

DIOCESE OF BROOKLYN

May 21, 2020

PLAN FOR THE REOPENING OF OUR CHURCHES

Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio is pleased to announce the Diocese of Brooklyn will slowly work towards going back to normal by opening the doors of the churches on **May 26, 2020 for private prayer** as well as for funerals and limited celebrations of baptisms and weddings. The following directives will apply in general and individual churches should prepare further directions which the faithful must adhere to when visiting a church.

Stage 1: Opening of Churches for private prayer, private Funerals, Baptisms and Weddings (without Mass)

Stage 2: Limited Celebrations of Daily Mass (No date has been set yet)

Stage 3: Limited Celebrations of Sunday Mass (No date has been set yet)

Stage 4: Celebration of First Holy Communion and Confirmation (No date has been set yet)

- ❖ One door should be opened for entrance into the church.
- ❖ The church should be marked off with painter's tape to show areas that adhere to social distancing guidelines.
- ❖ The elderly and all who are health-compromised **MUST** be advised to stay home.
- ❖ Communications to parishioners should tell them that anyone who feels sick in any way **must** stay home. Parishioners should be asked to take their temperatures before leaving their home and should stay home if the temperature is over 100 degrees.
- ❖ The church will have been measured and marked off, respecting social distancing norms.
- ❖ There is to be **NO** holy water in the fonts.
- ❖ Crying rooms and other rooms aside from the main church **must** be kept closed and locked.
- ❖ Hymnals, missalettes and any other worship aids **must** be removed from the pews and stored away.

- ❖ Bulletins must not be distributed, nor should there be any literature available for people to take. Bulletins could be uploaded to parish websites.
- ❖ Parishioners must be advised of the requirement to wear masks, which they will bring on their own from home. No one should be in church without a mask.
- ❖ Parishioners are to be encouraged to bring their own sanitizers from home.
- ❖ Restrooms should be open and available but used by one person at a time and must be cleaned regularly.
- ❖ It is advisable that churches be cleaned after each opening.
- ❖ For the foreseeable future, parishes may not schedule any events which will draw crowds and make social distancing difficult.

PRIVATE PRAYER AND DEVOTION

The church will be open for a limited time period each day. Pastors will decide on these hours of opening based on the needs of the community. The church should remain open for no more than 4 hours each day. These hours should not coincide with the time a Mass is celebrated in the church.

- There is to be no congregating of people (e.g. gathering to say a rosary together). There should not be more than ten (10) people in the church and there cannot be a group gathered.
- The faithful must be instructed not to touch statues or other devotional objects in the church.
- Two ushers or other volunteers MUST be present in the church to assure that social distancing rules are observed and to determine whether the church is getting too crowded.

Again, these rules will vary depending on the individual church's needs and configuration.

Parishioners should be made aware of these rules before the May 26th opening and by way of signage in the church itself.

Please note that some churches in high population density areas will not be able to open on the May 26th as they may have to set a different timeline. Please ask your parishioners to be respectful of the decisions pastors and administrators will make based on the requirements of their individual communities.

FUNERALS

The directives indicated above apply for funerals as well.

Funeral services will be permitted but are to be strictly limited to 10 people. The funeral service must be the Funeral Outside of Mass - Holy Communion should not be distributed at these services.

Persons attending the funeral must be seated using social distancing norms (Six [6] feet apart) except for members of the same household and everyone must wear a mask or face covering.

Funerals should begin with the casket in place in front of the sanctuary and with the participants seated. There is to be no procession into or out of the church. No worship aids should be distributed or used.

BAPTISMS

Baptisms will take place with social distancing guidelines being enforced and limited to 10 or fewer participants. The water must be changed for each baptism. Baptisms can be celebrated only with prior consultation with the Office of the Chancellor.

WEDDINGS

Weddings will take place with social distancing guidelines being enforced and, at first, limited to 10 or fewer participants. Weddings should be celebrated with the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass. No Nuptial Masses should be celebrated at this time. Holy Communion should not be distributed at this time. Weddings can be celebrated only with prior consultation with the Office of the Chancellor.

CONFESSIONS

Confessions will take place with the priest and penitent both wearing masks and remaining at least six (6) feet distant from one another. A space other than a traditional confessional might need to be used. A larger space will be needed. A barrier system could be devised. Care must be taken to assure that no lines or groups form for confessions.