

Diocese of London
COVID-19 Protocol and Directives Summary for Churches
16 July 2021

SECTION 1: The Order of Mass

SECTION 2: Safety Protocols for Churches

- All Protocols subject to change by the province (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/reopening-ontario>) or episcopal directive
- If not specifically mentioned here, check the updated ACBO *WorshipSafe* document at this [link](#) or email communications@dol.ca.

Preamble:

“Charity means we must make these sacrifices to help ensure our neighbours are safe. We must care for others in our communities and our fellow parishioners, even if it means we cannot gather for a short time...These measures will further restrict participation in the sacraments and call forth sacrifices from the faithful across the Diocese who have been drawing spiritual nourishment from the sacraments. The severity of the pandemic, however, means we must do our part, out of love, to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus.” Bishop Fabbro, 21 December 2020 (Update #15)

SECTION 1 – The Order of Mass

The order of the Mass during the pandemic is to reflect simplicity and brevity, with the intention of allowing for a dignified celebration in as short a time as possible.
Entrance <ul style="list-style-type: none">• the Book of the Gospels placed on the altar in advance• only the priest (and deacon) process(es) directly from sacristy – may include a cross-bearer• a cantor may sing one or two verses of a hymn
Introductory Rites <ul style="list-style-type: none">• from the chair with use of a lectern for the Roman Missal (no server for book)
Liturgy of the Word <ul style="list-style-type: none">• one lector at ambo for first and second readings, and to lead Responsorial Psalm• after second reading, Lectionary is removed if Book of the Gospels is being used• Gospel acclamation is neither recited nor sung• a brief homily is given• Universal Prayers are announced by deacon at ambo or priest at chair• there is no Children’s Liturgy during the pandemic
Presentation and Preparation of Gifts <ul style="list-style-type: none">• monetary collection taken in baskets at entrance/exit of the church• no procession with gifts – all is prepared in advance on a credence table next to the altar• the priest prepares the altar even if a deacon is present – no server assists• hand sanitizer is available on the credence table for use by the priest (and deacon)• where possible ciboria with altar breads for the assembly are placed at a distance from the priest• the ciboria should remain covered during the Eucharistic Prayer

<p>Eucharistic Prayer</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all prayers, including the assembly’s responses, are recited • when the priest’s hands are joined, it is important that they not be near his face • for the doxology at the end of the Eucharistic Prayer, the priest alone raises the chalice and paten
<p>Communion Rite</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the Sign of Peace is maintained but without contact • concelebrants (and deacons) receive the Precious Blood from different chalices • all ministers of Communion sanitize hands after receiving Communion before distributing to others, and again after distribution • all ministers of Communion wear a mask for the distribution • Communion must be distributed only in the hand • Communion from the Cup is not given to the assembly • ushers direct communicants to the front of the church to ensure necessary physical distancing • communicants stop two metres from minister for the dialogue, then step forward to receive the Eucharist • they step to the side, remove their mask, consume the Host, replace mask and return to their pew • a cantor may sing during the Communion Procession • the priest purifies his chalice and the ciboria • concelebrants (and deacons) purify their own chalice • all vessels are washed with soap and hot water following the Mass
<p>Communion to the Homebound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only members of the same household or specified care-givers may take Communion to the homebound • pyxes are prepared in advance of the celebration of Mass and placed on the credence table, then moved to the altar at the appropriate time • following the Prayer after Communion, the Blessed Sacrament is presented simply to the ministers
<p>Concluding Rites</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • announcements are made following the Prayer after Communion (collection, directions) • a simple blessing is given, followed by the dismissal • priest (and deacon) process(es) back to the sacristy

SECTION 2 - Safety protocols for churches

Protocol (applies to all Masses, services and rites in churches).	This reflects the requirements based on the province’s “Roadmap to Reopening Step 3” https://www.ontario.ca/laws/regulation/200364
Church Capacity - indoor Mass/services	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
Masks	Mandatory except when reading, leading prayers or receiving Communion. People who refuse should not be admitted. Documentation and a specific seating area are required for those with a medical exemption (see Update #13). In some health unit areas, masks can be removed for processions and exchange of consent/vows at weddings.
Screening	All must state they have done the self-assessment and screening questions to be admitted (Updated Feb 2021 at this link).
Cleaning	It is no longer necessary to clean entire pews after each Mass or celebration. Clean only the frequently touched surfaces of pews (tops and sides where people

	normally rest their hands) if the pew is scheduled to be used within an hour of the last gathering/event/service. If a pew will not be used within an hour of the last occupancy, there should be no need to disinfect it. Weekly cleaning of all surfaces (seats, backs, tops, kneelers), however, must still be done. Washrooms need to be cleaned after each Mass. Other high-touch surfaces such as railings and door handles should also be cleaned after each Mass
Holy Water Fonts	Remain empty until further notice
Contact Information	Required - must be collected at every gathering/event/service.
Singing (from Update #12)	Singing during Mass is allowed by a single cantor accompanied by a single musician. These two people must maintain a three-metre (ten-foot) distance from each other and from any member of the congregation. Choir members do not assist the cantor. Members of the congregation must be instructed not to sing, but to participate by listening and praying quietly. Singing is limited to the times when the main hymns would be sung. The processional and recessional hymns should be brief since the processions are brief (sacristy to altar). Longer hymns may be sung at the time of the Preparation of the Gifts and the Communion Procession. All parts of the Mass must be recited so that the congregation is able to participate fully at these moments: the Glory to God, the Responsorial Psalm, the Gospel acclamation, the Eucharistic acclamations, and the Lamb of God. At funeral Masses, the Song of Farewell may be sung by a cantor.
Communion For the Homebound	Allowed: Only by those who live in the same household or are a close contact/caregiver. The pyxes are presented to these ministers following the Prayer after Communion.
Confession	Regular times for Confession may be reinstated with safety protocols
First Communion	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
Baptism	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
Confirmation	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
Anointing of the Sick	Hospital: Allowed – follow their safety protocols Palliative: Allowed – follow their safety protocols Home: Allowed See best practices at this link .
Weddings (excluding receptions)	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
Funerals	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
RCIA Rituals	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.
Catechetical Sessions in Churches with Prayer Services(s)	Capacity limited only by the requirement of physically-distanced seating.