



Memo from the Bishop

Number 60 ✕ July 6, 2020

SINGING AT MASS: I reiterate here what I sent out late on Saturday. I realize that some of you may not have received this until after your weekend Masses and for the lateness of the notice, I again apologize. The State Document is quite specific. Here is the pertinent portion:

Considerations for Places of Worship

Discontinue singing (in rehearsals, services, etc.), chanting, and other practices and performances where there is increased likelihood for transmission from contaminated exhaled droplets. Consider practicing these activities through alternative methods (such as internet streaming) that ensure individual congregation members perform these activities separately in their own homes.

Consider modifying practices that are specific to particular faith traditions that might encourage the spread of COVID-19. Examples are discontinuing kissing of ritual objects, allowing rites to be performed by fewer people, avoiding the use of a common cup, **offering communion in the hand instead of on the tongue**, providing pre-packed communion items on chairs prior to service, etc., in accordance with CDC guidelines.

The link to the Guidance issued for places of worship is provided here:

[Guidance for Places of Worship](#)

AIRBORN TRANSMISSION: There is increased concern on the part of international and national health officials about the spread of COVID-19 through the air. There is much debate about this but the consensus seems to be that enclosed, poorly ventilated spaces with a lot of people are a serious source of potential transmission.

In general, our Churches are large spaces, well ventilated and the number of people continues to be quite limited. There are a couple of things related to this which your local parish committees might consider. First, there is always the possibility, as some of you are doing, of hosting Masses outdoors. I do not suggest or promote this but simply remind you that it is an option for some places. Second, have a committee look at the style and nature of the Filters in your air-handling units. Some filters are more efficient in trapping even very small particles, like the virus, than others. I do not know of any manufacturer who claims to trap particles as small as the COVID-19 virion. There are also UV units for placement in ducts which claim to eliminate some of the virus. This needs more research. Third, keep doors open and consider a large 'exhaust fan' at one door to maximize the airflow through the Church.

FUTURE UPDATES: It is very likely that individual Counties may announce stricter protocols which will affect our Churches in the coming days and weeks. I may not always hear about all of these and so, please, if you have additional information, make sure that this is transmitted to me so that I can make it available to the whole Diocese. Also, please, assure that those in your own County are made aware of any changes or updates.

PERSEVERE!