



PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

Reopening our Churches

(to be adapted to each parish setting)

We are still in the midst of a pandemic, and our primary concern must be for the life and health of the whole community. We must continue to pray for the people in our community and our world, as we begin to move forward and heal from the devastation of this pandemic.

I. Janitorial Crew

A special janitorial crew is necessary to ensure the church is thoroughly cleaned before each opening of the Church. The COVID-19 virus can live on surfaces for 7 hours; if church opening are scheduled more than 2 hours apart, regular cleaning is required; thorough disinfecting is recommended, but not required.

II. Coordinators and Ushers

1. Coordinator(s) – working from the only entrance - weather permitting the doors are to remain open. His/her role, as directed by the Pastor, is to monitor capacity, oversee all ushers, welcome parishioners and direct them to the hand sanitizer table or credence.

2. One or two outside, on a nice day, otherwise near the entrance:

- to pre-screen (see assessment questionnaire on page 5);
- to direct people to proper entrance door or sanitizer table.

3. One or more ushers – keeping in mind distancing:

- to escort the faithful to their pews (every second pew) keeping in mind social distancing and the total number of persons allowed in the Church (30%);
- to ensure safe traffic flow;
- to ensure social distancing before and during Mass Communion time. Those who attend with a personal mobility device should be placed in a designated area to allow a two-meter (six foot) pace between each person;
- to ensure social distancing when exiting.

Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie
GUIDELINES – REOPENING OUR CHURCHES

4. One or two to oversee the church facility (pews clean/disinfected, washrooms cleaned, holy water fonts emptied or covered, sanitizer available, nothing left in pews, security of collection basket/box).

III. Post Information/Guidelines

It is very important to keep the member of our parishes informed - website, Facebook page, church doors, outgoing phone message – of the following information.

- Parish schedule for Sunday and weekday Masses and Reconciliation.
- Notice regarding 30% capacity on a first come first served.
- Screening and public health protocols are in place - check your temperature at home and wash hand before coming to the church for mass.
- All parishioners are expected to wear non-medical masks and should bring their own masks – we suggest that parishioners over the age of five wear masks during Mass.

It is imperative to remind our parishioners that:

- Catholics are still dispensed from their obligation of Sunday Mass attendance at this time;
- COVID-19 is still in a threat to public health and our churches are open to 30% capacity;
- some may not be allowed entry for a specific mass if capacity is reached before their arrival;
- those who are considered vulnerable and those who care for them should not attend;
- there will be no children's liturgy at this time;
- crying rooms will be closed;
- parish ministries, meetings and social gatherings are on hold - a memo regarding the resumption of parish activities will be sent out at the appropriate time; and
- lay pastoral care ministers are not permitted at this time to bring communion to shut-ins and health care facilities - all requests must be forwarded to the parish priests.

If you have any symptoms that might be COVID-19 related, or if you have been in contact with someone suffering from possible or confirmed COVID-19 symptoms, please remain at home and contact Public Health authorities.

Social visits outside the church may take place, if proper physical distancing is observed and that these take place away from high-traffic areas such as the designated entrances and exits and driveways.

IV. PROPOSED ANNOUNCEMENT TO BE MADE BEFORE MASS

Pastor/reader should make announcements before Mass:

Welcome back! There are a number of temporary changes including:

- No procession into the church, rather from the sacristy.
- No congregational singing at this time.
- No sign of peace.
- Remain in our pews until ushered out for communion.
- No presentation of gifts. Collection baskets provided at the exit door.
- Reception of Communion will be accepted by hand only, for the time being.
- After Mass, remain in pews until ushered to the exit. Ushers will direct traffic flow. Please exit quietly maintaining physical distancing. Do not congregate at the doors of the church.
- We are taking precautions to protect the health and safety of everyone who comes into our churches. However, there can be no guarantees of complete protection from infection; there will always be risks of contracting viral infection in large gatherings of people.
- If you develop COVID-19 symptoms in the days following your attendance at mass, please phone or email the parish office, in addition to contacting your doctor and public health.

V. SIGNAGE

ATTENTION PARISHIONERS

Welcome back! We are happy to have you with us.

Please note that every reasonable precaution has been and will continue to be taken by the Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie to protect your health and safety. However, there can be no guarantees of complete protection as there will always be risks of contracting viral infection through large gatherings.

Please do not enter the church if you have a fever, feel ill or have been in contact with a COVID-19 positive person over the past two weeks.



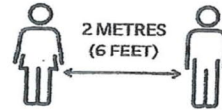
Diocese of
Sault Ste. Marie



Please wear a mask or face covering (mandatory).



Sanitize your hands upon entry.



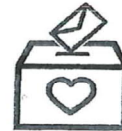
Maintain physical distancing at all times.



Please follow the directions of clergy, ushers and volunteers.



The holy water fonts will be empty.



There will be no collection during Mass. Please leave your offering in baskets at the entrance / exit.

Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie

VI. QUESTION TO BE ASKED FOR ASSESSMENT?

1. Are you or any member of your household experiencing any of the following?

- severe difficulty breathing (e.g., struggling for each breath, speaking in single words)
- severe chest pain
- feeling confused
- shortness of breath at rest
- inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing
- chronic health conditions

2. Do you have any of the following?

- chills
- painful swallowing
- stuffy nose
- headache
- muscle or joint ache
- feeling unwell, fatigue or severe exhaustion
- nausea, vomiting, diarrhea or unexplained loss of appetite
- loss of sense of smell or taste
- conjunctivitis (pink eye)

3. Have you travelled outside of Canada in the last fourteen days?

VII. PARISH PRIESTS AND TEAM CHECKLIST

- The schedule of Mass times provides sufficient times for all volunteer positions to be filled including shift change and information-sharing and the required cleaning protocols to be implemented.
- The Coordinators have been recruited and trained.
- All the other volunteer positions (Ushers and Janitorial Crew) have received the proper training or orientation before their first Mass.
- Protocols for the "wipe twice" method of cleaning and disinfecting have been identified.
- Pastor and Coordinators have an agreed process for the departure of the congregants.
- Pastor and the Coordinators have done a walkabout to check the key areas.
- Entrances and exits have been properly designated.
- Holy Water fonts are empty and covered
- Proper signage has been posted where necessary
- Confessional space identified and properly set up
- Pews have been marked or roped off to assure proper physical distancing
- Markings on floors have been placed to guide proper physical distancing on the main aisle and, *if necessary*, on side aisles.
- Areas with hand sanitizers
- Secure and highly visible area for the collection baskets
- Make sure doors can be propped open and will stay open
- Have a plan for managing the use of washrooms with proper distancing- how many people can it accommodate at one time with proper physical distancing or should it be considered as a single-occupancy use only?
- Area with supplies is well identified for ushers and volunteers (gloves, disposable masks)

Diocese of Sault Ste. Marie
GUIDELINES – REOPENING OUR CHURCHES

- Area with cleaning and disinfecting supplies - have a plan for disposal or washing of cleaning supplies.
- Sanctuary has been set up for proper physical distancing
- Credence table has been placed beside the altar
- The disposable non-medical mask of the priest should be placed on the credence table during Mass. It should be replaced by a new one before the beginning of every Mass.
- Removal of loose items that are difficult to disinfect, such as hymnbooks, missalettes, brochures, donation envelopes, rosary and rosary dispensers, lending library, all unnecessary posters on bulletin boards
- The table beside where the priest stands to distribute Holy Communion has a hand sanitizer pump and will have a corporal during the distribution of Holy Communion
- If your church has devotion candle areas, are they marked for proper physical distancing? If impossible, they need to be roped off and restrict access
- Unused areas in the church facility are locked (parish hall, cry rooms, meeting rooms, storage areas, choir loft etc...)

OTHER:

VIII. COORDINATORS CHECKLIST

- You have met with the Pastor and have performed an overall assessment of the church facility, reviewing the implementation of the guidelines and identifying potential issues and the necessary preventative measures that will need to be adapted for the parish.
- Ensure that all volunteers are up to date with the covid-19 guidelines.
- Volunteer team positions have been filled for the Masses.
- Welcoming Volunteers have been identified for the Mass and have been formed
- Have the required amount of gloves and non-medical masks.
- Have met with the team of ushers to discuss assigned areas and duties
- Have all you need at your assigned areas and duties
- Access to the necessary cleaning products
- Monitor collection baskets before, during, and after Mass
- Monitor washroom usage
- High-touch areas have been cleaned and sanitized - doorknobs, light switches, toilet handles, faucets and taps, elevator buttons, railings, public phones, computers (if used for tracking attendance), surface counters, equipment handles
