



Diocese of Wilmington

**GUIDELINES FOR THE CELEBRATION OF
THE SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK
SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (ELECT AND CANDIDATES)
and FIRST HOLY COMMUNIONS**

DURING THE CURRENT PHASE OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

June 18, 2020

OVERVIEW

While the following guidance represents a directive from Bishop Malooly, all pastors, parochial vicars, deacons and other personnel are to follow all official governmental and public health guidelines enacted for the prevention of the contraction and spread of the COVID-19 virus, including limitations on gatherings, physical distancing, hygiene and sanitation measures and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE).

Pastors may choose to implement additional and more restrictive rules for public worship than those permitted as they take into consideration vulnerable members in their respective parishes and other issues specific to their communities.

Pastors may begin Initiations and First Holy Communions at their discretion.

SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK/ PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

- Anointing of the Sick remains permissible on an individual basis. Communal celebrations are still not permitted at this time.
- Mindful of the restrictions at hospitals and other facilities, the priest should adhere to a facility's policy. Priests should use all Personal Protective Equipment that is provided.
 - Non-COVID-19 Patient – At a minimum, a face covering and gloves should be worn when anointing any person who is not known to have had or been exposed to COVID-19.
- A cotton swab or similar applicator should be used to anoint the sick. The cotton swab (or similar applicator) should be properly disposed of through burning or burying.
- No one other than a Priest may anoint the sick. If a priest is unable to enter a patient's room, then the Anointing is omitted, and only the prayers, Apostolic Pardon, and blessing may be given.
- COVID -19 Patient - Taking into consideration the personal risk assumed to yourself and others and also your ability to wear the required PPE, the anointing of a COVID-19 patient is permissible for priests under the age of 60 in good health. A recommended abbreviated Rite of Anointing of the Sick along with other considerations in such cases is presented by the Thomistic Institute, found online here under *Guidelines for Anointing*: thomisticinstitute.org/covid-sacraments

- Prior to any anointing of a COVID-19 patient in a facility, please make sure that the proper PPE will be provided, and proper instruction will be given regarding putting it on and taking it off. CDC guidelines can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/using-ppe.html>
- Home anointings of COVID-19 patients are not recommended since the appropriate PPE will not be available. Hospital level PPE is not recommended in homes/outside of the hospital as proper use of PPE requires training and appropriate methods of disposal (per CDC guidance).
- Extraordinary ministers of Communion are not permitted to take Communion to the homebound/hospitals/nursing homes until further notice.

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION (ELECT AND CANDIDATES)

- All previous guidance concerning the Celebration of the Eucharist must be followed.
- The Elect who did not receive the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and the Holy Eucharist at the Easter Vigil may be initiated by their pastor.
- An individual Mass can also be scheduled as long as the capacity does not exceed the current 30% capacity restriction with 6 feet of social distancing.
- A cotton swab or similar applicator should be used for anointings. The cotton swab (or similar applicator) should be properly disposed of through burning or burying. Note: A fresh applicator should be used for each Elect or Candidate.
- The Elect are required to participate in a minimum of one scrutiny—this already could have taken place on the 3rd Sunday of Lent. If not, at least one must be done. Bishop Malooly dispenses each Elect from up to 2 scrutinies.

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION

- All previous guidance concerning the Celebration of the Eucharist must be followed.
- Pastors may schedule the parish's First Holy Communion on an individual or "small group" basis, with the expressed permission of the parents.
- First Communicants are not required to wear masks when they receive First Communion but the priest still must wear one.