



## DIOCESE OF SUPERIOR OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 20, 2020

Dear Fathers, Parish Directors, Parish Life Coordinators,

On this the Feast of St. Bernardine of Siena, I once again wish you the hope, joy, and peace of the Risen Christ. I want to thank everyone for your attendance at yesterday's GoToMeeting. I hope you found it informational and helpful as we prepare to take yet another step along the uncertain journey of our COVID-19 world. I have tried to organize the material we covered in a more logical order, the main issues we addressed at yesterday's meeting.

### DIRECTIVES TO BE FOLLOWED FOR THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION OUTSIDE OF HOLY MASS

#### MASS: DISPENSATION, SUSPENSION, AND LIVESTREAM INFORMATION

1. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and the suspension of the public celebration of Mass remain in effect until further notice. This suspension includes the obligation to receive Holy Communion at least once per year during the Easter season.
2. All priests who are currently livestreaming or recording a Sunday Mass are encouraged to continue. This will give parishioners an opportunity to prepare spiritually to receive the Eucharist. ALSO, the benefits of Spiritual Communion should be continued to be promoted, especially for those who for whatever reason do not come to the Communion service.

#### RULES FOR COMMUNION SERVICES OUTSIDE OF MASS

1. Priests who are 65 and older, or any priest with high risk health factors are to contact Bishop Powers before celebrating a Communion Service outside of Mass.
2. PLEASE!! Anyone with a temperature of 100.4 or more or with flu like symptoms, PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE STAY HOME – WE DO NOT WANT TO PUT THE HEALTH OF OUR PRIESTS, DEACONS, VOLUNTEERS AND OTHER COMMUNICANTS IN ANY UNNECESSARY RISK. Also, anyone with a compromised immune system or other 'high risk' health factors, PLEASE FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR OWN HEALTH, CONSIDER STAYING HOME.
3. If possible, Communion Services should not start before 12:00 noon on Sunday. This will allow for people to attend a virtual celebration of the Mass in preparation for Communion. Communion Services are to conclude by 6:00 p.m. Sunday afternoon.
4. MASKS MUST BE WORN AT ALL TIMES BY ALL THOSE WHO ARE HELPING WITH THE COMMUNION SERVICES.
5. PLEASE – ALL WHO COME TO RECEIVE COMMUNION – PLEASE WEAR A MASK. LET US DO ALL WE CAN TO NOT EXPOSE ONE ANOTHER TO ANY UNDUE HEALTH RISK!

6. Signage clearly showing the flow for entering and exiting the church is highly recommended. Entering and exiting should be limited to 1 door each.
7. Signage must be placed at entrance doors asking those with a temperature of 100.4 or more or with flu like symptoms to not enter.
8. Weather permitting, entrance and exit doors should be propped open to limit the possibility of the transfer of the virus due to unnecessary touching of door handles.
9. Hand sanitizer is to be located AT LEAST at all doors and in easy access to the priest distributing Communion for when he needs to re-sanitize his hands.
10. Restrooms are not to be used unless it is an emergency.

### THE CHURCH AND COMMUNION SERVICES

1. The layout of each worship space will determine many of the particulars of the Communion Service.
2. Social distancing of 6 feet or more must be practiced between people not living in the same household.
3. All who enter the church are to sanitize their hands and are asked not to unnecessarily touch any pews or other church surfaces.
4. Collection baskets can be placed by the entrance and/or exit of the church for people to drop their offerings in. No one else should touch these offering until an appointed usher or other person puts the offering in the tamper proof bags.
5. No worship aids, parish bulletins, or other papers are to be distributed at this time.
6. There are to be no more than 9 people total in any single, indoors space. If the church has additional attached rooms, there can be up to 9 individuals in those rooms preparing to enter the church proper to receive Communion.
7. Before entering the church, all communicants should be instructed verbally and/or by signage:
  - \* that they will not have a time to kneel and pray either before or after receiving
  - \*they should also be asked not to grab ahold of the end of the pews, unless they need to steady their balance. This will avoid the need to sanitize them.
  - \*they should be instructed on how to receive Communion, with one hand under the other, standing as still as possible until the host is placed in their hands.
8. Communion will be distributed in the hand only. Gloves are not to be worn and if a communicant approaches wearing gloves, they should be instructed to take them off before receiving. If the custom, there should be an ample supply of low-gluten hosts.
9. the priest/minister distributing Communion should sanitize their hands often. It is recommended between each group of 8 communicants. If their hand touches the hand of a communicant, they MUST immediately disinfect their hands before ministering to the next person.
10. It is recommended that there be a table close by with hand sanitizer for the above. It should be large enough to hold the sanitizer and the ciborium.
11. After the Communion service is over, all surfaces of the church that have been touch are to be sanitized as soon as possible.

12. **NOTE: IN REGARD TO THE QUESTION OF TAKING HOLY COMMUNION HOME FOR OTHER FAMILY MEMBERS, THE GUIDELINE IS AS FOLLOWS:**

Consecrated hosts may not be taken home for other family members except in a pyx by a trained Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion [EMHC] for family members residing in the same household as the EMHC, and with the permission of the priest. The EMHC may not take Holy Communion to homes other than his or her own. During the pandemic, Holy Communion to the homebound is restricted to priests who are healthy and wearing proper protective gear.

I know this plan is not the return to our public celebrations of the Holy Mass that we all want. I beg your patience as we responsibly ease our way back. I also ask your prayers for me, the priests, and all the lay faithful who are working so diligently to make our Communion services a truly holy encounter with our Lord and Savior.

As the great Feast of Pentecost so rapidly approaches, may we all be filled with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit and may our loving God keep us healthy and safe.

Yours in the risen Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Most Rev. James P. Powers".

Most Rev. James P. Powers  
Bishop, Diocese of Superior