



Archdiocese of Cape Town

Office of the Auxiliary Bishop of Cape Town

8th September 2020

Directives for further participation in our worship life

Scientists have predicted an inevitable second surge of infections and any opening up of churches and other points of interaction has to be done with great care. It is particularly important that the **registering of persons** who attend any Church service be maintained as this helps in tracing people should an infection occur. With this in mind we are now ready to take further steps in opening up our churches.

Further to the directives contained in the Archbishop's newsletter number 5/2020 dated 3rd August 2020, we wish to thank the clergy, religious and faithful of the Archdiocese for the spirit of patience, understanding and graciousness expressed during this difficult time. We are still under Lockdown Level Two but seeing that the gradual adjustments have been negotiated safely and that we are becoming accustomed to the necessary safety measures it is possible for further participation in our worship life. As in all cases of gatherings safety protocols such as the registering of those who attend, screening, social distancing, hand sanitizing and the wearing of face masks must be observed. Directives in this regard have already been sent out. Anyone needing copies could obtain these from Mrs Desiré Jackson (desire@adct.org.za).

With regard to the celebration of the Sacraments we wish to communicate the following:

1) **The Eucharist.**

- i. Those parishes that have not yet started celebrating the Eucharist are encouraged to start by having six persons attending Mass.
- ii. Those parishes that have started with six persons are encouraged to increase the number to fifteen. Once again all the protocols will have to be followed.
- iii. Those parishes that have had 15 persons attending may now increase the number to twenty five.

It is important to increase the numbers gradually and that the maximum numbers for i – iii above be adhered to so as to inculcate an awareness of the risks involved and also to facilitate tracing should an infection occur. We also depend on the discretion of the priests – for example, while we request priests not to raise the maximum number of people attending Mass, some priests – especially those who minister in hotspots, might find it necessary to keep the numbers lower. In such cases the dispensation given by the Archbishop at the start of the National Lockdown still holds good – as it does with respect to all who, for safety reasons, cannot attend Mass on a Sunday. It is also recommended that the faithful consider attendance at Mass on a weekday in fulfilment of their Sunday obligation. It might be necessary to give catechesis in this regard.

All are encouraged to re-read the Archbishop's newsletter # 5/2020 regarding safety protocols and the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. The numbers for Adoration ought to be no more than ten persons at a time, for periods not exceeding twenty minutes.

2) Baptisms.

Only one child at a time may be baptized per celebration. Care must be taken to have in attendance only one sponsor and the immediate family members of the child being baptised. The absolute maximum in attendance ought to be fifteen excluding the minister. Where this number can be kept lower it ought to be.

In the case of adults the RCIA rites must be followed and no more than five persons at any given celebration may be received. Only immediate family members and one sponsor per candidate may attend – but in any event apart from the minister, no more than twenty five people may attend the full reception of candidates.

Anointing with the oil of Catechumens and with Sacred Chrism may be done using a cotton bud which must be discarded immediately after use (this is also recommended for the Anointing of the Sick) and after the celebration properly disposed of by burning. Appropriate hand sanitizing during the ritual might be necessary. As in all our liturgies during this time, there ought to be no singing. The Litany of the Saints and all prayers and responses must be done in a soft voice. While face masks lessen infections they are not totally infection-proof. Particular care must be taken to avoid any droplets either to or from the infant. This is why we request ministers not to carry the infant. It is not true that children do not become infected.

In keeping with Canon Law, where the danger of death exists, Baptism is to be administered without delay.

3) Confirmations

Both the Archbishop and I are available for Confirmations which may be celebrated at this time. Attendance must be limited to Parents and Sponsors. Depending on the number of candidates to be confirmed, it might be possible for a few immediate family members of candidates to be accommodated as long as the total number does not exceed twenty five persons. Where this number can be reduced it must be done. Candidates must be suitably prepared. Apart from the Bishop, Parish Priest and Deacon no other members of the clergy ought to be invited. Senior citizens and those with co-morbidities ought to be excluded from the guest list. Live streaming is encouraged. Confirmations may be celebrated on Friday evenings, Saturday evenings and on Sundays. On occasion celebrations may be held on other days. Parish priests are asked to negotiate a time and a date with Fr Michael Clement SAC (archbishop@adct.org.za).

4) Funerals

The protocols already in place for funerals must be adhered to. Numbers must be kept to an absolute minimum and social distancing relative to floor space must be maintained. Although the State allows for a gathering of fifty persons, our recommendation is that numbers be kept low as funerals generate the most infection possibilities. Services must be kept brief and no singing is to be allowed.

5) Penance and Reconciliation

We encourage Priests to celebrate this sacrament on an appointment basis at this time. Even though this might not be a gathering in the usual sense of the term, all safety measures such as the registering of persons, wearing of face masks, hand sanitizing and social distancing recommendations must be adhered to.

6) Marriages.

The best is to defer marriages until it is safe to celebrate the Sacrament with greater freedom and with greater festivity. Where the faithful find that they cannot wait until conditions are more favourable, a marriage may be celebrated with no more than the couple, the witnesses and the *immediate* family members of the couple in attendance. Every precaution must be taken to ensure that persons with co-morbidities are not invited. In any event, apart from the minister the maximum number of people in attendance should not exceed twenty five. Where this can be cut down further it should be done. The State does allow for fifty people to be in attendance but in the interest of safety and with due regard for effective tracing should this become necessary we restrict our numbers. Regarding preparation for marriage, if this cannot be done by the Priest, Deacon or suitably trained lay persons within the Parish, Mrs Joan Armstrong of CPD (adctcpd@gmail.com) can be contacted. Her cell number is 082 940 3137. I share this number with her kind permission.

Where live streaming is possible this option may be used with respect to the Eucharist, Baptisms, Confirmations, Funerals and Marriages. Celebrations must be kept brief.

It must be borne in mind that the pandemic is by no means over. The more we engage with others, the greater the vigilance we need to exercise. We appeal to the discretion of each Parish Priest/Administrator and expect that where there is extreme danger (for example in hotspots), celebrations of Baptisms and Marriages will be deferred until greater safety is assured. We ask the faithful to be charitable in this regard. We also ask that Clergy and Religious model the behaviour change that is necessary to cope with the pandemic. In conclusion, we thank you once again for your patience and willingness to serve.

Fraternally



Bishop Sylvester David OMI
VG: Archdiocese of Cape Town

