance of the Church.

After every ceremony, places of contact such as pews, door knobs, handles and washroom facilities shall be sanitized.

If possible, prop the entrance door open so that people do not have to touch the doorknob or surface.



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Priests shall consider measures to shorten the length of the Mass because the time spent in proximity to other persons increases the risk of transmission; for example, announcements can be kept brief or eliminated; cantors may delete verses of a song; select the shorter versions of the readings if the option is presented; preach a brief homily; limit the number of general intercessions and keep each brief.

Ceremonial Adaptations for Covid19

Altar servers shall remain 6' apart in the sacristy and during Mass. For entrance and recessional processions servers, ministers and presider shall form a single file respecting the 6' distance. Servers shall NOT hold the book for the Presiders and shall NOT present the wine and water or perform the Lavabo. For the presidential prayers, place the Roman Missal on the altar or on a stand at the chair. The cruets are to be placed in proximity to the altar for access by the priest. Lavabo is done by the priest alone.

There shall be no water in the holy water font.

Children's liturgy of the word shall be cancelled.

Crying rooms shall be closed or locked.

The Offertory Procession shall be omitted.

The Presider shall not invite an exchange of Sign of Peace.

A second corporal shall be placed on the far right corner of the altar. On it shall be placed a ciborium (and if necessary a second for celiacs) filled with the bread for communicants. This exercise avoids having the presider breathing or possibly coughing over the bread for communicants. . The Priest's corporal and paten with host are as usual.

No extraordinary minister shall distribute communion. (This is likely to change once permission is given for Sunday Masses.)



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Distribution of Holy Communion:

- i) A single file of communicants to the sanctuary shall respect the 6' distance requirement and where possible their return to their pew should proceed by a different aisle.
- ii) The priest **shall wash/ disinfect his hands before and after distribution of communion**. This can be done at the credence table or other suitable space visible to the congregation. This is in addition to washing his hands thoroughly before the Mass.
- iii) Due to the higher risk of transmission there shall be no distribution on the tongue;
- iv) Before distribution, communicants shall be asked to remove their gloves and mask.
- v) Before distribution communicants will be asked to stop six feet in front of the priest so that he may say "Body of Christ". The communicant responds "Amen" and bows, then steps forward to receive communion on the hand.
- vi) Holy communion shall be placed at arm's length (X2) onto the hand of the communicant.
- vii) Those who present themselves or their child for a blessing may be blessed by the priest when they stop to bow at a distance of 6'.

Immediately before the recessional the congregation shall be reminded to maintain 6' spacing as they leave the Church and to avoid gathering at the back of the Church. Perhaps ushers may assist parishioners to exit by row in single file.

Priests may meet people outdoors where physical distancing can be maintained. This also prevents crowding at the exits.

The Presider and other ministers shall NOT wear masks or gloves during the celebration of Mass and must remain at least six feet distant from one another and the members of the congregation.