

Parishes Regathering



A Workbook to Assist Pastors and Parish Leadership Teams
to Prepare for Gradual Return to On-Site Ministry and Worship



Diocese of Scranton

May 2020

**Includes
Liturgical Guidelines
for Yellow and Green Phases
See Appendix C,
pg. 15**

Contents



These topics, questions and checklists are designed to help Pastors and your leadership teams to recognize and prepare for the many aspects of opening up to more public interaction at Church. It is envisioned that you would utilize this abundant material in a series of conversations, or perhaps divide it among teams concerned with a certain dimension of readiness. Members of the Office for Parish Life Team, and all other Diocesan departments, are available to help you as you make plans suited to your particular parish setting.

- 3 Introduction
- 4 How do we begin planning?
- 4 Workplace norms
- 5 How do we prepare our facilities and grounds?
- 5 Communication Strategies
- 6 How do we begin inviting people back to **worship**?
- 7 How do we continue to proclaim the **word** and nurture faith formation?
- 7 How do we sustain the **community** while distanced?
- 8 How do we continue to engage people in **service**?
- 9 **Appendix A** Prevention and safety protocols for all facilities
- 13 **Appendix B** Ongoing liturgical norms for Red Phase Counties
- 15 **Appendix C** Detailed liturgical norms for Yellow & Green Phase Counties

Introduction



As counties are moved into the yellow phase on this chart of Governor Wolf's re-opening plan, parishes and other entities of the Diocese of Scranton will need to be prepared to adopt the new guidelines. Some of our current sheltering restrictions will be lifted, but additional requirements will be in place for any public spaces.

We know this process will be gradual and with a priority to what we believe is best for the common good and for our communities, respecting life and the well-being of all. We take extra care for the those designated as most vulnerable.

Please note that guidelines provided by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania are fluid. They may vary by region and change with little advance notice.

COVID-19 REOPENING PHASES			
WORK & CONGREGATE SETTINGS		SOCIAL SETTINGS	
RED PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LIFE-SUSTAINING BUSINESSES ONLY • RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE • SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION • MOST CHILD CARE CLOSED 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY AT HOME ORDERED • LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED • RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY • ONLY TRAVEL FOR LIFE-SUSTAINING PURPOSES
YELLOW PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TELEWORK MUST CONTINUE WHERE FEASIBLE • BUSINESSES WITH IN-PERSON OPERATIONS MUST FOLLOW SAFETY ORDERS • CHILD CARE OPEN WITH WORKER + BUILDING SAFETY ORDERS • RESTRICTIONS IN PLACE FOR PRISON + CONGREGATE CARE • SCHOOLS CLOSED FOR IN-PERSON INSTRUCTION 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STAY AT HOME RESTRICTIONS LIFTED IN FAVOR OF AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION • LARGE GATHERINGS PROHIBITED • IN-PERSON RETAIL ALLOWED CURBSIDE/DELIVERY PREFERRED • INDOOR RECREATION, HEALTH AND WELLNESS FACILITIES (SUCH AS GYMS, SPAS), AND ALL ENTERTAINMENT (SUCH AS CASINOS, THEATERS) REMAIN CLOSED • RESTAURANTS/BARS LIMITED TO CARRY-OUT + DELIVERY
GREEN PHASE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ALL BUSINESSES MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AGGRESSIVE MITIGATION ORDERS LIFTED • INDIVIDUALS MUST FOLLOW CDC AND PA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH GUIDELINES

Even though parishes will take reasonable precautions, and sanitize after each public event, there will still exist the risk of infection for anyone who attends as restrictions are eased. No one should expect that they will be safer in church than in any other public place. We will all experience challenges and frustration as we navigate through these weeks and months ahead. Just as parishes will differ in terms of which phase they are in, parishes will implement guidance from the Diocese in ways that best fit your local circumstances.

How Do We Begin Planning?



- Work with Pastoral and Finance Council members to review the current situation.
- Consider creating a Parish “Reopen” Strategy Leadership Group - include on the team some **health professionals** who can help with plans for preventive safety measures, screening, distancing, protecting the most vulnerable, handling known cases/exposure, contact tracing, etc.
 1. What is working? What needs more attention?
 2. What will change when our county enters the “yellow phase”? the “green phase”?
 3. What do we need to do to be ready?
- Develop parish specific planning strategies and policies in accordance with Guidance from CDC and Commonwealth of PA (details on next pages)
- Create an effective communication plan for needed information Be sure to share this publication with the whole parish: [What to Expect Article](#)

Workplace Norms



While teleworking remains the preference where possible, workplaces that have adequate space for physical distancing, easy access to hand sanitizer, soap and water, and the ability for continuous cleaning of all public areas could be engaged once the stay at home order is lifted.

- May need to rearrange workspace furniture
- Consider staggering of work hours. i.e. morning / afternoon shift
- Continue work at home with limited on-site attendance
- Continue to conduct meetings via conference calls, use of video technology
- Provide for regular parish meetings to resume, virtually or in small enough groups to allow for six-foot distancing, with masks
- Diocesan Offices are open and available to be of service. Many staff members are working remotely, but can be reached by phone or email.

[Worker Safety Order from the Pennsylvania Department of Health](#)

How Do We Prepare Facilities and Grounds?



Detailed checklist for maintenance personnel or buildings and grounds committees is found as Appendix A, pg. 9

- **Gathering for group experiences** - To begin returning to church for Mass or any type of group activity, we will need to limit group size to the current directive of no more than 25 people. This is a fluid situation, being monitored closely by state officials. The Diocese of Scranton will abide by the requirements of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and will update with each new notification.
- **Prevention and Safety considerations** - The safety of our members and our whole community, along with our opportunity to move through each phase to green, depends on our diligent efforts to arrange for six-foot physical distancing, to provide adequate protective equipment, to tend to sanitization procedures, to restrict people with symptoms, and to monitor when people have potentially been exposed to the virus.
- **Health and Safety Preparedness** – include on the team some professionals who can help with plans for preventive safety measures, screening, distancing, protecting the most vulnerable, handling known cases/exposure, contact tracing, etc.

Communication Strategies - Using All Media



- **Gather parishioner input** to support decision making. Here is a sample survey developed by one parish:
[SAMPLE SURVEY](https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/myparish) (<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/myparish>)
This sample is not receiving responses, but if you would like a similar survey tailored to your parish, contact Catherine-Butel@dioceseofscranton.org.
- During the yellow and even green phases it will be essential to continue providing **live-streamed and virtual access** to all parish worship and programs. If you would like **assistance with technology**, contact the Diocesan Team at:
computerissues@dioceseofscranton.org

How Do We Begin Inviting People To Worship?



Detailed liturgical and sacramental norms for are found as Appendix B (Red Phase) pg.13, and Appendix C (Yellow Phase) pg.15

- **The General Dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will remain in place**
There are understandably people especially in vulnerable or at-risk groups, who will feel it is safer to stay home than attend Mass. Potential limits on crowd sizes that are allowed in parishes will also make this dispensation necessary.
- **Livestreaming Opportunities should continue due to attendance limitations**
Since there are guidelines for the attendance numbers for any public gatherings, Catholic Television of the Diocese, and parishes, will continue livestreaming Masses and other faith experiences.
- **Social Distancing will be maintained**
The recommended social distancing guideline of six feet will need to be respected when entering and leaving a church, as well as in regards to seating and a potential Communion procession. Parishioners will be required to wear a mask and anyone showing any symptoms of sickness will be told to stay home. Social gatherings before or after Mass cannot be permitted.
- **Liturgical changes will be in place**
Just like established guidelines for the distribution of Holy Communion and exchanging the Sign of Peace without physical contact, additional guidelines are now established as individual churches are being allowed to begin worship again (Details, Appendix C)

Questions for Parish Team Dialogue:

- What will be the best social distancing plan for our space(s)?
- Which worship experiences are we most prepared to offer first? How can we start with success and a positive encounter for those attending?
- What are the main risks for our members - how can we reduce these?
- How will we determine who can attend, when many desire to do so?
- Are there special volunteer roles we need to develop to help this go smoothly?

- **Safety concerns, in addition to the virus itself, will determine the timeline**
Pope Francis prayed for prudence as communities begin lifting their lockdowns. The Holy Father said, *“At this time, we pray that the Lord would give his people – all of us – the grace of prudence and obedience to the instructions so that the pandemic does not return.”* As this process unfolds, there will certainly be challenges but the safety of our community will remain the benchmark.

How Do We Nurture Faith Formation?



Sacramental Preparation - find special ways to highlight and celebrate those still awaiting reception of sacraments; forego any remaining “requirements” in favor of celebrating as soon as restrictions permit and the families are comfortable returning to church. (See Appendix C, esp. pg. 20, for additional sacramental information)

Network with DREs and Youth Ministry Leaders - these groups are actively planning for and sharing ideas regarding RCIA, Family First Communion Retreats, Faith Formation experiences for Confirmation candidates, Virtual VBS, Catechist Camp for Online Religious Education, and effective small group online adult faith formation.

- Facebook Group: Diocese of Scranton Religious Edu & YM
- Weekly Group Zoom invitation - contact jdouglas@dioceseofscranton.org or shannon-kowalski@dioceseofscranton.org

How Do We Sustain the Distanced Community?



Connect in multiple ways – keep doing what is working virtually. Ideas:

- ◇ Bulletin/website to spotlight members: Senior students, Catechumens, First Communion Students, Family Resources, Mass Intentions, etc.
- ◇ Update Parish Website: Include an easy to access COVID19 Response section
- ◇ Include a list of HELPLINES, added to all virtual platforms.
- ◇ Enhanced use of technology: Identify experts (students and adults) in the parish who can provide technical assistance and support.

Pastoral Outreach - to those who may be isolated, homebound and experiencing loss:

- ◇ Invite persons from current existing outreach ministries or create new “Care” teams for phone calls, text messaging, email, cards/notes.
- ◇ Consider asking families to “adopt” some of the homebound and nursing home members for caring outreach
- ◇ Create mutual support agreements for times of crisis

Assess and Anticipate Emotional Wellness Needs – in the face of collective trauma, what will be the parish community’s needs for healing, grief, counseling, communal story-telling. Everyone has lost something – none of us will ever be the same again.

- How do we come to know ourselves and each other in new ways?
- Support family members and the whole community in some type of memorial - maybe similar to the annual Mass of Remembrance.
- Helpful bulletin insert: [“Choices you can make to stay emotionally healthy”](#)

How Do We Engage in Service?



Collaborate – with other churches and local agencies – the immediate community around your parish has a stake in being successful together with you – and you are best able to see the reality of the coronavirus containment or spread in your area.

- Draw on the partnerships within your deanery to meet the preparation steps and to keep unity of practices for neighboring parishes.
- What are new tasks and roles required for this process of moving into the next phase of pandemic management? Who are your best partners in this process?
- Who can you support and assist?
 - ◇ Coordinating emergency assistance
 - ◇ Sharing of resources, expertise, space
 - ◇ Help other parishes as they come into the “yellow” phase
 - ◇ Gaining some training for parish teams
 - ◇ Create mutual support agreements for times of crisis

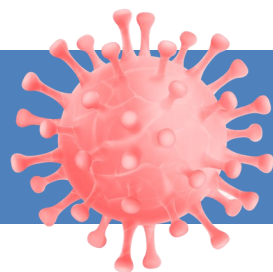
Stewardship - Parishes will continue to depend on the financial and human resources of the parish. How can you identify and train for the new volunteer roles needed at this time? What are the most effective ways you are continuing to invite parish contributions? Do you have ideas for replacing the customary summer events which provide both fund-raising and community building?

Resources for ongoing study and dialogue:

- [Center for Faith and Opportunity Initiatives at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)
- [Healthcare Ready](#)
- [Johns Hopkins University CSSSE Interactive Web-Based COVID-19 Dashboard](#)
- [U.S. Department of Health and Human Services](#)
- [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#)
- [Office for Parish Life Resources for a Time of Social Distancing](#)

Other agencies and/or resources your parish is using?

Appendix A - Prevention & Safety Protocols Checklist for All Facilities



All guidance based on the Federal and State Publications.

The following protocols are recommended at each phase of reopening. Parishes needing assistance with appropriate supplies for meeting these protocols should contact Frank-Semanski@dioceseofscranton.org.

Reopening Checklist

Pandemic Safety Officer

- ☐ All facilities will need to have a staff member or volunteer who will be the **Pandemic Safety Officer**. The Pandemic Safety Officer will oversee the enforcement of all safety, and security protocols and procedures. The Pandemic Safety Officer will also support all staff and volunteers in their roles to maintain a safe, secure, and healthy facility.
- ☐ Assign a Pandemic Safety Officer
- ☐ Determine who will be working to maintain the cleanliness and sanitization of the facility
- ☐ Provide training to all staff and volunteers who will be cleaning and sanitizing the facility, greeting and screening attendees, and securing the facility.

Cleaning and Sanitizing

- ☐ Staff wear disposable gloves and face covering when cleaning. Staff will also washing hands – 20 seconds with soap and water. Where soap and water are unavailable, hand sanitizer can be used
- ☐ Create checklist of items that were cleaned with staff initials, timestamp, and date of completion. To be checked by Pandemic Safety Officer prior to opening the facility
- ☐ Cleaning and disinfecting high touch point and traffic areas and restrooms.
- ☐ Cleaning of pews, kneelers, railings, doorknobs, restrooms, etc. after each mass
- ☐ Staggering mass times in order to allow for air circulation and disinfectant to work
- ☐ Maintain CDC guidelines for use and types of required disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

Preventative Measures

- ☐ Continue to provide mass online
- ☐ Limit the number of masses per day to allow for proper cleaning, sanitation
- ☐ Provide marking on floor to indicate social distancing spacing of 6 feet between attendees upon entering from the parking lot, seating in the facility, and upon exiting the facility
- ☐ Use of one door for entry to the facility and different door for exiting facility
- ☐ Provide hand sanitizer stations upon entry
- ☐ Provide accessible tissues
- ☐ Provide no touch trash bins
- ☐ Provide stationary donation box – must be monitored and secured
- ☐ Do not permit the use of communal water coolers, promote attendees to bring their own water, if needed
- ☐ Open doors for screened attendees
- ☐ Visually screen all attendees – visual signs of illness, quick responses to health survey to determine if the attendee has been ill
- ☐ Instruct attendee to designated assigned seat
- ☐ Exit protocol – spaced out exit to parking lot
- ☐ No congregating in the communal spaces after mass
- ☐ Parking lot monitored for cars to leave promptly after mass – staggering of parking spots?
- ☐ Should someone get ill during mass, provide a space separate for the ill person and procedures for all attendees to dismiss



Training for Greeters

- ☐ Must know how to visually screen attendees to determine if they are permitted to attend mass.
- ☐ Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- ☐ Screen for physical sign of illness (coughing, sneezing, runny nose, etc.)
- ☐ Instruct attendee where to sit based on assigned social distance measures set by state and federal guidelines
- ☐ Ensure all attendees have a facial mask
- ☐ Instruct attendees of protocols in place: hand sanitizer, use of restrooms, enforcement of CDC guidelines, as posted
- ☐ Do not provide reading material (books, flyers, newsletters, bulletin, and/or missalettes)
- ☐ Do not shake hands, hug, or kiss when greeting others

Personal Protective Equipment for Employees

- ☐ Must wear disposable gloves when cleaning
- ☐ Must wear face mask at all times
- ☐ Use tissues and discard after use.
- ☐ Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Personal Protective Equipment for Attendees

- ☐ Must wear face mask at all times – will provide mask?
- ☐ Gloves are optional
- ☐ Use tissues and discard after use.
- ☐ Wash hands frequently with soap and water or use hand sanitizer

Signage

- ☐ Signage about health guidelines posted outside of entrance to the facility
- ☐ Examples from CDC:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs-sp.pdf>

- ☐ Signage for parking lot (need for parking lot attendants?)
- ☐ Signage for seating
- ☐ Signage for entrance and exit doors

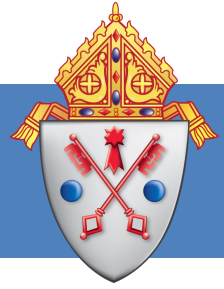
Requirements for Attendees

- ☐ Number of attendees will be designated by state and federal guidelines and enforced.
- ☐ Follow all CDC guidelines as posted and stay home when sick
- ☐ Must follow set facility protocol in order to enter and remain in facility
- ☐ Wear facial covering/mask
- ☐ Complete health survey
- ☐ Complete screening for illness, including temperature scan
- ☐ Rostering of attendees – if there is an instance when an attendee becomes ill with COVID-19, attendees will be contacted to be alerted of the potential risk and symptoms of COVID-19
- ☐ Most vulnerable encouraged to stay home
- ☐ Prohibited from bringing personal items (books, flyers, newsletters, bulletin, and/or missalettes)
- ☐ Prohibited from shaking hands, hugging, or kissing when greeting others

Training and Responsibilities for Staff

- ☐ Training for cleaning and disinfecting high touch point and traffic areas and restrooms
- ☐ Maintaining social distancing guidance
- ☐ Maintaining CDC recommendations for safe and health guidelines

Appendix B - Ongoing Liturgical Norms for **Red Phase** with Stay-at-Home Orders



All guidance based on the Federal and State Publications.

*The following protocols remain in place for all counties still in the **Red Phase**.*

Access to Churches for Private, Individual Prayer

- The decision to maintain access to a parish remains a decision of the Pastor or Parish Life Coordinator.
- Some churches have already opted to close their doors completely, and their decision will be supported by the diocesan bishop.
- Pastors and Parish Life Coordinators who have chosen to maintain access may continue to do so at this time but must follow all general prevention protocols for signage, distancing of six feet, sanitization, and restricting persons with symptoms.
- If a Church is unable to reasonably sanitize or maintain CDC authorized numbers of visitors for prayer (in this phase, 10 people), it should be closed immediately.
- A person who visits a church for private, individual prayer should wear a mask.

Status of Public Masses and Other Events

- Suspension of Masses open to the public and all public gatherings in all diocesan parishes, worship sites, college campuses, chapels and health care facilities remains in effect for counties in the red phase.
- All public adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Hours, devotional prayers and processions, indoors or outdoors, are suspended.
- Private Masses should not include members of the parish who may be present in the church for individual private prayer.
- During livestream Masses, a priest is permitted to have the assistance for a very limited number of people, including a deacon, lector, cantor and/or musician. The number of people should not exceed 10.

Sacrament of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick

- All public gatherings for the celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation or the Anointing of the Sick, indoors or outdoors, are suspended.
- In the gravest circumstances, priests may make themselves available for these sacraments, taking care to follow CDC guidelines for personal protection.
- The faithful are encouraged to follow the directives of the Holy See regarding perfect contrition that have been communicated to you in our regular updates.

Sacrament of Matrimony

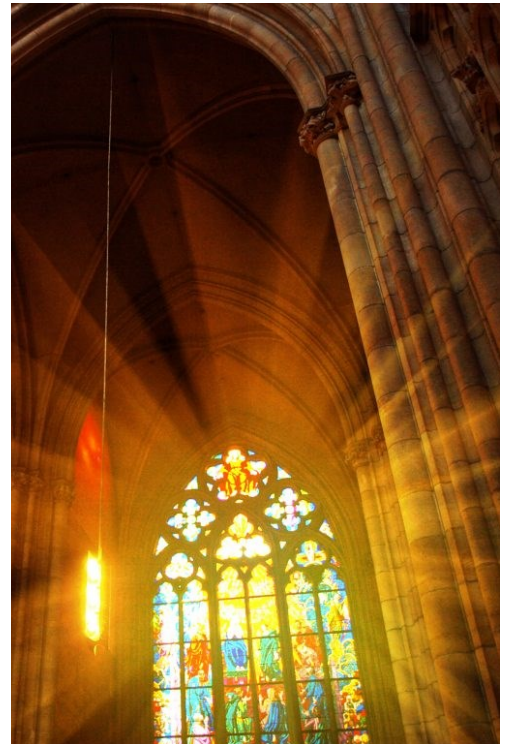
- All weddings scheduled are to be postponed until further notice.
- While churches may “hold open” the date of a scheduled wedding, whether the sacrament can be celebrated on that date will depend entirely on whether the restrictions have been lifted to the “yellow phase.”
- Priests, deacons and parish life coordinators are encouraged to speak to each couple and share this information with them and if necessary assist them in the rescheduling of the wedding.

Sacrament of Baptism

- The celebration of Baptism is to be suspended for the health and safety of all. In case of emergency (danger of death), the sacrament may be administered.

Funerals

- No funeral Masses or services, inclusive of those at funeral homes, are to be conducted.
- Priests, Deacons and Parish Life Coordinators may conduct grave-side burial services when appropriate for immediate family members only, mindful of the CDC guidelines for public gatherings.
- Provisions are to be made for the celebration of memorial Masses after the current healthcare crisis subsides, or the county transitions to the “yellow phase” when gatherings with a maximum capacity of 25 would be permitted.
- The use of cemetery chapels for final committal services is suspended.



Appendix C - Detailed Liturgical Norms for Yellow and Green Phase with Gradual Re-Opening

Updated June 12, 2020



The following protocols pertain to all counties of the Diocese of Scranton in the Yellow and Green Phase. While a parish may begin with a 25 person limit, it can welcome worshippers up to a 25% seating capacity limit whenever it is ready to do so.

ACCESS TO CHURCHES FOR PRIVATE, INDIVIDUAL PRAYER

- Parishes can be open for individual, private prayer. Hours and times can be determined by Pastor or Parish Life Coordinator and communicated to parishioners.
- All general prevention protocols for signage, distancing of six feet, sanitization, and restricting persons with symptoms must be followed.
- If a Church is unable to reasonably sanitize or maintain CDC authorized numbers of visitors for prayer, it should be closed immediately.
- People who visit a church for private, individual prayer should wear masks and could be asked to follow any necessary directions regarding designated entrances and exits to help with social distancing.

STATUS OF PUBLIC MASSES AND OTHER EVENTS

- The obligation to attend Sunday Mass remains suspended at this time.
- Public Masses in diocesan parishes, worship sites, college campuses, chapels and healthcare facilities may resume provided they follow these directives and adhere to the attendance limits for this phase.
- People who are at risk because of an underlying health issue or who are elderly or infirm are strongly encouraged to stay home, for their own health, and to avoid any risk of contracting the virus.
- All guidelines and sanitization procedures for before, during and after Mass must be followed. **The gradual reopening of parishes and resuming public Masses is dependent on a parish's readiness to execute the proper sanitization procedures and liturgical directives.**
- Parishes may schedule public adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Holy Hours or devotional prayers but any attendance must observe the current limit and, given the desire of the faithful to attend, a reservation system may have to be implemented for attendees.
- The recommendation is to begin with resuming daily Mass celebrations and eventually move to Sunday celebrations.
- Outdoor Masses, that is, Masses celebrated in church parking lots are permitted if they respond to a pastoral need and proper social distancing measures are followed. The faithful must remain in their cars for Mass, but are to leave their cars for the reception of Holy Communion and return to their cars for the conclusion of Mass.
- Parishes should continue to livestream Masses and other events to optimize the number of people who can participate.

BEFORE, DURING AND AFTER MASS (much of this applies to any public devotions)

Pastors/Parish Life Coordinators are to see that these obligations are enforced without exception.

BEFORE:

- As you invite people back to Mass, provide clear directions about what is expected, what the protocols will be, and what they need to do to be prepared. Signage should also be posted at the entrance of the church emphasizing:
 - ◊ Each member of the faithful will need to wear a mask.
 - ◊ The faithful should be encouraged to bring disinfectant wipes to assist with sanitizing the areas they occupy.
 - ◊ They should be advised to check their temperature at home, and to remain at home if they are experiencing any symptoms.
- If needed, the Mass schedule may change to ensure enough time between Masses to clean and sanitize. Additional Masses could be added during the week to increase the number of people who can attend weekly.
- Appropriate cleaning of high-use areas within the church is to be done before and after each Mass.
 - ◊ Pews utilized by any person must be wiped down with disinfectant
 - ◊ Restroom facilities and door handles, push plates and knobs, are to be sanitized after each Mass.
- Floors and seating in the pews must be marked with appropriate social distance of six feet between individuals or family members of the same households. This will mean several pews are to be left vacant between congregants.
- Remove any hymnals or missalettes from the pews and store until the pandemic has passed.
- Holy water fonts are to remain empty.
- Hand sanitizer is to be made available throughout the church when possible.
- All liturgical ministers and ushers should wear masks and practice very diligent hand-washing and social distancing.

DURING:

- The limit of people present for all Masses (indoor) includes the priest, deacon, lector, musician, extraordinary minister if they are present. Altar servers are not to be used at this time. There is also no need for choirs to participate in Masses during this phase.
- Determination should be made as to the liturgical ministers who will be in the sanctuary respecting social distancing.
- Parishioners enter through designated door, take assigned seating pre-arranged for distancing, follow guidance regarding the line for communion, and exit by a different designated door. Entry doors are to be propped or held open before Mass and exit doors are to be propped or held open at the end of Mass to prevent people from touching the door handles, knobs or push plates.

- Pastors should utilize the short form of readings and offer brief homilies as a way to shorten the duration of Mass.
- The Offertory procession and sign of peace are suspended.
- The collection is taken only at a stationary, secured basket or lock box. The collection box should be monitored by ushers until the donations are collected and handled according to the proper protocols in place for handling collections.
- Only the priest and deacon are to distribute Communion. If there is an issue with a vulnerable priest or deacon, an extraordinary minister of Communion may assist.
- Priests and deacons (and any other ministers) must wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion and are to use hand sanitizer prior to, immediately after, and, if necessary, during the distribution if contact is made with the communicant's hand or tongue. Gloves are not to be worn during the Communion distribution.



- **It is highly recommended that the distribution of Holy Communion take place AFTER the conclusion of Mass.** This should be explained to the faithful beforehand and that social distancing must be observed in forming a procession to receive Communion. The exceptions for the distribution of Communion after Mass are First Holy Communion Masses, Confirmations and Funerals.
 - ◊ After receiving Communion, the faithful are to depart and not return to their pews.
 - ◊ Communicants may make their prayer of thanksgiving once they leave the church.
 - ◊ The communicants are to follow the usher's directions and floor markings through this whole process.
- Ushers assist with maintaining distance in communion line. Parishioners remain masked until just before their turn to receive, and then return the mask.
- Parishioners are to be strongly advised to receive the Body of Christ in the hand, in keeping with the guidance of health professionals, to avoid the chance of spreading contagion to priests or other parishioners from contact with saliva.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended at this time.

AFTER:

- Exit is guided by the trained volunteers. No bulletins are distributed and no interactions are held with clergy or other ministers.
- Parishioners are not to gather or socialize in any manner (for example, coffee and donuts), but should proceed directly to their cars.
- Pews and other high-traffic areas of the church are to be immediately wiped down before the next Mass, along with the removal of any trash or other items in pews.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON HOW TO INVITE PARISHIONERS BACK TO MASS

- It will be the responsibility of each parish to develop a system that adequately allows the faithful to gather, in a way that works best for the pastor and parish staff and meets all requirements stated in these guidelines.
- No parishioner should expect to attend Mass on a daily or regular basis.
- During the first few weeks as a fair and equitable policy is developed, a parish may consider inviting members of a parish with a clear reason and who feel comfortable attending. Those might include:
 - ◊ Families for whom a funeral was postponed
 - ◊ Those Elect and Candidates awaiting the Easter Sacraments of Initiation
 - ◊ Families presenting a member for the Sacrament of Baptism
 - ◊ Wedding anniversary couples being honored in June (if health will permit)
 - ◊ Weddings that have been postponed
- A parish may consider establishing a reservation system for Mass attendance for both weekday and weekend services. Parishioners could call or email the parish office if they are interested in attending (similar to a restaurant reservation system).
- Creating a proper reservation system will allow the parish to know how many people are attending Mass on any given day, and to provide equitable access for all members.
- Merely depending on "first come, first served" for Mass attendance is not sufficient as it would create too many hardships and potential division.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

- The Sacrament of Penance will be made available to people. Individual confession is the ordinary manner of celebrating the Sacrament. Communal Penance Services are prohibited at this time.
- As always, the priest should take great care to ensure that the conversation with the penitent remains absolutely confidential.
- A priest can establish an area for confessions in an open area of the church or church hall, or a Reconciliation room with adequate space for distancing.
- A church rectory cannot be used for confessions.
- A priest confessor and the penitent should both wear a mask since by nature confession occurs in a close setting.
- Confessions outside of the church may be offered - penitents remain in their cars with the car window open while the priest hears their confession from a six-foot distance.
- Proper sanitization of any areas or surfaces touched by penitent is necessary after each confession.
- The Sacrament of Penance cannot be celebrated by cell phone, FaceTime, Zoom or any other video conferencing technology. Cell phones and any other electronic devices (with the exception of a hearing aid) should also not be used to amplify the voice of either the confessor or penitent.
- Even though the Sacrament of Penance is available, the faithful are encouraged to follow the directives of the Holy See regarding perfect contrition.
- General Absolution is not permitted at this time.

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK/PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

- Individual Anointing of the Sick remains permissible, but not communal celebrations.
- Mindful of the restrictions at all area hospitals and nursing facilities, the priest should adhere to a facility's policy.
- In a hospital, priests should use all Personal Protective Equipment that is provided.
- A doctor or nurse may not anoint a person if the priest is unable to enter the patient's room. In this case, only the prayers, Apostolic Pardon, and blessing may be given.
- For an Anointing of the Sick in a home, priests should practice meticulous handwashing. Face masks and gloves must be worn, and a cotton swab used to anoint the sick person with the Oil of the Sick. The cotton swab should be properly disposed of through burning or burying. Use hand sanitizer after the anointing, and upon returning home, remove and launder your clothes and take a warm shower.
- Extraordinary ministers of Communion are not permitted to take Communion to the homebound/hospitals/nursing homes until the county is in the "green phase."

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

- The *Order for Celebrating Matrimony within and without Mass* is permitted.
- The maximum of people allowed inside church to attend a wedding includes the priest, any musicians and photographers.
- All wedding guests (not bride and groom) must follow social distancing guidelines, unless they are immediate family living under one roof.
- All guidance from before, during and after Mass must be followed. (see pages 16-17)
- For the "Celebration of Matrimony," the priest should stand behind the altar and the bride and groom should stand in front of the altar, to allow for social distancing.
- The wedding rings should not be handled by others (ring bearer, maid of honor, best man) prior to the wedding couple giving them to each other.
- The faithful must wear masks during the service.
- There should be no receiving line or gatherings at the conclusion of the ceremony. Guests must depart using social distancing.
- If any type of program is to be used at the wedding, each guest must get their own individual copy and must be responsible for taking it with them upon leaving.
- Priests, Deacons and Parish Life Coordinators are encouraged to speak with each couple in advance to share this relevant information.
- Even if a wedding date is scheduled while a couple is in the "yellow phase," if a particular county or region regresses into the "red phase," the restrictions of that phase may require further postponement.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

- Communal baptisms are not allowed at this time. The Sacrament of Baptism is permitted only for one child at a time, unless those to be baptized are immediate family members.
- Social distancing and group size guidelines are still applicable during Baptism.
- The priest or deacon and the faithful should wear a mask for the entire Baptism.

- The priest or deacon should recite the *Ephpheta* Prayer, but should not touch the child's mouth or ears as called for in the *Order of Celebrating Baptism*.
- Fresh water should be used for each baptism and then discarded. The Baptismal font should be sanitized after each Baptism.
- A priest or deacon may use cotton swabs to apply the Oil of Catechumens and the Sacred Chrism.
- All guidance from before, during and after Mass must be followed. (see pages 16-17)

FUNERALS

- Funeral services, including funeral Masses, wakes and viewings may resume with families and guests, so long as they don't exceed the attendance limit and those gathered abide by social distancing requirements.
- A funeral Mass for a COVID-19 parishioner is permitted. The casket should be closed prior to entering the church.
- Parishes should inform funeral directors of current church attendance limit, the liturgical guidelines for funerals, and coordinate procedures such as encouraging members of the same household to sit together, social distancing for the arrival and departure, reception of Holy Communion etc.
- Family and friends of the deceased should be seated in church first before bringing the casket or urn inside. Appropriate social distance between members of the same households is to be respected, especially when entering and leaving church.
- It is recommended that the Introductory Rites of the Funeral Mass (Sprinkling with Holy Water, Placing of the Pall, Placing of the Christian Symbols) take place after everyone has been seated in church and the casket/urn is placed at the foot of the sanctuary.
- It is encouraged to have members of the same household place the pall on the casket.
- All guidance from before, during and after Mass must be followed, including the omission of the Offertory Procession. (see pages 16-17)
- Since the procession to the cemetery usually follows the funeral, it is recommended that the distribution of Holy Communion take place within the Mass. Appropriate social distancing during the reception of Holy Communion at funerals will need to be coordinated by the parish and the funeral director.
- The priest should wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion and the Final Commendation. The faithful should wear masks.
- The pall is to be removed from the casket by the funeral director before processing down the aisle and out of church.
- Memorial Masses for individuals who died during the stay-at-home orders may also take place as long as the number of people who gather does not exceed the established limits. Live streaming of these services is a possibility, if the family desires, to allow others attend remotely.
- The use of cemetery chapels for final committal services remains suspended.

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (ELECT AND CANDIDATES)

- The Elect who did not receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist at the Easter Vigil may be initiated by their pastor if they are comfortable with returning to church.
- As a parish determines how to establish its process for the faithful to return to Mass, the Elect and Candidates could be invited as one of the first groups for a Sunday Mass.
- Special consideration should be given to offer these sacraments during a Sunday livestream Mass so that members of the parish community can participate virtually.
- Only one member of the Elect or Candidate can receive the Sacraments of Initiation at a given Mass, unless they are members of the same household.
- An individual Mass with the Elect's family, sponsor and the parish R.C.I.A. director can also be scheduled as long as the capacity does not exceed the attendance limit.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

- Pastors and Parish Life Coordinators may decide when to reschedule the parish's First Holy Communion on an individual or "small group" basis, with the expressed permission of the parents and following attendance limits set for this phase. These celebrations may take place at a weekend or a weekday Mass and may be livestreamed for the parish to participate.
- All guidance from before, during and after Mass must be followed. (see pages 16-17)
- For the Renewal of Baptismal Promises, the First Communion candidates should not bless themselves with holy water from the Baptismal Font nor should holy water be sprinkled on them.
- The priest should wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion. The faithful should wear a mask while in attendance.
- Family members are discouraged from remaining in the church to take photographs.

SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION (ADULT AND 8TH GRADE)

- All Confirmations scheduled with Bishop Bambera in the Spring of 2020 have been cancelled. Parish Confirmations scheduled for Pentecost weekend this year will also need to be postponed.
- Although Pastors and Sacramental Ministers have already been granted the faculty to administer the Sacrament of Confirmation at the Easter Vigil or on Pentecost, given the current circumstances, this faculty is extended beyond Pentecost to the end of the Liturgical year on Saturday, November 28, 2020.
- Pastors or sacramental ministers may offer an individual Confirmation Mass that does not exceed the established limits for attendance.
- All guidance from before, during and after Mass must be followed. (see pages 16-17)
- A pastor or sacramental minister may use Confirmation within Mass or without Mass.
- **Priests should use cotton balls or cotton swabs for the Anointing with Chrism during the Sacrament of Confirmation in their parishes.** Each cotton ball or swab used is to be set

aside after anointing each candidate, and either burned or buried in an appropriate location after the Confirmation. With the use of cotton balls or swabs, there is no need for the priest to sanitize his hand after each anointing, unless for some reason his hand made contact with the candidate. While the use of gloves during the anointing is left to the discretion of the priest, sanitization is still recommended if his hand has made contact with the candidate, in order to avoid cross-contamination.

- The practice of having the Confirmation sponsor accompany the candidate and placing his or her hand on the candidate's shoulder for the Anointing with Chrism is suspended at this time. The Confirmation sponsor is to remain in his or her pew during the Anointing and offers prayers for the candidate who is about to receive this sacrament.
- The reception of Holy Communion should take place within the Confirmation Mass.
- The priest should wear a mask for the Anointing and the Distribution of Holy Communion. The faithful should wear a mask while in attendance.
- Family members are discouraged from remaining in the church to take photographs.