

# WORSHIPS SAFE

DIRECTIVES FOR CHURCH SERVICES

EMERGENCY MEASURES  
PANDEMIC AND EPIDEMIC

ROMAN CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF CHARLOTTETOWN

*A copy of this document should be retained for future reference.*

*DATED: June 22, 2020*

*Introduction*

The Directives of **WORSHIPSAFE** focus on the safe opening of our Churches and the participation of the faithful in the celebration of the Eucharist and other Sacraments and Rites of the Catholic Church.

The practice of these directives provides no guarantee that viruses such as Covid 19 will not be contracted. But they are the best and most practical measures to ensure the safety of our people.

**WORSHIPSAFE** contains directives not guidelines. They shall be implemented in every Catholic Parish Church and chapel. Parishes/Units shall implement these directives or remain closed to public worship.

The obligation of Sunday observance is suspended in this Diocese of Charlottetown until further notice.

Priests with compromised immune system or suffering symptoms of cold and flu shall not offer Mass for the public. The parish church where he serves shall remain closed unless that Pastor can find a substitute priest.

### *Physical distancing - Sanitizing - Registering*

**Public seating shall be restricted to every third pew.** The two pews in front of and behind an occupied pew shall be cordoned to prevent access.. This ensures a 6'foot distance both behind and in front of parishioners. Families from the same household may sit together in a single pew. Churches without pews using chairs or churches in which pews are aligned in an arc shall devise a seating plan for the congregation to ensure social distancing,

No choir may gather in Church due to physical distancing. One cantor with instrumental accompaniment may lead congregational singing and maintain a distance of 12'.

In Phase 3 of Renew PEI we read "*Microphones should not be shared*" . This is taken to mean duets, and trios etc. speaking or singing simultaneously.

All songbooks, hymnals and missals shall be removed from the pews and entrance of the Church.

After every ceremony, places of contact such as pews, door knobs, handles and washroom facilities shall be sanitized. Note: the cordoned off pews need not be sanitized.

Handwashing and sanitizing areas shall be available in churches and church washrooms.

Signage shall be posted at the entrance to each Church indicating the requirements of physical distancing, hand hygiene, cleaning and disinfection practices in the Church and respiratory etiquette regarding coughing and sneezing.

Signage shall indicate that individuals with symptoms of Covid 19, such as fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny nose should not attend Mass. Priests with such symptoms shall cancel Mass or find a substitute priest.

**It is highly recommended** to prop the entrance door open so that people do not have to touch the doorknob or surface.

**It is highly recommended** that measures be taken to shorten the length of the Mass because the time spent in proximity to other persons increases the risk of transmission; for example, announcements can be kept brief or eliminated; cantors may delete verses of a song; select the shorter versions of the readings if the option is presented; preach a brief homily; limit the number of general intercessions and keep each brief.

Every parish/unit and chapel shall devise a method, to record the name and phone number of one person per household in attendance at Mass. This record must include the number of people attending from the household. This data shall be dated for each Mass and kept with parish records for one month.. At any time, the Public Health Office may request access to this information.

### *Ceremonial Adaptations*

Altar servers shall remain 6' apart in the sacristy and during Mass.

All personnel in the sacristy shall wash/sanitize their hands before Mass.

**It is highly recommended** that entrance and recessional processions enter from and return to the sacristy directly. This avoids the occasion of gathering at the church entrance.

Entrance and recessional processions from the Church entrance to the Sanctuary shall be planned so that servers, ministers and presider maintain 6' distancing. Processions shall be single file respecting the 6'distance. No gathering of ministers or of parishioners is permitted at the Church entrance at any time.

For the presidential prayers, place the Roman Missal on the altar or on a stand at the chair.

Servers shall NOT hold the book for the Presiders. Servers shall NOT present the wine and water or perform the Lavabo. The cruets are to be placed in proximity to the altar for access by the Presider. Lavabo is done by the priest alone.

There shall be no water in the holy water font.

Children's liturgy of the word shall be cancelled.

Crying rooms shall be closed or locked.

The Offertory Procession shall be omitted.

One or two secured containers shall be placed in the vestibule of the Church. These secured containers shall be clearly signed inviting parishioners to deposit their Sunday offering (donation), There shall be NO COLLECTION taken during the offertory.

After extending the Sign of Peace the Presider may invite parishioners to exchange a simple nod of the head, a head bow.

A second corporal shall be placed on the far right corner of the altar. On it shall be placed a ciborium (and if necessary a second for celiacs) filled with the bread for communicants. The bread in the ciborium shall be covered with a lid or a pall. Before the words of Consecration the lids or palls shall be removed and then returned after the words of consecration. This exercise avoids having the Presider breathing or possibly coughing over the bread for communicants. . The Priest's corporal and paten with host are as usual.

Distribution of Holy Communion:

- i) A single file of communicants to the sanctuary shall respect the 6' distance requirement and where possible their return to their pew should proceed by a different aisle. **It is highly recommended** to mark the floor with tape at 6' intervals facilitating social distance for the file of communicants to and from the sanctuary. **It is highly recommended**, where possible, to have communicants return by a separate aisle. **It is highly recommended** to invite the faithful to proceed for communion by sections if this allows the file of communicants to return by a separate aisle.
- ii) The priest shall wash/ disinfect his hands before and after distribution of communion. This can be done at the credence table or other suitable space visible to the congregation. This is in addition to washing his hands thoroughly before the Mass.
- iii) Due to the higher risk of transmission there shall be no distribution on the tongue. This is a temporary measure to reduce the risk of transmission.
- iv) Before distribution, communicants shall be asked to remove their gloves and mask.
- v) Before distribution communicants shall be asked to stop six feet in front of the priest so that he may say "Body of Christ". The communicant responds "Amen" and bows, then steps forward to receive communion on the hand. **It is highly recommended** that some demarcation be used to mark the floor indicating where to stop before receiving communion.
- vi) Holy Communion shall be placed at arm's length (X2) onto the hand of the communicant.

vii) Those who present themselves or their child for a blessing may be blessed by the priest when they stop to bow at a distance of 6'.

**It is highly recommended** to remind the congregation to maintain 6' spacing as they leave the Church and to avoid gathering at the back of the Church

**It is highly recommended** to avoid greeting parishioners before or after Sunday Mass as this tends to gather people which would compromise physical distancing.

The Presider and other ministers shall NOT wear masks or gloves during the celebration of Mass and must remain at least six feet distant from one another and the members of the congregation.