

Bishops' Conference of Scotland

Updated Liturgical Guidelines for Holy Mass June 2021

At a recent meeting of the Bishops' Conference, the following guidelines were agreed in terms of Liturgy. Restrictions for Sacred Liturgy for council areas in Level 3 remain the same.

In Level 2:

1. The sacristan may set-up for Holy Mass.
2. There may be altar servers.
3. Both the Gloria and the Creed may be included
6. At Sunday Mass the second reading may be included.
7. The sermon should be brief.
8. The offertory procession may be included.
9. Holy Communion should be received on the hand. The celebrant and communicant both wearing masks may now use the traditional invitation and response – “Body of Christ. Amen.”
10. The communicant should extend his/her hands to receive the host and then step two paces to the side in order to place the host on the tongue.
11. If a parish priest agrees to distributing Holy Communion on the tongue, this should take place after Mass. The priest, wearing a mask, should sanitise his hands between each communicant. This is necessary because he can transfer virus from one person to the next if he inadvertently touches the tongue. Priests cannot maintain any significant distance from the communicant. The distance between him and the open mouth of the communicant is probably about 70-80 centimetres. He is, therefore at a slightly increased risk. The fact that he is wearing a mask is irrelevant since the mask is mainly about preventing the wearer infecting others. The priest can still be infected if droplets land in his eyes.
12. Holy Communion may be distributed after the Final Prayer. Parishioners may be directed to leave the Church immediately after receiving Holy Communion. This will depend on the access and space available in the Church. Where access and space is sufficient to prevent cross over of parishioners, Holy Communion may be received in the ordinary manner.
13. The collection may be taken as the parishioners exit the church. If there are two collections, one may also be taken as parishioners enter the church.
14. Where clergy are in the shielded group i.e., suffering from an underlying medical condition, but have received both vaccinations, they may choose to celebrate Mass publicly.

15. Deacons may assist at Mass in accordance with the National Guidelines and after conversation with the parish priest.
16. In Level 3 a cantor and organist are permitted
17. In Level 2 a small group is permitted to lead liturgical singing.
18. Incense may be used within reason.
19. Married couples need not wear face masks if they are a sufficient distance from the celebrant and the congregation. The same applies to parents of child to be baptised.

In Levels 0-1:

The above restrictions may be eased with the consent of the parish priest as long as face masks are worn, and physical distancing is observed according to the government guidelines. This acknowledges that the requirement for physical distancing may be reduced soon from 2m to 1m. **All parishes will be informed when and if this happens.**

As the virus is predominantly contagious through the breathing in of air droplets, windows and doors in churches should be open especially between Masses.

All previous restrictions as set-out above are now lifted except for:

The use of hymn books when congregational singing with masks is permitted. Hymn books could be given out to the congregation for the duration of the restrictions, and they could be invited to bring the book each week, or a paper copy could be used but only for that particular Mass. Neither books nor paper copies can be shared outside a family group. Alternatively, hymns that people know well without the need for written words could be chosen.