

OPENING UP ON MAY 10TH 2021 AND BEYOND:

Dear friends,

We all look forward to opening up our churches again for safe public worship in pods of 50 where possible. Archbishop Dermot Farrell's very clear email to us of Friday 30th April 2021 carrying the latest advice from the Department of An Taoiseach is printed below the suggestions outlined here.

Here are some thoughts and ideas to stimulate creative responses as to how we will welcome back God's people to our acts of worship. Something essential has been absent from our liturgies for a long time. The real and substantial presence of the Body of Christ in the people now begins to return. How will we celebrate this?

1: As people approach the Church:

Will you have put up bunting?

Have you clear signage advertising your parish plans for re-opening?

Is that information updated on your parish website and social media?

Is the Covid 19 safety signage on your doors and seats, on pathways and aisles in good shape? Are your hand-sanitizing stations well stocked?

If you have outdoor speakers, will there be joyful music playing to welcome those returning? How will your parish volunteers greet the people and assist them into the Church? What will people smell as they enter: disinfectant or rather some freshly burnt incense? Will there be fresh flowers?

2. Word of Welcome:

Most of the suggestions above are about the welcome communicated to the people by the way the space has been prepared for them, engaging all the senses and using only a few words. Perhaps a member of your Parish Pastoral Council can lead a scripted word of welcome a few minutes before Mass begins, including a very brief description of what will happen during the distribution of Holy Communion and how to safely exit when Mass ends. (Best if this is done at a microphone other than the Ambo, if at all possible.)

3: The Lord takes delight in his people:

The response for the Psalm given for 10th May is very apt: "The Lord takes delight in his people." It is Eastertime. Let us rejoice and be glad in it. Perhaps the Blessing and Sprinkling with Holy Water could be used for the Penitential Rite within your church [see page 1354 of the Missal]. Remember that when watching a liturgy online, most people would have been doing so sitting down the whole time. Some will need encouragement and a reminder when to

stand, sit or kneel at the appropriate time. A cantor and accompanist would greatly enrich this reopening liturgy. How can we keep this welcome and rejoicing sustained all through this opening week?

4: Remember best practice in the consecration and distribution of the Eucharist -

As much as possible, at each Mass try to consecrate only enough hosts to be distributed at that liturgy, keeping a certain number reserved in the tabernacle for the sick and dying. Only have as many hosts in each paten that the Minister will distribute to the people in their pod. Remember to cover the patens or ciboria of hosts with palls or with an opened purificator from the time of the Preparation of Gifts until the Breaking of Bread. All ministers of Holy Communion should visibly practice thorough hand sanitizing before and after distribution. Be mindful that there may be some people present who can only receive a low gluten host. Should there be an overflow of a few parishioners standing outside the Church, remember to have outdoor speakers on and arrange to have the Eucharist brought to them.

5: Go in peace. Alleluia! Alleluia!

After the final hymn has been sung, calm words from a Commentator will help the orderly, patient and safe exit of the faithful. An extra hymn or instrumental music may be of help here too. Parish Newsletters and the opportunity to contribute to collections could be offered to the faithful outside the church as people leave, positioned several paces away from the doors.

Wishing you a joyful and safe reopening!

**Advice communicated to us by Archbishop Dermot Farrell
Friday 30th April 2021**

Pods of 50

Where the size of the premises/Place of Worship allows for a capacity of greater than 50 this may be permitted only where:

- social distancing guidelines are adhered to
- the premises can be subdivided into distinct sections (cordoned or marked appropriately) of not more than 50 persons in each section

- there is a minimum of 4 metres between sections
- each section having its own entrance/exit route
- there are separate arrangements for elements of the service involving close contact, for example the distribution of Holy Communion
- strictly no movement of people between sections before, during or after the service
- the premises are well-ventilated

Funerals

There is an increased risk of transmission of the virus where families and communities come together following the death of a loved one.

Therefore, numbers at funeral services (and Weddings) is capped at 50 regardless of size of premises.

Notwithstanding the increase in numbers permitted, funerals are still considered private family events and all notices in newspapers or on-line should be clear about this.

Funeral services should continue to be live-streamed to help reduce numbers attending.

Attendance at wakes in private homes and at Funeral Homes remains unchanged i.e. immediate family only and people should be discouraged from queuing to pay respects.

Singing

As with previous reopening for religious service congregational singing and choir singing is not permitted.

Solo singing with accompanist is permitted subject to compliance with detailed guidance contained in HSE Covid-19 Guidance for Religious Services.

Outdoor Worship is not permitted in line with Government restrictions on organised outdoor gatherings.

Drive-in Religious Services may take place outside places of worship (e.g. church carpark) where all attendees remain in their vehicles and no sharing of vehicle outside of family unit.

If your parish is considering this option, the utmost respect for the distribution of the Eucharist is essential.

Use of Religious premises for any other purposes/parochial activities/community meetings etc. is not permitted in line with Government restrictions on organised indoor gatherings.

DUBLIN DIOCESAN LITURGY RESOURCE CENTRE

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