



# DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

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

## OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

### MEMORANDUM

Memo to: All Parishes  
From: Monsignor Murray J. Kroetsch, Chancellor  
Date: 18 March 2022  
Re: Liturgical Clarifications Effective March 21, 2022

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As announced by the Premier of Ontario, effective March 21, 2022, masks are no longer required in most public settings. Hospitals, healthcare facilities and nursing homes will continue to require masking for staff and visitors alike.

In response to several questions which we have received at the Chancery Office, I wish to clarify the following points.

#### Mass

- Masks are no longer required in any churches, parish offices, meeting spaces and parish halls in the Diocese of Hamilton. While they are no longer required, we must respect those who chose to continue wearing masks because of personal choice.
- Our churches are now open for full capacity; physical distancing is no longer required. Once again, we must be sensitive to those who wish to be seated apart because of personal choice.
- Ropes and other barriers to seating are to be removed.
- Hand sanitizers are to remain available at the entrances of the church; those distributing Holy Communion are to continue using hand sanitizer before and after distributing the Eucharist.
- All liturgical ministries can now be restored as they were exercised prior to the beginning of the pandemic.
- The altar is to remain bare (except for the altar cloth) until the Offertory. The use of the credence table is restored.
- Celebrations of the Children's Liturgy of the Word (and other youth ministry) are permitted.
- The collection may be taken up by ushers using baskets with handles. The passing of a basket among parishioners is not permitted at this time.
- Gifts of Bread and Wine may be presented as was the custom prior to the beginning of the pandemic.
- The Sign of Peace may be given, preferably a bow instead of a handshake.

- For the time being, masks or shields are to be worn by Priests and others when distributing Communion. This will ensure both safety and comfort for all who come forward for Communion.
- For the time being, those who wish to receive Communion on the tongue are asked to come forward after the rest of the assembly has received Communion on the hand.
- Communion from the Chalice is not permitted at this time.

### **Holy Week and Easter**

- The Liturgy for Palm Sunday is to be celebrated in the usual manner according to the Roman Missal. Palms may be blessed and distributed as was customary prior to the beginning of the pandemic.
- On Holy Thursday, the oils may be presented at the beginning of Mass, prior to the Gloria.
- The Mandatum ritual (washing of feet) may be celebrated as was customary prior to the beginning of the pandemic.
- Communion is to be distributed only under the form of bread.
- Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament at the conclusion of the liturgy may take place in another room or chapel, provided there is an adequate and well-ventilated space to accommodate those who wish to remain for prayer.
- The Celebration of the Lord's Passion on Good Friday is to be celebrated in the usual manner according to the Roman Missal.
- Individual veneration of the Cross is permitted as was the custom prior to the beginning of the pandemic. However, the kissing of the Cross is not permitted. Other signs of adoration of the Cross are recommended: simple touching, bowing, genuflecting.
- For the Easter Vigil, the celebration of Light (blessing of fire, the lighting of the Paschal candle and individual candles, and the singing of the *Exsultet* take place as outlined in the Roman Missal.
- The Liturgy of the Word takes place as usual at the Vigil.
- For the Baptismal Rites, all of the elements found in the Roman Missal are permitted. The assembly may be sprinkled with Holy Water as usual. The Priest and those being initiated may wear masks as they wish, according to their comfort level. The use of cotton swabs is no longer required for the anointings.
- On Easter Sunday, as at the Easter Vigil, the assembly can be sprinkled with Holy Water following the renewal of their Baptismal Promises.

### **Other Rites**

#### *Confirmation*

- Confirmations are to be celebrated outside Mass. A mask or shield is to be worn by the minister of the sacrament.
- The current practice of each child being seated with their sponsor and family in one pew is to continue at this time, to avoid unnecessary movement.
- It is recommended that the candidates for Confirmation wear name tags and that the usual dialogue between the minister and candidate be omitted for the time being.
- The use of cotton swabs is no longer required for the anointing.

### *First Communion*

- The current practice of each child being seated with their family in one pew is to continue at this time, to avoid unnecessary movement.
- A mask or shield is to be worn by the minister of the sacrament.

### *Reconciliation*

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is to be celebrated in a well-ventilated room which provides a good distance between the confessor and penitent.
- It is recommended that the Priest wear a mask or shield during the celebration.

### *Anointing of the Sick*

- The Priest is to wear a mask or shield for the celebration and observe any requirements of the hospital or other institution. When celebrating in a home, care should be taken to ensure the safety and comfort of the sick person. The use of a cotton swab is no longer required for the anointings.

### **School Ministry**

In person visits and the celebration of Mass in schools and school Masses celebrated in the church are permitted, provided that the local School Board permits them and the Principal and Pastor feel that it is safe to hold such in-person visits and celebrations.

### **Home Visits**

Home visits by volunteer ministers are permitted provided both the visitor and parishioner are comfortable with such an in-person meeting.