



**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARISH MINISTRY
DURING THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD**

Guidelines for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and the Sacraments

- Please see the “Liturgy and Sacraments” section of: <http://archphila.org/arise/>

Guidelines related to Catholic Schools

- Please see: <https://aop Catholicschools.org/covid-19-information/>

Guidelines for CYO

- Please see: <http://www.cyophilly.com/covidprocedures/>

Guidelines related to Religious Education / PREP

- Please see: <http://phillyocf.org/webinars/>

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
NON-LITURGICAL PARISH MINISTRIES**

Our Catholic Faith is essentially incarnational. Because God became man and effected our salvation in a human body, we believe in the centrality of the in-flesh, in-person encounter between the person, Christ, and the community. For this reason, the in-person life of the Church is irreplaceable. Now that we have reached the Green Phase, parishes are encouraged to resume in-person events and meetings whenever possible.

The parish should lead the way by gently encouraging parishioners (who are not at high risk for severe illness with COVID) to make their way back into in-person parish life. We can do this by inviting parishioners to attend in-person events that are spiritually enriching and also safe, communicating clearly your mitigation practices of social distancing, sanitization and numbers.

Guidelines for “In Person” Meetings/Events

When holding in-person meetings and events in your parish, please consider these recommendations:

- Please observe social distancing and sanitization protocols for any in-person meeting.
- It is recommended that masks be worn whenever someone is mobile (i.e. coming in or out of the building, using the restroom, etc...). Once seated, masks may be removed as long as social distancing is in place. As a reminder, the Governor's mandatory mask order does not apply to religious organizations.
- Where possible, meet in rooms with the largest amount of space and ventilation.
- If the meeting or event takes place in the Catholic school, the organization's leadership must consult with the pastor and school administrator regarding additional protocols (if any) regarding COVID19 which must be followed.
- Although religious organizations are exempt from the 25 person indoor occupancy limit, it is recommended that parishes make this their protocol *when meeting in any space outside of the Church or Chapel. Exceptions to this would be when the event is taking place in large, conference-size rooms, cafeterias and gymnasiums that can accommodate large groups.* In these cases, please follow the protocol of "up to 75% capacity" with social distancing and sanitization measures in place, the same as you would in the Church.
- There may be occasions when the Church or Chapel will be used for non-liturgical, but *religious* events. If an event is taking place in the Church or Chapel, please follow the protocol of "up to 75% capacity" with social distancing and sanitization measures in place.

Religious vs. Non-Religious Functions

Governor Wolf's occupancy limits of 25 people indoors and 250 people outdoors (25/250) do not apply to religious organizations. However, *non-religious* functions taking place on parish grounds are required to adhere to these occupancy limits. Below you will find some common parish ministries and events categorized as either religious or non-religious.

Religious Functions

These ministries are considered religious because they express or directly support the essential mission of the Church. These ministries are exempt from the 25/250 occupancy limits unless noted otherwise. However, please consider following the recommendations above when planning events for these ministries.

- RCIA sessions, adult faith formation, evangelization, prayer groups
- Sacramental preparation meetings, including marriage preparation
- PREP parent meetings, Catechist meetings
- Liturgical ministry meetings and trainings (lectors, Extraordinary Ministers, altar servers, music ministry, etc...)
- Pastoral care support groups (e.g. bereavement, divorce ministry, etc...)
- Parish councils
- Knights Councils and other Catholic lay association meetings with religious content
- Other large meetings with religious content
- Youth ministry, Catholic scouting troops (i.e. troops chartered by the parish or Catholic organization like the Knights of Columbus)
- Social Ministry outreach (e.g. food cupboards, clothing distribution, etc...; NB: *The charitable works of the Church belong to her essential mission. However, Catholic Social Services recommends that all social service ministries adhere to the 25/250 person limit and CDC guidelines.*)
- CYO Sports (NB: *Please follow Archdiocesan CYO Guidelines found at <http://www.cyophilly.com/covidprocedures/>*)
- Safe Environment trainings (NB: *Office for Child and Youth Protection guidelines require adherence to the 25/250 person limit*)

Non-Religious Functions

The organizations and events below are considered non-religious and are required to adhere to the Governor's 25/250 occupancy limit.

- Catholic School parent meetings, teacher meetings, home-school association meetings (NB: *Please follow the guidelines of the Catholic Schools Office*)
- Social events and social groups
- Bingo, Festivals, Carnivals, Wedding Receptions, Baby Showers
- 12 Step groups (AA, NA, etc...) and other organizations that have separate legal status

OTHER QUESTIONS

Outdoor Masses

As a reminder, the permission of the Archbishop is required for the celebration of Mass outside of a sacred space. Please request permission through the Office for Divine Worship at fr.dgill@archphila.org.

“Hybrid” Models of Parish Ministry – In Person and Online Offerings

Where possible, parishes are encouraged to offer “hybrid” models of parish events and ministries, making accommodation for both in-person and virtual participation, especially for those who cannot participate because they are at high risk for severe illness with COVID19.

If adding a virtual component would present a distraction or disrupt the efficacy of the in-person ministry, *preference should be given to the in-person experience over the virtual*. It is not always necessary to offer a virtual component to every in-person offering. One option is to offer two separate events, one in person and one online, or to record the in-person event and share it online after the event has ended.

Some parish ministries may decide that they can only operate effectively in person, especially when personal sharing, intimacy and vulnerability are essential to the ministry. These ministries should be free to make this decision and opt not to offer a virtual option. This has the added benefit of encouraging those who may be staying away out of unreasonable fear to consider making their way back to in-person parish life.

Notifying the Parish of Possible COVID19 Exposure

In the event that someone in your parish community tests positive for COVID19 and was in contact with other parishioners (e.g. at Mass, parish meetings, etc...), parishes are asked to take steps to notify those with whom the person was in contact. Please follow the notification procedures determined by your parish's county health department. Please contact your county health department for more information.

Please also contact the Archdiocese – either Meghan Cokeley mcokeley@archphila.org or Fr. Dennis Gill fr.dgill@archphila.org – so that the Archdiocese can support you in this process.