



**LITURGICAL GUIDELINES FOR THE YEAR 2020  
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC  
(Updated: March 24, 2020)**

The current public health pandemic continues to bring about fears and anxiety in the hearts and minds of many people. However, it has also unified us as a people seeking the good for the other. Now more than ever, we must continue to anchor our hearts and minds in the abiding truth of God's love for us, His sons and daughters. We remain strong in faith knowing that God will be with us always.

As we are all aware, we have adapted the way we live our daily lives, as well as in the way we worship. The decisions made regarding the liturgical life of our parishes continue to be made with prayer, faith, and in observance of policies established by our civil authorities ensuring the good of all people.

**Therefore, in order to help priests perform their ministry with faith, prudence, and wise judgment, the Archbishop in consultation with the Auxiliary Bishops and the Council of Priests, has established the following revised liturgical guidelines. These guidelines are to be followed until further notice.**

### **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- Parish churches, chapels, centers, and missions are to be closed to the public effective March 24, 2020 until April 19, 2020 (inclusive), or until further notice.
- Church offices are to be closed to the public. Pastors may allow a minimal number of parish staff members (less than 10) to continue working in the office provided that social distancing is observed. For example, while the office is closed to the public, staff members can still answer telephones, answer emails, process payroll. If these functions can be performed remotely from home, this would obviously be ideal and diminish the risk of contagion.
- Social distancing requires separation of individuals at least six feet apart. Also, practice good hygiene by washing hands with soap and water frequently or using hand sanitizing products with at least 60% alcohol. Pastors should be vigilant in reminding parishioners and staff members to stay home if they are sick, especially having symptoms of fever or cough. Lastly, encourage frequent cleaning and sanitizing of premises.
- If your parish is equipped with a bell system, you are invited to ring your bells at 12:00 PM and 6:00 PM as a sign of solidarity and hope, and to ensure the people of God that we, as a Church, still are very much present, even if we have adapted the way our parishes operate in these times. Please be mindful of observing City noise ordinances.

## MASS

- The public celebration of Mass has been suspended in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles until April 19, 2020 (inclusive), or until further notice. Priests are encouraged to continue celebrating Mass for their faithful but should take the form of a “Private Mass” (i.e. without a congregation) in their church or chapel and be livestreamed. One or two ministers may assist the priest.
- Priests are to encourage the faithful to keep the Lord’s Day holy. Some ways to do this include: reading the Gospels, praying with their families, and to join to the sacrifice of the Mass by making an act of spiritual communion.
- If a priest wishes to expose the Blessed Sacrament for Adoration he should do so via livestream without the presence of any adorer. Please ensure that the Blessed Sacrament is secured in the place of Exposition.
- Parishes are invited to inform their parishioners of opportunities to view Mass or other services via livestream. The weekday and Sunday Masses will be livestreamed from the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels via the LA Catholics Facebook page, [facebook.com/lacatholics](https://www.facebook.com/lacatholics). For more information on additional Mass broadcasts on TV and radio visit, [lacatholics.org/mass-for-the-homebound](https://lacatholics.org/mass-for-the-homebound). If your parish is livestreaming its Masses or other services, please email [DigitalTeam@la-archdiocese.org](mailto:DigitalTeam@la-archdiocese.org) to be added to the list on the Archdiocese’s website.

## RECONCILIATION/CONFESSION

- Parishes are to cancel all Lenten penance services and suspend all regularly scheduled confession times.
- As Pope Francis reminded us in his homily on March 20, 2020, priests are encouraged to remind the faithful who are physically unable to attend individual Reconciliation of the Church’s teaching on Perfect Contrition. Such contrition arises when the penitent expresses a love of God above all else, the sincere desire for forgiveness, and firm resolution to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation as soon as possible when available. Perfect contrition obtains the forgiveness of sins, both venial and mortal. (cf. *Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)* 1452)
- Priests may offer the Sacrament of Reconciliation only in danger of death or extremely extraordinary situations. Please observe social distancing, while at the same time ensuring privacy for the penitent. There are no confessions by telephone, electronic means, or by “drive-up.”
- Priests are encouraged to remind the faithful of their duty to confess serious sins once a year. Please keep in mind that the *Code of Canon Law (CIC)* does not specify a season to do so (cf. 989). Furthermore, the traditional “Easter duty” refers to the reception of Communion during the Easter season (cf. *CIC* 920, §2).

## ANOINTING OF THE SICK

- Priests are to attend to the needs of those who ask for the Anointing of the Sick. If a priest is sick or considered to be a high-risk individual (e.g. above 65 years of age, suffers from respiratory conditions, immunocompromised, etc.), he should request assistance from another priest.
- Priests attending to the needs of the sick are to observe all proper sanitary protocols. If in a hospital setting, check-in with proper medical personnel and follow their directions before entering and upon leaving the room of the patient. For home visits, this includes but may not be limited to handwashing before and after the visit, wearing gloves, a facemask, and a gown to cover clothes.

- If you find out that you have been exposed to COVID-19, immediately contact your health care provider. As a result, you may be required to quarantine yourself.
- Priests must clean and refresh their oil stocks before visiting each sick person.
- Instead of using his hand, the priest may use an instrument, such as cotton-tipped swab or cotton ball, to anoint the sick person (cf. *CIC* 1000, §2). The priest dips the cotton-tipped swab or cotton ball in the oil to administer the Sacrament. Please take care of using only one swab per person and dispose of the instrument appropriately (e.g. by burning or burying in the ground).
- If desired by the person requesting the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, priests may hear the confession of the sick person and grant individual absolution.
- For the time being, sick calls and distribution of Holy Communion for the homebound are reserved to priests only.

## **BAPTISM**

- Unless an emergency, the celebration of the Sacrament of Baptism is to be postponed until further notice. This includes those baptisms which customarily take place at the Easter Vigil.

## **WEDDINGS**

- The celebration of the Sacrament of Matrimony from now until April 19, 2020 (inclusive), or until further notice, are to be postponed.
- A priest may not assist at a wedding if the couple does not have a valid civil marriage license.
- It is recommended that Pastors notify couples who have already scheduled weddings.

## **FUNERALS**

- Funerals may take place only in the form of “The Rite of Committal with Final Commendation” (also known as the “graveside service”) at the Cemetery. If desired by the family, a memorial Mass can be scheduled appropriately at a later date.
- It is recommended that Pastors notify family members who have already scheduled funeral Masses.

## **CONFIRMATIONS**

- The celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation from now until April 19, 2020 (inclusive), or until further notice, are postponed. The Office of the Confirming Prelate will contact parishes with Confirmations scheduled during the affected dates. Rescheduling will be handled at a later time.

## **HOLY WEEK**

- The Archbishop will celebrate the Chrism Mass in the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels on April 6, 2020. Instead of attending, priests and the faithful are encouraged to view the Cathedral’s livestream of the Mass. Additionally, the Archbishop will celebrate the liturgies of the Sacred Paschal Triduum at the Cathedral, which will also be livestreamed.
- Details for the distribution of Holy Oils will be given at a later date.
- Should a priest wish to celebrate the Triduum liturgies in his local parish, he is reminded to observe social distancing. One or two ministers may assist the priest.

- In parish churches, the priest(s) of the parish may celebrate the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper. The faculty to celebrate Mass on this day in a suitable place, without the people, has been granted in an exceptional manner to all priests. The washing of the feet is to be omitted. At the end of the Mass, the procession with the Blessed Sacrament to the place of repose is to be omitted and the Blessed Sacrament is to be kept in the Tabernacle. Priests who are unable to celebrate Mass should instead pray Vespers of the day. (cf. Decree, *In time of Covid-19*, Prot. N. 153/20)
- On Good Friday, for the Adoration of the Holy Cross, if more than one person is assisting, to express reverence to the Cross without kissing or touching it, a genuflection or profound bow would be appropriate (cf. Memorandum, *Observance of Holy Week 2020*, USCCB).
- Furthermore, in the Solemn Intercessions, please note the special intention to be added (cf. Decree, *In time of Covid-19*, Prot. N. 153/20; Memorandum, *Observance of Holy Week 2020*, USCCB).

#### XI. For an end to the pandemic

**Let us pray, dearly beloved, for a swift end to the coronavirus pandemic that afflicts our world, that our God and Father will heal the sick, strengthen those who care for them, and help us all to persevere in faith.**

Prayer in silence. Then the priest says:

**Almighty and merciful God,  
source of all life, health and healing,  
look with compassion on our world, brought low by disease; protect us in the midst of the grave challenges that assail us and in your fatherly providence  
grant recovery to the stricken,  
strength to those who care for them,  
and success to those working to eradicate this scourge.  
Through Christ our Lord.**

**R. Amen.**

- For the Easter Vigil, “The Solemn Beginning of the Vigil or Lucernarium” the preparation and lighting of the fire is omitted, the Paschal candle is lit, the procession is omitted and the Easter Proclamation (Exsultet) follows. The “Liturgy of the Word” then takes place. For the “Baptismal Liturgy,” the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises” alone is necessary (cf. *Missale Romanum* pag. 371, n. 55). The baptisms which customarily take place at the Easter Vigil are to be postponed in accordance with the *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults* (n. 26). The Elect should participate in at least one Scrutiny, which can take place at Mass or in a Liturgy of the Word, before being baptized. The “Liturgy of the Eucharist” follows the “Renewal of Baptismal Promises.” (cf. Decree, *In time of Covid-19*, Prot. N. 153/20)