



**Diocese of Joliet
Coronavirus Update
June 30, 2020
Re-opening Churches**

Dear Priests, Deacons, Parish Administrators/Business Managers,

As always, for your ongoing efforts as we move to reopen our parishes.

1. Guidelines for bringing Holy Communion to the sick and homebound

If the visit is in a hospital environment, ministers of care are to follow the hospital directives regarding personal care. The attached guidelines provide instruction on conducting visits to homes, as well as specific measures related to minimizing any potential exposure for both the minister and the recipient of Holy Communion.

2. Guidance for non-liturgical meetings

As you know, effective with the launch of Phase 4 of “Restore Illinois” on June 26, non-liturgical gatherings of up to 50 people have been allowed as long as social distancing and cleaning/disinfecting guidelines are adhered to and masks are worn.

Please note the following:

- Meetings such as book clubs, Knights of Columbus, blood drives and bingo, just to name a few, are permitted on parish campuses. You must communicate the safety protocols and guidelines to these groups but recognize that the responsibility to ensure compliance resides with the parish staff.
- A pre-registration and/or attendance record-keeping process must be in place to support contact tracing efforts, which are vital to reducing the spread of COVID-19.
- Since district-specific school/religious education guidelines for the next academic year have not yet been released, all activities for minors (under the age of 18) remain cancelled until those guidelines are provided and take effect. The exception would be our youth ministry, religious education and Catholic School programs which are being communicated to you separately.

- To the extent possible, consideration should be given to holding meetings outside with proper social distancing measures in place.
- Hand sanitizer should be readily available for meetings.
- In the event there are requests for food and beverages at meetings, all food and beverages must be in single-serve containers. For example, individual boxed lunches are permitted, but an open buffet, potluck and/or boxes of bagels or donuts are not. Single, unopened bottles of water are permitted, but a pitcher of water is not. All utensils and plates must be disposable and intended for one-time use.

3. Protocol for reporting confirmed employee cases of COVID-19

Just as parish leadership is to gather the facts and report any confirmed parishioner/attendee cases of COVID-19 to Chris Nye at cnye@dioceseofjoliet.org for direction and guidance, please complete the Employee COVID Reporting form and follow the instructions to inform him of any confirmed employee cases. See guidelines attached.

4. Contact tracing importance

Attendance must be tracked and retained for at least 14 days for all Masses, liturgical services, meetings and events for contact tracing purposes. Parishes are encouraged to use their Mass pre-registration system for baptisms, wedding and funerals, as well. If and when that is not feasible for smaller gatherings, it is important to direct attendees to a sign-in sheet to collect names, email addresses and cell phone numbers. Again, this same principle applies to all non-liturgical gatherings within the parish, as well. Maintaining accurate attendance records for all events is vital to the work of contact tracing, which is a significant part of reducing the spread of COVID-19.

5. Use of air conditioning and fans

The introduction of fresh air into enclosed spaces is recommended to help improve air quality and reduce the likelihood of the spread of the coronavirus. As the weather warms up, it is natural to want to use fans and turn on air conditioning systems. Both systems are acceptable to use in conjunction with proper social distancing practices. However, we recommend certain additional precautions.

- Fans can be used to bring fresh air into a space. The most effective method is to place fans in windows and/or doors and aim them outward, while leaving doors/windows open in other areas of the room. This will allow the fans to exhaust stale warm air from the room while bringing in fresh air at a controllable rate. Fans should not be pointed into the room nor directly at parishioners, which would cause much greater airflow between parishioners and minimize the benefits of social distancing.

- Air conditioning can and should be used when available to help bring fresh air into worship spaces and reduce humidity levels. Fresh air dampers should be opened fully to allow the systems to pull in the maximum level of fresh air. The dampers are generally part of the primary air conditioning system, located in the mechanical room. If there is any concern regarding making these adjustments, please contact your primary HVAC contractor.

For ongoing directions, please contact:

Chris Nye cnye@dioceseofjoliet.org 815-221-6194
Alex Rechenmacher arechenmacher@dioceseofjoliet.org 815-221-6180

You are also welcome to contact me.

I continue to be extremely grateful for your cooperation and support. Please know of my support, encouragement, and prayer for you at this time.

Muchas Gracias,

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Most Reverend Richard E. Pates
Apostolic Administrator
Diocese of Joliet