



Worship Office

Archdiocese of Newark

POST-PANDEMIC LITURGY DIRECTIVE

RECOVERING THE FULL CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY

*The Liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed;
at the same time it is the fount from which all her power flows.*

The Church earnestly desires that all the faithful be led to that full, conscious, and active participation in liturgical celebrations called for by the very nature of the liturgy...

Yet it would be futile to entertain any hopes of realizing this unless, in the first place, the pastors themselves become thoroughly imbued with the spirit and power of the liturgy.

–Sacrosanctum Concilium (SC), 10, 14

The outbreak of the Covid-19 Pandemic in 2020 required a temporary reduction of liturgical practices in the celebration of the Eucharist and administration of the sacraments. With almost all aspects of life returning to normalcy, it seems opportune for the Archdiocese of Newark to foster a renewed fullness in liturgical celebrations.

Until now, the only liturgical restriction remaining within the archdiocese is the prohibition regarding the reception of Holy Communion from the chalice. Nevertheless, many pandemic restrictions and accommodations have been retained either in an abundance of caution or out of convenience.

Beginning as early as the Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper on Holy Thursday, April 6, 2023, but no later than Pentecost Sunday, May 28, 2023, all pandemic reductions and accommodations are abrogated and minimalistic tendencies in the celebration of liturgical rites are to be eliminated. The liturgy thenceforth is to be celebrated in the fullness demanded by its very nature, fostering the full participation of the faithful.

Live streaming and broadcasting liturgies as they are occurring, even if recorded and viewed later, is permitted. The pre-recording of "staged liturgies" (liturgies not occurring live at the proper time) is prohibited. Streaming and broadcasting Mass is a valuable resource for those who are unable to attend because of sickness or major health concerns. However, for those without health concerns, this does not fulfill the obligation to participate in Mass.

THE FUNCTIONING OF MINISTRIES

“To fulfill the requirements of the liturgy, every Sunday Eucharist, the fullest expression of parish worship, should include liturgical ministries (i.e. acolytes, lectors, musicians, etc.), as well as an environment that supports an experience of hospitality and mystery” (Archdiocesan Policy on Sunday Mass Scheduling).

“Every care should be taken that singing by the ministers and the people not be absent in celebrations that occur on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation” (*General Instruction of the Roman Missal* (GIRM), 40).

This means that the sacred ministers and the faithful take part in Mass according to the state proper to each:

- Deacons who may have been fulfilling various roles in the absence of sufficient ministers should note that “[i]n liturgical celebrations each person, minister or layman, who has an office to perform, should do all of, but only, those parts which pertain to his office by the nature of the rite and the principles of liturgy” (SC 28).
- Acolytes (servers) are to function in their proper role. They carry the cross and candles in the processions, hold the book for the clergy, set the altar, etc.
- Lectors are to function in their proper role. They read the First and Second Readings and, in the absence of a Deacon, they carry the *Book of the Gospels* in the procession to the altar and read the intercessions of the Universal Prayer.
- Musicians are to function in their proper roles. Cantors and psalmists lead the assembly's singing in the parts proper to them. Organists and other musicians accompany the singing of the assembly. Whatever is necessary for the assembly's participation (hymnals, worship aids, projections) is to be restored.
- The offerings of the faithful, that is, the collection along with the bread and wine, are to be presented by the faithful. The time taken to collect the offerings is not an intrusion but rather a constitutive part of worship.

THE LITURGICAL ENVIRONMENT

The liturgical environment or worship space and its furnishings is to be arranged appropriately to accommodate the rites. The celebrant should lead the prayers from the proper place (chair, altar, ambo) as indicated in the Roman Missal. The use of a lectern for the Roman Missal at the chair, or a credence table placed immediately adjacent to the altar, are unnecessary when the ministries (acolytes/servers) function properly. Prayerful movement from place to place is part of the rite and provides the time and space required to separate the various parts of the liturgy. **Credence tables should be distanced from altars, such that “it is possible to walk around [the altar] easily” (GIRM, 299). Beginning at the Easter Vigil, holy water must be returned to all baptismal fonts and holy water receptacles.**

HOLY COMMUNION

Every effort is to be made to ensure that, “the faithful, just as the Priest himself is bound to do, should receive the Body of Christ from hosts consecrated at the same Mass and...partake of the chalice, so that even by means of the signs, Communion may stand out more clearly as a participation in the sacrifice actually being celebrated” (SC, 55; GIRM, 85).

“The consecrated host may be received either on the tongue or in the hand, at the discretion of each communicant” (GIRM, 160).

Communion is to be offered under both kinds. In the past, it was recommended that there be two (2) ministers distributing the Blood of Christ for each minister distributing the Body of Christ. This may not be necessary at the reintroduction of the distribution of the Blood of Christ. Perhaps even a single minister distributing the Blood of Christ, strategically positioned, may initially accommodate all those desiring to receive. The sign value of Communion under both kinds should not be minimalized and the number of communicants allowed to increase with time.

“Because it is the memorial of Christ’s Passover, the Eucharist is also a sacrifice. The sacrificial character of the Eucharist is manifested in the very words of institution: ‘This is my body which is given for you’ and ‘This cup which is poured out for you is the new Covenant in my blood’ (Luke 22:19-20). In the Eucharist Christ gives us the very body which he gave up for us on the cross, the very blood which he ‘poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins’ (Mt 26:28)” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1365). It is also noteworthy that even if only a few receive Communion under both kinds that it is necessary for the faithful to have the option of receiving both.

The following points should be stressed when offering Communion under both kinds:

- The chalice is to be wiped and rotated following each communicant. This should be done in more than a hurried, perfunctory manner so that visible attention to hygienic concerns might increase comfort and invite participation.
- Intinction is not permitted for the assembly.
- The chalice is handed to the communicant, it is not poured into the communicant's mouth by the minister.
- The Priest, Deacon, or extraordinary minister of Holy Communion consumes what remains in the chalice(s) immediately following the distribution of Communion. It is not to be poured into the *sacrarium*. (See *Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 107).
- Concelebrants must always receive Communion under both kinds (*Redemptionis Sacramentum*, 98). This is to be understood in the strictest sense to assure validity.
- Masks and hand sanitizer may be used at the discretion of the individual or as determined by parish policy.

CONCLUSION

The faithful should be prepared for the abrogation of the remaining pandemic reductions in advance with homilies, bulletin articles and announcements during the weeks of Lent/Easter. A series of bulletin articles is available from the Worship Office.

Emerging from a period of necessary adjustment during a unique moment in time, the Archdiocese of Newark earnestly desires to celebrate the liturgy with the full, conscious and active participate of all the faithful, for “in it is found the high point of both the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit” (GIRM, 16).

Mindful that most of the faithful’s experience of the Church occurs during liturgy, it is imperative that the liturgical norms be carefully observed. May we come to appreciate the value of good celebrations and the liabilities of those less than adequate. Fidelity to the Church and the vision of the imperatives of the Second Vatican Council demands this.

May the grace of God and the prayers of his Holy Mother support us!

RESOURCES AVAILABLE

- *General Instruction of the Roman Missal*, especially 39-41, 85, 95-107, 171-198, 278-287 (<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/general-instruction-of-the-roman-missal>)
- *Norms for the Distribution and Reception of Holy Communion under Both Kinds in the Dioceses of the United States* (<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/norms-for-holy-communion-under-both-kinds>)
- *Redemptionis Sacramentum* (https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccdds/documents/rc_con_ccdds_doc_20040423_redemptionis-sacramentum_en.html)
- The Reception of Holy Communion at Mass (<https://www.usccb.org/prayer-and-worship/the-mass/order-of-mass/liturgy-of-the-eucharist/the-reception-of-holy-communion-at-mass>)
- *Lectionary for Mass*, Introduction, especially 38-55