

# **Report and Recommendations from the Task Force for Re-entering, Re-opening, and Re-imagining for the Diocese of New Jersey**

## **Addendum July 15, 2020: Baptism Procedures During COVID 19**

- The Candidate for Baptism (or the parents, if a child) should be clearly instructed prior to the service that the Celebrant will be closer than 6 feet during the baptism and that the Celebrant will necessarily touch the forehead of the Candidate with Chrism at the signing of the cross. The Candidate (or the parents/sponsors) should assent to these exceptions to the health and safety protocols prior to the service and provide that assent expressly in an email or in writing.
- All members of the “baptismal party” [i.e. Candidate and sponsor(s)] should remain in their seats until after the Blessing of the Water. (Reminder: only persons living in the same house can sit together.)
- The Celebrant may remove her or his facemask to bless the water if s/he is 20 feet away from the congregation.
  - If Celebrant is wearing a face shield, s/he must be 10 feet away.
  - If the Celebrant remains masked, s/he must be 6 feet away.
  - The Celebrant must put on her/his facemask prior to the party coming to the font.
- If the Candidate for Baptism is an infant or young child, one parent or adult sponsor is to hold the child over the font. One other adult sponsor or parent may accompany them to the font and, as much as possible, remain 6 feet apart from the Celebrant.
- If the Candidate for Baptism is old enough to stand by themselves over the font, accommodations should be made make that possible (i.e. a step-stool). Two adult sponsors or parents may accompany the Candidate and, as much as possible, remain 6 feet apart from the Celebrant.
- Each Candidate should be baptized and then chrismated immediately following.
- It is not necessary, or recommended, to use an instrument (i.e. shell or cup) to pour water over the candidate’s head.
- After chrismation, the Candidate and sponsors/parents are to return to their seats.
- If there are multiple baptisms (unless Candidates are from the same household):
  - A separate basin will be needed for each Candidate
    - One bowl/basin should be placed in the font and some water poured into it.
    - The rest of the water should remain in the ewer.
    - The water in the bowl/basin and the water in the ewer are to be blessed with a sign of the cross (similar to consecrating additional wine in a flagon).

- After the first candidate is baptized, the basin/bowl is removed, a clean bowl/basin is placed in the font, and clean water from the ewer is poured into the new bowl/basin.
  - Repeat for all additional Candidates.
- The Celebrant needs to be mindful when using Chrism to not “cross-contaminate” the container. Some oil may be poured onto fingers to anoint or put into separate bowls.
- The Celebrant must use hand sanitizer between each candidate.
- A separate cloth is needed for each Candidate to blot water or chrism.
- One party must be in their seats prior to the next party moving to the font.
- The Candidates are to remain in their seats after the baptism. They should not be carried or brought through or around the congregation, and parishioners should not leave their seats to greet the newly baptized.
- As much as possible, there should be no touching of shared objects (e.g. a baptismal candle lit from the Paschal Candle should be extinguished after the baptism and placed in a bag to give to the Candidate).
- Any candles, certificates or other gifts should be offered while keeping the 6-foot physical distance.