

July 15, 2020

Please note: *The Bishop's Office is communicating with State and local officials for clarifications on the public health directives. In particular, inquiries are being made about resuming the 10-person limit for indoor services of funerals, weddings, baptism, etc. Sacramento County health officials have approved conducting the aforementioned services with a 10-person limit. Placer County as well as Yolo County have said "no" to any indoor religious services until there are changes in the state directives. Guidance from other county health agencies will be sent along as soon as it comes available.*

Additional Directives on Celebrating the Sacraments and Funeral Liturgies Outdoors in Light of the Current Restrictions Due to the Rising Cases of COVID-19

The following are additional directives in celebrating the other Sacraments and funeral liturgies in response to Governor Newsom's suspension of indoor activities, which include church services. The following directives are issued to provide guidance to pastors and priests of parishes located in the counties where indoor worship services have been suspended. Those parishes which are located in counties where indoor worship services are possible should continue having these liturgical celebrations indoors. It is prudent that pastors of those parishes not affected by these restrictions develop a contingency plan for their respective parishes. *Due to the extraordinary pastoral challenges brought about by the rising infections and deaths due to the pandemic, the Bishop grants permission to priests in those counties where indoor worship services have been suspended, for the public celebration of weddings, funerals, baptism, and confirmation to be conducted outside of the church building.* This accompanies the decision to permit the public celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass outside.

The principles for safety and the reverence of the sacraments/rites articulated in the **Directives for the Celebration of Outdoor Masses** (July 9, 2020) apply in celebrating the Sacraments and funeral liturgies outdoors. The priests have the responsibility and obligation to pastorally advise the faithful on the necessary adaptations for the celebrations of the liturgies in order to keep every faithful safe and healthy. Be reminded that the location must maintain the reverence required by the Sacrament and the Rites of the Order of Christian Funerals (Outdoor B.1.). The Sacrament and rites should be celebrated within the church property (Outdoor B.2.). Inquire with the Vicar General, Fr. Vaughan, regarding the necessity of pastoral consideration in specific circumstances.

In some counties, there is no limit to the size of outdoor gathering as long as physical distancing, face-coverings, and contact tracing are in place. Check your local county public health agency's website for this information or call the public county health officer for clarification.

The applicable directives in the email sent to the priests on July 13, 2020 must also be followed diligently in celebrating the sacraments and funeral rites.

If the scheduled celebration of the sacrament or the funeral falls within the period of suspension of indoor activities, priests should pastorally counsel the faithful to consider rescheduling the celebration of Sacrament or funeral at another date when it is safer for everyone.

A. On Celebrating the Rites of the Order of Christian Funeral

1. Priests are to adhere to the applicable principles and instructions in the **Guidelines for the Public Celebration of the Order of Christian Funerals in the Diocese of Sacramento** (June 9, 2020).
2. In the case of Catholic Cemeteries, the funeral liturgy is to be celebrated within the property of the cemetery. Priests are to coordinate with other funeral homes regarding diocesan directives in celebrating the rites.

B. On Celebrating the Rite of Marriage

1. Priests are to adhere to the applicable principles and instructions in the **Guidelines for the Resumption of the Public Celebration of the Sacrament of Marriage** (June 11, 2020).
2. The Rite of Matrimony should be celebrated only within the church property. Inquire with the Vicar General, Fr. Vaughan, regarding the necessity of pastoral consideration in specific circumstances.
3. The number of people attending the Rite or Marriage should be limited as much as possible to those who are required to be present.
4. The Sacrament of Marriage should be celebrated within the Sacrifice of the Mass. Mindful of the pastoral circumstances, the pastor may choose to celebrate the Rite of Marriage Outside of Mass.

C. On Celebrating the Rite of Baptism

1. Priests are to adhere to the applicable principles and instructions in the **Guidelines for the Resumption of Celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism** (June 11, 2020).
2. Group baptisms are to be avoided at this time.
3. The people present should be limited to the child to be baptized, the parents, and the godparents.

D. On Celebrating the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation

1. Pastors and Parochial Administrators are to adhere to the applicable principles and instructions in the **Guidelines for the Celebration of the Sacrament of Confirmation During the of the COVID-19 Pandemic** (June 22, 2020).
2. Pastors/Parochial Administrators are to limit the number of candidates receiving the sacrament to the minimum permitted by local ordinances on public gatherings.
3. The attendees for the celebration should be limited to those who are required to be present (candidate, sponsor, and parents)
4. The Sacrament of Confirmation should be celebrated with the Sacrifice of the Mass. Mindful of the pastoral circumstances, the pastor may choose to celebrate the Rite of the Conferral of the Sacrament of Confirmation Outside of Mass.

E. On the Sacrament of Reconciliation

1. Priests are to adhere to the applicable principles and instructions in the **Guidelines for the Sacrament of Reconciliation During the Time of the COVID-19 Pandemic** (June 24, 2020).
2. The location for celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation must be able to maintain the seal of confession and physical distancing requirements
3. The schedule of confessions must be done at a time of the day when the temperature does not compromise the health of both confessor and penitent.