



Guidelines and Directives for Holy Day / Holiday Celebrations

NOTE: These guidelines are current as of October 29, 2020. Given the increase in COVID-19 cases being reported throughout our region and the additional restrictions being put into place by state and local health authorities, all diocesan operations and facilities should regularly check current published guidelines from local health departments and updates from the diocese.

All Saints' Day

- All liturgical celebrations must follow established protocols, e.g., capacity for which the parish is certified, registrations, masks, social distancing, etc.
- Schools may continue the custom of students dressing up as saints.
 - Face masks/coverings must still be worn
 - There should be no parades or processions.
- Please note: due to the pandemic the dispensation from the obligation of Sunday and Holy Day Masses for all Catholics within the Diocese of Joliet remains in force. Those faithful initiated into the Most Holy Eucharist who are unable to participate in-person are encouraged to participate via livestream/broadcast and offer an Act of Spiritual Communion, in union with the entire People of God in the diocese and throughout the world in this time of stress and difficulty.

All Souls' Day / Dias de los Muertos

- The custom of bringing pictures of deceased loved ones to church for placement on a dedicated table, altar or other area may continue.
 - Parishioners should leave their pictures at a designated space in the narthex, vestibule or just inside the church doors.
 - Parish ushers or environment committee members will then place the pictures on the dedicated table or altar.
- Parishioners should not congregate around the tables or altars.
- If possible, the parish should consider an electronic display of pictures to reduce the number of physical objects that are handled and to allow for viewing from a greater distance.
- Encourage parishioners and school families to consult the guidelines from health officials and the CDC on safe celebrations of Dia de Los Muertos.
- The Book of the Dead may be placed in a publicly accessible place within the church.
 - An usher must be present before and after Masses to ensure physical distancing of parishioners signing the book and sanitizing their hands.
 - Acceptable means of signing names in the Book include:
 - Parishioners bring and use their own pen and take it with them when finished.
 - Directions can be placed on display with hand sanitizer nearby, noting that everyone is to sanitize their hands before writing in the Book.
 - Place a table near the Book and on the table have a jar with sanitized pens and the jar is marked "Sanitized Pens" and a jar that is marked "Used Pens." Directions can be placed there as well, instructing people to use a pen from the "Sanitized" jar, then when finished, place it in the jar marked "Used Pens."
 - With either of the latter two options, an usher should also monitor to ensure the protocols are followed.



Thanksgiving

- Thanksgiving Day Masses must follow established protocols, e.g., capacity for which the parish is certified, registrations, masks, etc.
- There should be no procession of food donations during the Mass.
- If the parish conducts a food collection, a receptacle should be placed in the narthex, vestibule or just inside the doors of the church for food donations.
- Parishes should consider scheduling specific times that parishioners may drop off food donations.
- If schools are accepting donations, then a central receptacle for collection should be established rather than collection in classrooms. Principals should determine the location of the receptacle and a process for depositing donations that maintains all current school protocols (e.g., maintaining cohort distancing and integrity).
- Encourage parishioners and school families to consult the guidelines from health officials and the CDC on [safe celebrations of Thanksgiving](#) in the home. Note: Diocesan guidelines, if more restrictive, are to be followed without exception.

December 12: Our Lady of Guadalupe celebrations

- All liturgical celebrations must follow established protocols, e.g., capacity for which the parish is certified, registrations, masks, social distancing, etc.
- Non-liturgical celebrations may not exceed the maximum number of attendees established by the State of Illinois, which may differ by region – see [IDPH website](#).
- To accommodate all those who wish to show their devotion to Our Lady of Guadalupe, parishes are encouraged to spread out services over a number of days (e.g., the 9-day Novena, or the 12-day Novena based on local custom).
- Decorations may be up for the full 9 or 12 days
- Parishes are encouraged to livestream all events and promote this as a venerable and meaningful option to participate
- Parishes can also encourage the faithful to view the livestream of services from the Shrine of Our Lady of Guadalupe in Mexico City.
- Parishes are encouraged to hold non-liturgical services outdoors
- Parishes may establish a shrine outside for Our Lady of Guadalupe
- Dancers are permitted outside only with masks and physical distancing
- “Running-of-the-torch” is strongly discouraged and may not be organized by the parish
- There are to be no receptions, potluck meals, or any food and drink.
- Home devotions are encouraged in lieu of in-Church devotions
- All volunteer requirements are to be met for any service.
 - A strong group of volunteers remains critical for all parish-based activities
 - The parish may need to recruit more volunteers for these and all celebrations during the Holiday/Holy Day season.



Christmas Novenas

- Las Posadas
 - Processions are to maintain physical distancing, the use of masks, social distancing, etc.
 - Entering any home by a group of participants is prohibited
 - Prayers, etc. are to be conducted outside maintaining physical-distanced guidelines.
 - Although the celebration of Posadas typically calls for it, there should be no singing
 - All activities in the church must observe established protocols including registration, limits on numbers, masks, etc.
 - Parishes should encourage families to observe this custom at home or create a virtual Posadas with remote participants.

- Simbang Gambi
 - All liturgical celebrations must follow established protocols, e.g., capacity for which the parish is certified, registrations, masks, social distancing, etc.
 - Processions (e.g., the procession of lights) are to maintain social distancing
 - There are to be no receptions, potluck meals, or sharing of food

- All activities in the church are to observe established protocols

Christmas

In general:

- Highlight the seasonal aspect of Christmas, encouraging people and parishes to spread celebratory/observance activities over the course of the entire Octave of Christmas.
- All capacity numbers for any church, per certification, must be strictly enforced
- Parishes must reiterate guidelines and requirements in advance of Christmas Eve Masses and throughout the season as many visitors who might not know the protocols will be present. Ensure your protocols are easily discovered on your parish website homepage and social media channels as visitors search for Christmas Eve/Day Mass times.
 - Ads in local papers, and working with civic and community organizations to share your guidelines may also be helpful
- Prepare for the need to enlist and train more volunteers
- It is critical to foster an atmosphere of welcome and hospitality. As parishioners invite family and friends who do not regularly attend Mass or practice the faith to join them for Christmas Masses, during this time of suffering, having well-trained greeters/ushers is of utmost importance.
- A parish may choose to add more Masses, but this is only if there are enough volunteers to staff the additional Masses.
- Parishes may plan for anticipatory Masses on Christmas Eve to begin at 3 p.m. but not earlier.
- Other sites within the parish campus may be used for overflow, with livestream (e.g., Parish Halls, gymnasium, etc.) but the following must be observed:
 - All protocols in the overflow site must match those in the church (e.g., number of ushers, volunteers to sanitize hands, use of masks and social distancing, etc.)
 - Following the celebration, release by site will need to be regulated: One site dismisses at a time (e.g., the Church empties first, then the parish hall) to avoid bottleneaking of parishioners at exits.
 - Both sites need to be on the same campus/church grounds.



- Simultaneous Masses may be celebrated at two separate sites in the parish, assuming all protocols and personnel requirements are met.
 - These should be staggered start times (e.g., 4:00 and 4:15) to prevent both celebrations concluding at the same time, which could lead to crowding and bottlenecks at exits.
- Parishes are encouraged to livestream allowing people, especially the most vulnerable, to participate remotely.
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- Pageants at Masses are prohibited.
- Family / children's Masses
 - All Masses must follow established protocols, e.g., capacity for which the parish is certified, registrations, masks, etc.

Special Note Regarding Liturgical Music

- The Diocese of Joliet promulgated guidelines to Music Directors and Choir Directors on August 27, 2020. Beginning with the publication of today's guidelines, a maximum of three (3) singers/cantors may be used IF they are EACH able to maintain 12' distance in all directions.
- All other guidelines for music remain in force and include the following:
 - In addition to the cantor(s), use of only one instrument at all liturgical celebrations.
 - No brass or wood wind instruments may be used (this includes Mariachis)
 - Musicians must be masked and maintain 6' of physical distance from each other
 - Parishes are encouraged to use pre-recorded music
- Lessons and Carols
 - Given the guidelines established above, and current studies regarding choirs, and because of other recent super-spreader events: in-person Lessons and Carols using choirs are prohibited this year.

Communal Penance Services

- During the pandemic, it is recommended that the Sacrament of Reconciliation is made available through individual confessions following all of the safety and health requirements. However, if you are also planning an Advent Communal Penance Service with individual confessions, you must follow the established guidelines for church capacity, reservations, physical distancing, face coverings/masks and cleaning, etc.