



Diocese of
Green Bay

Guidelines for Public Masses in Times of Very High COVID-19 Alert

The Diocese of Green Bay has reinstated the dispensation for the obligation to participate in the Sunday Mass effective October 5, 2020. Though the faithful will no longer be under an obligation to attend Sunday Mass, if they are able and are healthy, they should in good conscience attend. The following guidelines are intended to help parishes provide an opportunity for the faithful to encounter Christ in the liturgy of the Church while abiding by reasonable and proportional measures to limit the spread of disease.

General Provisions

1. If individual Catholics struggle with serious health concerns, are caring for an ill loved one, or are morally prevented from worshipping at Mass for a grave reason, he/she should not attend. Additionally, if individuals are frail due to illness or age and in their well-formed consciences believe that going into public places - including Sunday worship at Mass - would place their health or the health of their loved ones in serious jeopardy, they too should not attend.
2. **Those who are showing symptoms of illness such as a cough or fever, even if not COVID related, in the spirit of Christian charity, should remain at home.**
3. **Hand sanitizer and masks should remain near the entrances of the church. All those who are entering or exiting should be encouraged to perform proper hand hygiene.**
4. Holy water fonts should remain empty.
5. Hard surfaces should continue to be wiped down between masses with antibacterial cleaner.
6. **Masks are mandatory.** If there are members of the faithful who cannot wear masks due to serious medical or psychological reasons, they may certainly come to Mass, but a separate area should be procured for them if possible. Temperatures should be taken if possible.
7. Hymnals, worship aids, and common use print materials should not be used. Instead, single-use worship aids may be created to assist the faithful but should not include music.
8. **There remain no restrictions as to the percentages of people present for any given liturgy so long as the standards of social distancing are upheld.** If the number of people present for a liturgy potentially exceeds county or local restrictions, the pastor or pastoral leader should contact the Diocese for further consultation. All local and county regulations should be followed.
9. If possible, it is recommended that a separate area be designated or an added Mass be celebrated and clearly communicated to the faithful for those who are 65 or older or who have significant health concerns. If the parish should decide to have a separate area, the area should be clearly indicated (by taping-off seating, placing signs, etc.) to ensure that this seating is for persons who are practicing physical distancing (maintaining a 6-foot distance from others who are not members of their household).
10. **The faithful should be encouraged to maintain social distance, especially in high-traffic areas if possible** (for example, when entering or exiting the church, in the vestibule, etc.).
11. If it be possible and necessary, adjacent spaces in the Church may be used for the faithful as long as there is a clear line of site to the sanctuary or an AV system to facilitate active participation in the Mass.

Specific Provisions for the Parts of the Mass

- 12. The celebrant and other ministers should remain more than 6 feet from the congregation during the entirety of the Mass if possible and wear a face covering when not speaking. We recommend that there should not be altar servers until further notice.**
- 13. It is recommended that full choirs are not utilized during this phase, but rather there continue to be a cantor and a musician for the celebration of the liturgy. Congregational singing should be discouraged at this time. If the faithful sing, they should be wearing a face-covering.**
14. Special provision should be made for the collection - baskets should not be passed from person to person. Long-handled baskets could be acceptable if the ushers can remain a suitable distance from others and they are sanitized after use.
 - a. Central boxes or collection points where the faithful can place their contributions should be made available.
15. The sign of peace may be omitted or the faithful may gesture a sign to those around them.

The Distribution of Holy Communion

- 16. The Precious Blood will not be distributed to the faithful.** If possible, sufficient low-gluten hosts should be consecrated and made available for the faithful who require these hosts. A deacon or concelebrant should not receive from the same cup as the celebrant. The celebrant could offer the Cup for the concelebrant to intinct and then should consume the Precious Blood and purify the vessel himself.
- 17. Those distributing Holy Communion should wear a mask and must use hand sanitizer before and after distribution.**
 - a. If at any point the minister of Holy Communion touches a communicant's hand or tongue, proper hand hygiene should be practiced immediately before continuing the distribution of Holy Communion.
 - b. Though it should be strongly encouraged that the faithful receive Holy Communion in the hand, provisions should be made so that anyone who wishes to receive on the tongue may do so. If the faithful desire to receive on the tongue, they should receive from the priest. If the priest, does not feel comfortable with this, he may delegate another ordinary or extraordinary minister of the Eucharist to distribute to those who wish to receive on the tongue.
18. Parishes should consider making special provision so that at-risk individuals can come forward for Holy Communion first, and also so that they can remain 6 feet from other members of the congregation while in line for Holy Communion. (This should be clearly communicated to the faithful at the time of distribution.)
19. Holy Communion may not be distributed with gloves, nor may it be received in the hand if a member of the faithful is wearing gloves.
20. The faithful receive Holy Communion in the normal way. A single file line is encouraged. If there is a double line, there should be a 6' distance between the lines.