



MEMORANDUM

MEMO TO: ALL PRIESTS
MEMO FROM: BISHOP DOUGLAS CROSBY, OMI
DATE: TUESDAY, JUNE 9TH, 2020
RE: OPENING OF CHURCHES

As you are aware, Premier Doug Ford announced that all churches in the Province of Ontario are permitted to open for prayer and worship. In order to ensure that our churches are prepared to open for personal prayer and for Mass, according to the 30% capacity seating restriction, churches in the Diocese of Hamilton are permitted to open as follows:

Tuesday, June 16, 2020 for weekday Masses and prayer.
June 20-21, 2020 for Sunday Masses. **There are no exceptions to these dates.**

Effective Sunday, June 21, 2020, there are to be no live-streamed Masses provided by Parishes in the Diocese of Hamilton. Those who are unable to come to the church are to be directed to televised Masses on Salt and Light (each day at 6:30 am, 11:00 am, 3:00 pm, and 10:30 pm EST. Mass is also available online: <https://saltandlighttv.org/mass/>. Vision TV broadcasts Mass on Sunday at 8:00 am.

Please find attached the Liturgical Norms for the first stage of reopening churches in the Diocese of Hamilton. You are asked to review these carefully and are invited to participate in one of the two conference calls which I will host tomorrow:

Date: Wednesday, June 10, 2020
Times: 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m.
Invitees: All Priests

To access the call, please dial:	
Toll Free	1-855-342-6455
Local	1-416-933-3853
Conference ID	5861034 #

The Agenda for the call includes:

- Preparing our churches for opening;
- Liturgical Norms;
- Provision of PPE equipment and sanitizing materials;
- Signage, floor and pew markings.

During the coming days Pastors may need to assemble and train a group of volunteers to assist in cleaning the church and to guide people to designated seating areas.



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

LITURGICAL NORMS FOR THE FIRST STAGE OF REOPENING CHURCHES 9 JUNE 2020

In the Diocese of Hamilton, the opening of churches is permitted for weekday Mass and prayer effective on Tuesday, June 16, 2020, and for Sunday Masses, effective Saturday/Sunday, June 20-21, 2020.

Prior to the opening of churches and adjacent facilities, the following rules must be implemented in all Catholic churches, and where applicable, all parish halls where the public may attend.

A. The Universal Application of Physical Distancing

In all cases, when community gatherings take place, or when individuals are using the church or other facilities, a physical distance of two metres (six feet) is to be strictly maintained. This is necessary to avoid:

- personal contact
- transmission of any particle fluid/spray from one's mouth or nose
- deposit residue on surfaces from one's hands or face.

B. Cleaning of Churches and Related Facilities

- Churches should always be clean and tidy; however, in times of pandemic, extra care and attention must be taken to ensure that surfaces remain as clean as possible to reduce the transmission of infection.
- All staff engaged in cleaning (including the handling of soiled laundry or waste materials) are to wear masks and disposable gloves. Masks are to be disposed of when dirty or no later than the end of the day. Gloves should be changed as often as necessary (usually at the end of any task or after cleaning a washroom facility).
- All surfaces (floors, seating, kneelers) are to be wiped with warm water containing sanitizing agents that are related to killing germs at least once per week. All pew fronts and the tops and sides of benches are to be wiped with a sanitizing agent after each event.
- During the week, if the church is open for private prayer or for liturgies with small groups, it is recommended that seating be restricted to one area so as to eliminate the cleaning of other areas.
- Approved disinfectant cleansers are to be used to avoid damage to wooden surfaces.

- It is generally accepted that any surface contagion on floors, pews and other surfaces will live no longer than 72 hours. If there are gaps of 72 hours between the use of the church, no further cleaning/disinfecting need take place.
- When someone falls sick in the church, the area within a two-metre (six feet) radius is to be thoroughly cleaned before it can be used again.

Washrooms

Church washrooms are to be restricted to use when absolutely necessary only. No more than one person/family (living at the same address) at a time should use a washroom. Notices to this effect are to be posted outside the washroom. Hand washing signs are also to be placed in the washroom. Any washroom that is soiled must be closed pending cleaning with disinfectant.

Water Fountains

Water fountains or coolers are to remain out of service during the duration of the pandemic.

Disinfectant Hand Sanitizer Dispensing Machines

Each church should have a minimum of two of these devices at the entrance and exits doors of the church. Each parishioner should be directed to sanitize their hands before entering the church. If possible, these devices should be touchless and should be maintained.

Holy Water Fonts

Holy water fonts are to remain empty until such time as they may be used safely.

Sacred Vessels

All sacred vessels used in the liturgy are to be cleaned with warm soapy water and hot rinse after they have been purified following each Mass.

C. Posting of Notices

It is important to post notices in prominent places at all entrances to the church regarding the requirements for entering the church and participating in any liturgical celebrations. Notices should include the following directives:

- Entrance is not permitted to those who have an elevated temperature, or are suffering from cough, sputum production, shortness of breath, undue fatigue, loss of appetite, muscle aching, runny nose, chills involving shakes, loss of taste or smell. If you feel sick, you are kindly asked to stay home.
- Be sure to follow the guidance of the ushers/ministers of hospitality and sit only in the designated places to ensure physical distancing at all times.
- Avoid touching your face or other persons.

The notice may also include information regarding overflow seating or additional Sunday Masses being provided in the Parish on Sunday. Announcements regarding the reception of Communion and egress can best be made during and at the conclusion of the liturgy.

Preparing the Church for the Liturgy

In addition to cleaning and disinfecting the church and adjacent facilities before the use of the church for the liturgy or for personal prayer, the following norms are to be observed.

Signage

Signs are to be posted at the entrance(s) of the church listing times of liturgical celebrations and times when the church will be open for adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and personal prayer.

Church Entrances

Where possible, weather permitting, it is recommended that the doors of the church should be open to avoid contact with handles. If this is not possible, ushers, wearing masks and disposable gloves, should assist. In addition, signs are to be posted regarding who may enter, the use of PPE and distancing.

In order to avoid surface contact, all printed material such as bulletins, pamphlets and newspapers should be removed. Areas for the sale of religious articles should be closed.

Hymnals, Prayer Books, Envelopes

All hymnals, prayer books and other papers are to be removed from the pews during the pandemic.

Elevators

Only one person (with an assistant, as needed) is to use the elevator, preferably with an attendant who will ensure that doors and handles are kept clean after each use.

Seating

During the pandemic, to ensure that physical distancing takes place, each church must be cordoned off in such a way as to promote two metre (six feet) distances. Seats may be designated by tape markings. Individual and family places must be clearly marked. Seating must be marked in such a way that there is alternation of patterns between rows to guarantee spacing.

Floors and Aisles

In high traffic areas (entrances and aisles) tape must be used to designate spacing of two-metre (six feet) increments and also indicate the direction of movement. The tape should be a bright colour and distinguished from the colour of the floor surface. It should be of sufficient quality to remain in place and so that it can be removed or repaired without harm to the surfaces. The tape should be inspected after every Sunday to ensure it is in good condition and remains visible.

Disabled Area

Those who attend church with a personal mobility device should be placed in a designated area with sufficient space to allow a two metre (six feet) space between each person.

Sanctuary

Seating in the sanctuary should be limited and must be arranged to ensure physical distancing.

Sacristy

Entrance to the sacristy is to be limited to those who are required to prepare for the liturgy. If the room is small and does not allow for the required distancing, one person at a time should use the room. All surfaces in the room are to be kept clean.

Crying Rooms and Small Chapels/Devotional Areas

Unless it is possible to ensure two-metre (six feet) distance between families, crying rooms are to be closed.

Overflow Crowds and Standing Room

This is discouraged unless there is sufficient space to allow for distancing and for aisles to be clear so that traffic is not impeded.

Washrooms

In addition to cleaning and disinfecting the washroom(s), a sign is to be posted indicating that they are to be used only in necessity, and only by one person (family) at a time. A sanitizing fluid device (preferably touchless) should be placed outside each washroom.

Meeting Rooms

All adjacent meeting rooms are to remain closed during Sunday Mass.

Confessionals and Reconciliation Chapels

Most confessionals and reconciliation chapels are too small to ensure physical distancing. A larger room elsewhere in the parish complex should be used. In addition to the opportunity for face-to-face Confession, a portable kneeler with a screen should be in place for the penitent who wishes to remain anonymous, provided the penitent wears a mask and disposable gloves. The penitent should wipe the door handle with disinfectant upon leaving the room and then dispose gloves, if used, in the container provided.

CHURCHES OPEN FOR PRAYER

Since most adoration chapels are too small to ensure physical distancing, they are to remain closed during the pandemic. However, the church may be open for determined times for prayer and adoration. Times when the church is open are to be posted.

Supervision

Churches should never be left open unsupervised. Compliance with physical distancing should be enforced by an attendant in charge. Any refusal to comply should be reported to the Pastor or member of the pastoral staff.

NORMS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF SUNDAY MASS

The Assembly

All in the assembly are asked to take their temperature before coming to church and, with the exception of the Priest and ministers, are strongly encouraged to wear a mask upon the recommendation of the Ontario Medical Officer of Health.

Ministers of Hospitality

Ushers or ministers of hospitality are to be present before Mass at the entrance(s) to the church to direct people to the hand sanitizers and to their seats while observing physical distancing.

Prayers before Mass

Where it is the custom for the people to pray the Rosary or other devotional prayers before Mass, this practice may continue.

The Priest

The priest celebrating Mass is not to wear a mask or disposable gloves during the liturgy. However, he must wash his hands before and after Mass, and use hand sanitizer before and after distributing Holy Communion.

Music During Mass

In many parishes it will not be possible to ensure physical distancing among musicians (instrumentalists and choir members). Therefore, a single instrumentalist and cantor is to provide music during the liturgy. Music should be limited to familiar hymns with refrains and the ordinary parts of the Mass which parishioners know by heart.

Entrance Procession

The entrance procession takes place directly from the sacristy. If the sacristy is located at the main entrance to the church, every effort should be made to maintain physical distancing (e.g., by having people seated away from the centre aisle). A hymn should be sung, led by an instrumentalist and a cantor, with a common refrain in which the assembly can participate.

It is recommended that only the Priest (and Deacon) and a single server, if needed, participate in the procession. The Book of the Gospels should be placed on the altar before Mass.

The Introductory Rites

The Priest leads the Introductory rites in the usual manner from the chair. The Priest may use a simple lectern for the prayers rather than have a server hold the book.

Liturgy of the Word

The Liturgy of the Word takes place in the usual manner. In order to minimize contact with the Lectionary, only one lector proclaims all the Scripture readings from the Lectionary already placed on the ambo. The lector may be seated in the assembly, but should be close to the ambo. The

Psalm is sung by the cantor at another lectern. Following the second reading, the lector removes the Lectionary so that the Priest (or Deacon) can proclaim the Gospel. No candles are used for the Gospel. The proclamation of the Gospel and the homily follows as usual. The Creed is professed and the Prayers of the Faithful are offered. The petitions may be announced by the Priest at the chair.

Children's Liturgy of the Word

The celebration of the Children's Liturgy of the Word is not permitted during the pandemic.

Offertory

The monetary collection is omitted at this time and the bread and wine are not presented as usual. The collection is to be received at the doors of the church where people can place their donations in baskets held by the ushers as they leave the church. The bread and wine are placed on the credence table near the altar before Mass. If the credence table is placed beside the altar, there is no need for a server to assist.

Credence Table

In addition to all that is needed for the Eucharistic Prayer and Communion, hand sanitizer should be placed on the credence table to be used by the priest and ministers before and after distributing Holy Communion.

Vessels on the Altar

Where possible, the ciboria containing hosts for the assembly are to be placed at some distance from the Priest's chalice and paten. If the ciboria have covers, these should remain in place during the Eucharistic Prayer.

Eucharistic Prayer

The Eucharistic Prayer is prayed by the Priest with the assembly making the usual responses and acclamations. Whenever the Priest is praying with hands joined, it is important that his hands not be near his face.

Communion Rite

The Greeting of Peace is maintained; however, the usual sign of peace is omitted. A simple bow of the head towards one's neighbor may be offered as a sign of peace.

Holy Communion is distributed by the Priest and Extraordinary Ministers of Communion. All ministers of Holy Communion are to sanitize their hands before distributing the Eucharist.

Concelebrants are to receive Holy Communion by intinction and the principal celebrant (or the last to receive) consumes the Precious Blood directly from the chalice. Deacons are to receive Communion under the form of Eucharistic bread only.

Upon the strong recommendations of medical authorities, Communion is received only in the hand at this time. Communicants are instructed to remove their masks, using the straps and without touching the front of their masks, while the person ahead of them is receiving Holy Communion. The individual dialogue between the minister and communicant is omitted. Instead, following the “Lord, I am not worthy”, the Priest continues to hold up the Eucharistic Bread and says to the assembly: “The Body of Christ”. All respond together: “Amen”.

It is desirable that the Priest remind the people that they are to place one open hand upon the other to reverently receive the Sacred Host. In silence, the minister carefully places the Body of Christ in the communicant’s hand without touching the person.

Ushers need to direct people to the Minister of Communion to ensure physical distancing. Depending on the layout of the church, it may be necessary to distribute Holy Communion to one section at a time so that distance is maintained when people are both coming forward to receive and when they are returning to their seats. Pastors will need to train the ushers beforehand and a simple announcement will need to be made until people are used to this new procedure for the Communion procession.

Following the distribution of Holy Communion, the remaining Eucharist is placed in the tabernacle in the usual manner. All vessels are placed on the credence table, to be taken by a server or sacristan to the sacristy following Mass. There they are to be purified and then washed with soapy water.

Communion to the Sick and Homebound

The pyxes which have been prepared with hosts are placed on the credence table before Mass. After the Prayer after Communion, they are presented to the ministers who will bring Holy Communion to the sick and homebound. When giving the Eucharist, they are to observe the same procedures (e.g., hand washing) as when distributing Communion during Mass.

Concluding Rites

The concluding rites take place in the usual manner. Any necessary announcements may be made. In particular, people are to be reminded to place their offerings in the baskets provided and to follow the direction of the ushers or ministers of hospitality when exiting the church in an orderly way, while maintaining physical distancing. Parishioners are instructed to leave the church without spending social time with the Priest and fellow parishioners at the door or in the parking lot. The use of printed bulletins is suspended at this time.

OTHER RITES CELEBRATED IN THE CHURCH

Since these rites take place in the Church, the requirements for preparing the space, physical distancing, the use of music and procedures for liturgical ministers as they apply to the particular rite are to be observed.

Baptism

The Baptism of infants and young children are celebrated in the usual manner. In order to respect physical distancing and limit the number of participants, Baptisms are not to be celebrated during Mass at this time; nor are they to be celebrated communally, i.e., with several families at a time. With the exception of maintaining physical distancing among family and friends, and the Priest or Deacon sanitizing his hands before and after the pouring of water and anointing, the Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated in the usual manner according to the Rite of Baptism.

Christian Initiation of Adults

The Christian Initiation of Adults (including children of catechetical age) is celebrated during Mass, since the rite includes the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist. The Reception into Full Communion is also to be celebrated during Mass. It is recommended that these rites not take place at this time during the Sunday Mass.

Marriage

Marriage liturgies may be celebrated in the church provided that the number of participants does not exceed 10 people. The norms for physical distancing pertain to all present with the exception of the bride and groom. It may be more fitting to celebrate Marriages outside Mass.

Reconciliation

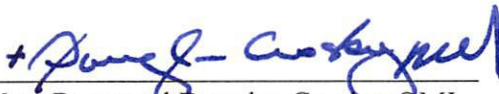
Opportunities for the celebration of Reconciliation are to be posted for the faithful. The place for the celebration is described above (see page 4). For those waiting to celebrate the sacrament, social distancing must be observed.

Funerals

Funeral Masses may be celebrated in the church provided that the number of participants does not exceed 10 people. The norms for physical distancing pertain to all present. Priests and Deacons will collaborate with Funeral Home staff to take all the necessary precautions to ensure the health and safety of all who participate.

First Communion and Confirmation

The scheduling of First Communion and Confirmation for children is the responsibility of the local Parish and the Bishop's Office. The norms for celebrating Sunday Mass apply to these celebrations.


Most Reverend Douglas Crosby, OMI
Bishop of Hamilton


Monsignor Murray J. Kroetsch, PH, VG
Chancellor