

OFFICE OF WORSHIP

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 22, 2021
To: All Parishes and Institutions of the Archdiocese of Saint Paul and Minneapolis
From: Reverend Tom Margevičius, Director, Office of Worship
Re: **Updated Liturgical Guidelines for Lent, Holy Week, the Triduum, and Easter 2021**

I. Removal of the Word “One” in English Collects

The Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments (CDWDS) has decreed that as of February 17, 2021, the wording of liturgical collects in English—the opening prayer at Mass, Funerals, Weddings, the closing prayer in Lauds and Vespers in the Liturgy of the Hours—is to be changed. From now on, the word “one” in the doxology is omitted, thus: “...through our Lord Jesus Christ, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, [~~one~~] God for ever and ever.” In Latin—*per Dóminum nostrum Iesum Christum Fílium tuum, qui tecum vivit et regnat in unitate Spíritus Sancti, **Deus**, per ómnia sácula sæculórum*— *Deus* affirms the divinity of Jesus, not the Trinity. See this [explanation](#) by the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions. Those praying the 2018 Spanish *Misal Romano* need not change anything; that translation already captures the nuance: “... y es **Dios**, por los siglos de los siglos.”

II. New Saints in the Universal Liturgical Calendar

On January 26, 2021, a CDWDS [Decree](#) indicated that July 29—the Obligatory Memorial of Saint Martha—will heretofore include her sister and brother Saints Mary and Lazarus. (They had already been included on this date in the 2004 *Roman Martyrology*.) In addition, a February 2, 2021 [Decree](#) by the same Congregation announced that the following are to be inscribed in the General Roman Calendar as Optional Memorials: St. Gregory of Narek, Abbot and Doctor of the Church (27 February); St. John De Avila, Priest and Doctor of the Church (10 May); and St. Hildegard of Bingen, Virgin and Doctor of the Church (17 September). Even though these additions to the sanctoral calendar take effect immediately, approved translations of the prayers are still forthcoming.

Remember that Saturday April 24, 2021 is the Archdiocesan Obligatory Memorial of St. Mary Euphrasia Pelletier, whose liturgical texts are online [here](#).

III. Size of Non-worship Gatherings

On February 13, 2021, Governor Walz’s [Executive Order 21-07](#) went into effect. Based upon encouraging numbers regarding infection rate, hospital bed occupancy, vaccinations, etc., the Order allows more persons to gather. While most of it does not affect worship services—neither liturgies nor spiritual events such as Bible studies and RCIA meetings—it does affect private parties such as funeral luncheons and wedding receptions, as well as public events like Friday Fish Frys. Private parties are covered in the updated [Requirements](#)

[for Celebrations and Significant Life Events](#). Indoor private parties with food or drink now permit up to 25% of capacity, allowing for 6' distance between households, with a total not to exceed 50 persons. Additionally, the event cannot take place between 11:00 p.m. and 4:00 a.m. Other requirements (e.g. table size) are also in this guide. The limit for indoor private parties without food or drink is 25% of capacity and a maximum of 250 persons, observing the 6' social distance. Fish fries open to the public are subject to [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Indoor Venues](#). Additionally, all requirements applicable to indoor dining at [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#) must be observed, unless they are inconsistent with the Indoor Venues document.

IV. **Frequency of Sanitation**

The Centers for Disease Control updated its [recommended sanitization protocols](#). In particular, it may not be necessary to disinfect an entire space after each use; depending on the size of the facility, ventilation, etc., it may be sufficient to sanitize the used areas after an event, and attend to the entire space once a day. Even so, high-contact surfaces such as door handles, restroom facilities, microphones, and ambros still must be sanitized often. Consult your staff and adjust the [COVID Preparedness Plan](#) if needed.

V. **Congregational Singing**

The MN Department of Health's [Guidance for Music Activities](#) has also been updated. While it still indicates that "[c]ongregational singing, group singing, or chanting by attendees is not recommended in indoor ceremonies or services," it now seems to admit the possibility of exceptions. "[I]f congregational singing is allowed, both of the following requirements must be met: **1.** Individuals who are not part of a household group must be separated by a physical distance of at least 6 feet, and household groups must be separated from other household groups by more than 6 feet, whenever possible. **2.** Attendees or members of the congregation must wear face coverings during the entire service or ceremony, including when singing or chanting."

The Archdiocese continues to recommend against congregational singing at the present moment. Pastors considering resuming congregational singing (for example, at the Mass of the Lord's Supper or the Easter Vigil) should do so only after consultation with staff, musicians, and the parish COVID Preparedness Plan Coordinator.

No congregational singing is safer than some singing; more distance between households is safer than less; humming with mouths closed behind the mask is safer than open-mouth singing; and quieter singing is safer than boisterous singing. In all cases, masks are required. Interestingly, according to the [MNDH](#), "Sharing books, hymnals, and religious texts by people from one service to the next does not pose a significant risk of spreading COVID-19. Limit the sharing of these texts in close proximity to each other at the same time to those in your own household. Consider cleaning the covers of these objects along with other frequently touched items in your worship space as established in your cleaning schedule." Even so, it is still safer to distribute single-use worship aids that the faithful may take home, or else are promptly recycled after use.

VI. Obligation to Attend Mass

The bishops of Minnesota have decided not to revoke the dispensation yet from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. Archbishop Hebda continues to encourage those in high-risk categories (the elderly, those with compromised health, those caring for vulnerable populations, etc.) who have not been vaccinated to stay home. A clarification on the “Easter Duty” (cf. can. 920) will be forthcoming closer to Easter.

VII. Live-streamed and Pre-recorded Liturgies

Parishes are encouraged to continue broadcasting liturgies online, both live-streamed and pre-recorded. In our Archdiocese, the Mass of the Lord’s Supper should be pre-recorded no earlier than 4:00 pm on Holy Thursday; the Passion of the Lord no earlier than 12:00 noon on Good Friday; and the Easter Vigil no earlier than 6:00 pm Holy Saturday evening (and not offered online before 8:00 pm). Please contact me if you have questions about this.

VIII. General Absolution

Pastors may continue to celebrate the Rite for Reconciliation of Several Penitents with General Confession and Absolution (Form III), especially in nursing homes and assisted living care facilities. Recall, however, the parameters in the *Rite of Penance* n. 34: “Those who receive pardon for grave sins by a common absolution should go to individual confession before they receive this kind of absolution again, unless they are impeded by a just reason. They are strictly bound, unless this is morally impossible, to go to confession within a year. The precept which obliges each of the faithful to confess at least once a year to a priest all the grave sins which he has not individually confessed before also remains in force in this case too.” Refer to the [March 24, 2020 Memo](#) for more information. There will be no observance of “24 Hours for the Lord” (around-the-clock confessions at the Cathedral) this year.

IX. Confirmation

As Archbishop Hebda’s December 21, 2020 letter indicated, all Archdiocesan-sponsored Confirmations scheduled at the Cathedral, Basilica, and St. Wenceslaus through summer 2021 have been cancelled, and individual parishes may confirm in their own churches. See the [May 28, 2020 Memo](#) for details regarding which priests have the faculty to confirm, and how to do so safely.

X. Anointing of the Sick and Communion to the Homebound

We are grateful to those pastoral ministers—both lay and ordained—who have been practicing “courageous creativity,” as Pope Francis calls it, finding ways to safely bring the Sacraments to the sick and homebound. Pastors must ensure that such care minimizes the danger of infection for both recipients and ministers. Continue to anoint using cotton swabs,

avoid touch when giving Holy Communion, always wear masks, and frequently wash and sanitize hands and items.

XI. Weddings

Bridal parties must wear masks throughout the ceremony, though the bride and groom may remove their masks while they are exchanging vows. Remember that Executive Order 21-07 now allows larger groups to gather for wedding receptions (cf. section **III** above). Until further notice, Pastors may presume permission to celebrate outdoor weddings on parish property. For weddings on non-parish property, indoors or outdoors, Pastors must still seek permission in writing directly from the Archbishop.

XII. Funerals

Cremation permits greater flexibility regarding when a funeral can be celebrated, but also may result in bypassing the interment of the remains. Please gently remind the faithful of their Christian obligation to inter the cremated remains. Executive Order 21-07 also allows larger gatherings for funeral luncheons; refer to section **III** above, with the links indicated.

XIII. The Year of St. Joseph

See the Archdiocesan [webpage](#) dedicated to the Year of Saint Joseph, including an upcoming series of monthly presentations called the [Wonderful Cuppa Joe](#). The faithful are encouraged to visit our ten [St. Joseph pilgrimage](#) parishes and sites during this special Year. Priests are invited to celebrate the Votive Mass of St. Joseph when the liturgical Ordo permits, especially on Wednesdays and during March, the month traditionally dedicated to Saint Joseph. Remember that Pope Francis offered a [Plenary Indulgence](#) for the Year of St. Joseph, to which Archbishop Hebda added our own [Partial Indulgence](#).

XIV. Additional Liturgical Details for Lent

As mentioned in the [February 4 Memo](#), the Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions prepared this [guide](#) to help prepare Lenten liturgies. Adapt it as helpful. The CDWDS issued a [Note](#) regarding modifying Lenten liturgies this year, but it gives very few specifics because pandemic conditions vary widely country-to-country. It acknowledges that guidelines [indicated for 2020](#) continue to be valid, but expects every diocese to develop its own protocols in consultation with local authorities. Remember that priests are encouraged to pray the new liturgical texts for [Mass in Time of Pandemic](#) as the liturgical Ordo permits. As indicated in the [January 7 Memo](#), parishes may also begin gradually introducing more liturgical ministers (servers, lectors, etc.) into their celebrations, provided social distance guidelines are observed, all remain masked while in the sanctuary (except when proclaiming texts), and hands are frequently sanitized. The baptismal font and holy water stoups, however, are to remain empty. Filling these vessels with sand or other substances during Lent has never been indicated in the liturgical texts.

XV. RCIA Liturgies

Parishes that did not send catechumens and candidates to an Archdiocesan-sponsored Rite of Election should celebrate that Rite in their own communities. The other Rites should be celebrated so as to minimize person-to-person contact. For example, during the laying on of hands or signing the senses, do so without touching, and in pre-baptismal anointings (RCIA nn. 98ff.) apply the oil with cotton swabs as is done at baptisms, confirmations, and anointing of the sick during the pandemic.

XVI. Communion Protocols

[Protocols](#) for safe reception of Holy Communion during the pandemic remain unchanged. Communion may be distributed during or after Mass, with the faithful approaching in familiar Communion lines, or ministers bringing Communion to them in the pews. The minister and recipient should remain masked throughout the “The Body of Christ/Amen” exchange. After receiving the Host, the recipient steps to the side, removes the mask, consumes the Host, and replaces the mask. The Archdiocese continues to express a strong preference for reception in the hand. After distributing Communion on someone’s tongue, the minister must sanitize hands.

XVII. Palm Sunday

Liturgical processions are risky because they are less controlled, putting persons into greater proximity with others not in their own households. Throughout Holy Week, the Triduum, and Easter, aim to conduct processions in a restrained way, or even omit them. For Palm Sunday, assign ushers (wearing masks and gloves) to give the faithful palms as they enter. If palms have been blessed in advance, use the Third Form (Simple Entrance). Otherwise, use the Second Form (Solemn Entrance), and after the opening Gospel the priest may walk through the assembly and sprinkle holy water as they hold up their palms. Otherwise, at the end of the liturgy ushers can distribute blessed palms to the faithful on their way out. Realize that reduced numbers of faithful this year will need fewer palms than on previous years. Plan accordingly and reverently burn any leftover palms.

XVIII. Chrism Mass

The Chrism Mass will be celebrated 10:00am Thursday April 1, 2021 at the Cathedral of St. Paul. All the faithful are welcome to join the clergy in attending. Given the demands of Holy Thursday, no meal or time of retreat has been scheduled for priests. Oils can be picked up after Mass, as well as at the Archdiocesan Catholic Center starting Easter Tuesday. Every parish and institution by default will be assigned one 1-oz. bottle of each oil, unless you contact Laurinda Irwin irwinl@archspm.org indicating that you will need a different amount of a particular oil.

XIX. Holy Thursday Mass of the Lord’s Supper

The Washing of the Feet has always been an optional rite, and continues to be—all the more so, in a time of pandemic. If Pastors choose to include it, they must sanitize their hands

before and after touching each person, pour fresh water on each person's feet, use a clean towel for each person, and consider washing fewer persons' feet. All persons must remain masked throughout. Do not replace the foot washing with hand washing, invite the faithful to wash each other, or perform other unapproved rituals.

After the liturgy, minimize the number of persons who participate in the procession to the Altar of Repose, and maintain social distance between all those staying to pray.

XX. Good Friday Liturgy

Last year the CDWDS invited all churches worldwide to [add an intercession](#) for those suffering from the pandemic during the Good Friday Solemn Intercessions. Archbishop Hebda invites all communities to add the following intercession this year as well:

IX b. For the afflicted in time of pandemic

Let us pray also for all those who suffer the consequences of the current pandemic, that God the Father may grant health to the sick, strength to those who care for them, comfort to families and salvation to all the victims who have died.

Prayer in silence. Then the Priest says:

Almighty ever-living God,
only support of our human weakness,
look with compassion upon the sorrowful condition of your children
who suffer because of this pandemic;
relieve the pain of the sick,
give strength to those who care for them,
welcome into your peace those who have died
and, throughout this time of tribulation,
grant that we may all find comfort in your merciful love.
Through Christ our Lord.

R/. Amen.

Perform the Showing of the Holy Cross in such a way that ministers and members of the assembly do not approach closer than safe social distancing allows. The faithful may adore the Holy Cross from their pews, or if they approach, venerate it by either bowing or genuflecting, without kissing or touching the Cross.

XXI. Easter Vigil

Since the sun sets in the Twin Cities around 7:43pm Saturday April 3, 2021, the Easter Vigil is not to begin before 8:00pm, including the broadcasting of live-streamed or pre-recorded liturgies. Consider using shorter forms of the *Exsultet* and Blessing of Water, fewer than the nine assigned readings (the longer we are in each other's proximity, the greater the risk of infection), and continue to curtail congregational singing.

You may assign ushers (masked and gloved) to distribute small taper candles to the faithful as they enter, inviting them to go directly to their pews.

As with other processions, be careful during the *Lucernarium* that all remain masked and socially distant. Invite only a few to space themselves around the blazing fire. As the sacred

fire begins to spread through the church, be sure people do not touch each other or each other's candles; only the flame is passed person-to-person. After the *Exsultet*, have a lector remind the faithful to "Please! Very gently, extinguish your candles." Remember, COVID-19 is most easily spread through exhaled breath.

Do not practice baptism by immersion this year. For every baptism, pour fresh water. Once water has been poured over a person into the basin, water must not be reused, and after the liturgy it is to be safely poured down the sacrarium.

For the renewal of baptismal promises, once again instruct the faithful to maintain safety and social distance when re-igniting their tapers. The priest (with the assistance of a deacon, if necessary), while masked, may walk through the assembly sprinkling them with holy water from an aspergillum. Remind the faithful to extinguish their candles with gentleness.

If there are confirmations, apply chrism using a cotton swab, which is reverently to be burned after the liturgy. Both priest and confirmand are to remain masked throughout, and the priest should sanitize his hands after confirming.

Though the Church recommends that those baptized and confirmed on the Easter Vigil receive Holy Communion under both Species, only one person may drink from a chalice during the pandemic. The newly initiated may receive the precious Blood provided no one else has drunk from that chalice. You may use multiple chalices (one for each communicant), and/or clergy may receive Communion via intinction.

At the end of the liturgy remind the faithful to deposit their taper candles in the bins on their way out of church, where they can either be sanitized chemically right away, or they may remain untouched in storage until risk of infection has transpired.

XXII. Easter Sunday and the Easter Season

In place of the Creed on Easter Sunday, the faithful may renew their Baptismal promises, after which they are sprinkled with holy water. Provided no one has had contact with the water in the aspergillum before the liturgy, and after the liturgy the water is reverently disposed of, the priest (wearing a mask) may walk through the assembly sprinkling them while the musicians sing an Easter anthem.

As always, contact me with your questions. margeviciust@archspm.org