



Archdiocese of Newark

November, 2020

Mass During Pandemic

The Archdiocese of Newark has put into place “Directives for Parish Liturgical Celebrations During the Covid 19 Pandemic.” These can be viewed in their entirety at rcan.org/covid19.

Parishioners should be aware that all pastors, administrators and chaplains have been told to comply with these directives. They are in place to protect the health and safety of all parishioners, lay ministers, and members of the clergy. Your cooperation with these directives will protect you and those around you. It is an act of charity to cooperate with these instructions.

A few items from the directives which parishioners should be especially aware of are listed below:

- The obligation to attend Mass is still suspended. Parishioners who are sick, high risk, or uncomfortable attending Mass are not obligated to do so. Further, anyone attending Mass who does not wish to receive Communion does not have to do so. Remember that even with precautions in place, it is still possible to contract Covid 19 in church.
- Parishioners should check their temperature before coming to Mass. Anyone with a fever or other symptoms should not attend. All parishioners must wear a mask at all times while in church. From the moment you enter the building to the moment you leave, a mask is required to be worn properly, over the mouth and nose. All parishioners must maintain social distancing while entering, attending, and leaving the church. Churches have marked off seating and limited occupancy to accomplish this.
- Due to limited occupancy, parishioners may be asked to register before coming to Mass or sign in upon arrival. Parishioners who do not preregister for Mass may not be able to enter if the church has reached capacity. Additionally, if someone who attended Mass was diagnosed with Covid 19, other parishioners in attendance could be notified to take proper precautions.

Receiving Communion

In the Archdiocese of Newark, there is only one way to receive Communion during the pandemic. The faithful process up the aisle in single file, distancing between households, wearing a mask. Communion is only distributed in the form of bread and only given in the hand. After receiving the host in the hand, the recipient steps to the side, lowers their mask, consumes the host, replaces their mask and returns to their place.

Why Can't I Receive Communion on the Tongue?

Covid 19 has been proven to be spread through droplets of saliva. Clergy and lay ministers should not be putting their fingers in or near a person's mouth, especially when they then have to give communion to others. Please note that the practice of receiving communion in the hand during the pandemic is only temporary, and that no one is obligated to receive communion at this time.

Cooperation with the directives is mandatory and is meant to save lives. During a time of crisis, all need to make sacrifices for the good of others. Making sacrifices during the liturgy such as not being able to receive from the cup or having to receive the host in the hand should be offered up to God for the hundreds of thousands who have succumbed to this deadly virus.

The pandemic will not last forever, but while it is here, the patience and cooperation of all members of the clergy and faithful with the Directives are needed so that all may be safe while worshiping “to the praise and glory of God.” If you have questions, please speak with your pastor or parish staff member. Thank you and God bless you.