



**Office of Worship**  
**Diocese of Honolulu**

MEMORANDUM

To: Clergy and Parishes

From: Deacon Modesto Cordero, Director Office of Worship

Date: December 7, 2020

RE: LITURGICAL DIRECTIVES FOR THE CHRISTMAS SEASON DURING THE TIME OF PANDEMIC

The following are liturgical directives and reminders that impact all Catholic churches, chapels, oratories, centers, and missions in the Diocese of Honolulu for the **Christmas Season** during the time of pandemic.

- The dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is extended through **February 16, 2021** (Tuesday before Ash Wednesday).
- **Singing at Mass**: Our latest directive reads: “*Singing is now allowed by using ONE instrumentalist and ONE cantor ONLY (both need to wear a face covering at all times). The congregation should continue not to sing at Mass as much as possible. The use of wind instruments is still prohibited.*”
  - The use of other “non-wind” instruments (e.g. guitars, violins, drums, piano, organ, etc.) is allowed to be used simultaneously.
  - **The use of a small choir is permitted during the Christmas season.** If the parish is using a choir, choir members need to follow the rules for indoor singing as directed by the state [“Any person(s) singing shall maintain physical distancing of at least ten (10) feet from any other person(s) while singing. Members of the same performing group singing may be closer than ten (10) feet together while performing, provided the group consists of less than ten (10) persons. To the extent reasonable and practicable, a physical barrier (e.g., plexiglass) of sufficient size to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 shall separate any person(s) singing from any other person(s), but not including members of the same performing group.]
  - A distance of 10 feet between the cantor and the congregation needs to be observed as much as possible.
  - In addition to the Entrance, Offertory, Communion and Leavetaking hymns – **the Kyrie, Gloria, Responsorial Psalm, Gospel Acclamation and the rest of the Mass part responses could be sung during the Christmas season, observing the proper precautions.**
- **Liturgical processions** – Entrance and recessional processions from and back of the church **are allowed.** It is recommended to keep them simple (e.g. clergy and altar servers only).
- **Altar Servers** – The use of altar servers at Mass **may be reinstated at this time**, especially to help with the entrance and recessional processions, use of incense and ringing of the bells during the Mass.

*Approved by Bishop Larry Silva on December 6, 2020.*

- **Reconciliation** – Parishes can celebrate **communal penance services and/or reinstate specified hours for reconciliation** as much as possible. Please observe good spacing between the penitent and priest, while at the same time observing absolute privacy for the penitent. Confessions by phone or via the internet are not permitted. General absolution is not permitted.

Reminders from prior diocesan directives and/or protocols:

- **Wearing of mask or mask/face shield** - In response to the Office of the Governor’s “13<sup>th</sup> Proclamation related to the COVID-19 Emergency” (dated September 22, 2020): “All persons must wear face coverings in compliance with county orders, rules and directives.” Our diocesan directive stands as promulgated in our latest MEMO: “Face coverings (masks or mask/face shields) will be worn at **ALL** times by **ALL** who participate at the Mass during the liturgical celebration. For those ministers with respiratory issues the use of a face shield instead of a face mask is highly recommended.”
- Priests, deacons and other duly commissioned extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion – who are not at high risk of infection themselves -- may continue to take Communion to the homebound, always exercising proper hygiene procedures and wearing masks.
- In-person church meetings may continue (with no more than 5 people), **IF** proper social distancing and the wearing of masks is observed. Otherwise, meetings should continue to be conducted virtually.
- We encourage parish priests to start/continue live-streaming their liturgies (especially during the Christmas season) to their parishioners via social media platforms and to communicate to them the times of these services and log-in information for their parish’s Facebook and/or website. Daily and Sunday Masses are currently being livestreamed from various parishes in our diocese. For a comprehensive and updated list please visit our website at [www.catholichawaii.org](http://www.catholichawaii.org).
- **Funeral services:** In compliance with the Office of the Governor’s “14<sup>th</sup> Proclamation related to the COVID 19 Emergency” (dated October 13, 2020) (Exhibit H) directs “*any cemetery, cemetery authority, mortuary, mortuary authority, or person engaged in the provision of funeral services or who embalms bodies is prohibited from transporting a body to a residence or **any other location**, unless it is the location of burial authorized by law.*” Therefore, all Funeral Masses in the presence of a body (casket) in the state of Hawaii are to be postponed OR celebrated without the presence of the body.
  - Our clergy can still offer the Vigil for the Deceased and/or a Funeral Liturgy outside Mass at the mortuary/funeral home, or a Committal Service at the cemetery.
  - As an exception during this time, a Funeral Mass at church in the presence of an Urn or without the presence of the body may still be celebrated before the Committal. In that case, the body should be blessed with holy water at the cemetery, and the Final Commendation and Farewell should be included in the Committal Service (See Order of Christian Funerals, Chapter 6.)
- Religious Education, Youth and Young Adult Ministry and Faith Formation may continue following the proper guidelines provided by the Office of Religion Education and Faith Formation.

All prior memos, directives and protocols are still in effect unless changed in this memo.

For any additional questions or concerns contact me at [mcordero@rcchawaii.org](mailto:mcordero@rcchawaii.org) or (808) 585-3342.

*Approved by Bishop Larry Silva on December 6, 2020.*