

Guidelines for Optional Phase One Opening. Celebration of Mass Outdoors

As the first phase of the resumption of public worship with the faithful, it is permissible for every parish to offer the celebration of Mass in an outdoor venue in two possible configurations. **This first phase is optional** and will remain in effect until church buildings and other indoor venues can be safely reopened for worship.

More specifically, in an appropriate outdoor venue to be designated by the pastor, including the church parking lot, an outdoor celebration of the Eucharist will be permitted as the first step in the resumption of public worship.

Only one of the following two configurations are allowed at any one time.

1. Two configurations are possible for the outdoor celebration of Mass:

a. First Configuration: Attending Mass outdoors in designated seats

- i. The faithful can be seated on individual chairs, provided by the parish or supplied by individual congregants, with social distancing requirements strictly observed, to the maximum number of 50 congregants.
- ii. If the seats are provided by the parish, they must be appropriately sanitized after each Mass.

b. Second Configuration: Attending Mass outdoors remaining seated in one's car

- i. The faithful can remain in their cars, parked in designated spaces, in a church's parking lot where Mass will be celebrated in a designated area.
 - ii. The maximum number of cars admitted to each celebration of Mass will depend upon three factors:
 1. The size of the parish parking lot;
 2. The need to maintain six feet between parked cars;
 3. Maintaining the ability for any car to exit freely from the lot in case of emergency.
 - iii. In addition to the requirements listed above, provision must be made for an orderly entrance that allows pre-registration to be checked, an orderly exit and a centralized offertory process.
 - iv. Provided that six feet of distance is maintained between parked cars, the windows of any car may remain open during the celebration of Mass.
- c. If the creation of an outdoor sanctuary raises serious logistical problems and in light of the technological capability of a parish, it may be possible for Mass to be celebrated inside the church proper without the presence of the faithful and at the same time live streamed for those who attend Mass in an outdoor venue.

2. Distribution of Holy Communion

It is permitted for a parish to delay the start of the distribution of Holy Communion at the celebration of any outdoor Mass while it continues its preparations to offer Communion safely. This delay must be temporary in nature and cannot extend to the distribution of Communion when worship resumes in the Church building.

- a. In order to ensure that Holy Communion is distributed in a safe and reverent manner, a separate set of protocols will be established governing both the distribution of Communion either in the hand or on the tongue.
- b. In order to respect social distancing and depending upon the size of the area, no more than 49 persons can be on line for Holy Communion in any outdoor venue.
- c. Further, there is to be no distribution of Holy Communion for anyone who remains seated in a car, with the exception of those who may be disabled.

3. Requirements for the Outdoor Celebration of Mass:

- a. Proper Provision must be made for the **audio transmission of the Mass**:
 - i. For Configuration #1, an appropriate sound system must be provided for the full participation of the faithful.
 - ii. For Configuration #2, some provision must be made for amplification or the rental/purchase of a low-band FM transmitter system that allows the audio from Mass to be broadcast on a car radio.
- b. The **use of a face mask that covers both the nose and mouth** by the faithful will be required for:
 - i. All who are seated in an outdoor venue for the celebration of Mass;
 - ii. All those who attend Mass seated in their cars and:
 1. Choose to open their windows during the celebration of Mass
 2. Present themselves to receive Holy Communion.
 - iii. This requirement does not apply for those who are seated in the cars and **do not exit** their vehicles for Holy Communion.
- c. During the celebration of outdoor Mass:
 - i. The Church building must remain closed;
 - ii. Eucharistic adoration cannot be offered within the Church while any Mass is celebrated outdoors
 - iii. The bathrooms of the Church must remain closed.

4. Liturgical Considerations for the outdoor celebration of Mass:

- a. An appropriate **altar** must be setup in a suitable place
 - i. All **vessels** to be used at Mass must be sanitized before and after Mass
- b. During the optional outdoor start to the celebration of public Mass, the **only persons to be present in the sanctuary** are the celebrant, concelebrating priest(s), deacon(s), the cantor.

- i. All lay readers, EMEs, choir members and altar servers should not exercise their liturgical service during the first phase of the reintroduction of public worship.
- c. The **celebrant will not be required to wear a face mask** during the celebration of Mass, provided he maintains proper social distancing with anyone else present in the sanctuary.
 - i. Before the distribution of Holy Communion, the celebrant and assisting clergy are required to put on a face mask.
 - ii. In addition, all clergy and ministers are required to sanitizing their hands before and after the distribution of Holy Communion.
 - iii. Please refer to the guidelines for the distribution of Holy Communion for more detailed information.
- d. All restrictions that were imposed in the weeks prior to the cessation of public worship remain in effect indefinitely. This includes:
 - i. The suspension of the distribution of the **cup**;
 - ii. No physical contact during the exchange of the **sign of peace**;
 - iii. All **worship aids** must be disposable and discarded after each Mass;
 - iv. **Hymnals** are not permitted to be distributed or used.
- e. A centralized process for taking up the **collection** must be created that avoids any passing of a basket or interchange between ushers and congregants. A central depository can be established that will require each member attending to place their donation directly within it.
- f. Since each parish is strongly encouraged to create a reservation system for those who wish to attend the celebration of Mass, each pastor must consider:
 - i. A proper method by which the names of those who registered may be checked in advance of admittance into the venue
 - ii. A procedure by which anyone who comes and is not registered is dealt with in a proper manner

5. Funeral Masses and Nuptial Masses:

- a. Once outdoor public worship is introduced, it is permissible to celebrate in an outdoor venue both a Funeral Mass without the presence of the body and a Nuptial Mass.
 - i. The same norms that govern the celebration of Sunday Mass also apply to these Masses.
 - ii. Current existing norms remain in effect that allow the Funeral Service without Mass and the Wedding ceremony to be celebrated in the church, provided that all existing norms are followed.

6. Review of a Parish Plan:

Please refer to the *General Guidelines for Resumption of Public Worship*

with a Congregation for more details regarding the process by which a parish plan will be reviewed before implementation.

7. Optional start of outdoor public worship: **Solemnity of the Ascension (May 21, 2020)**