



## Sacramental Guidelines for Reopening

# SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

These guidelines for celebrating the sacrament of reconciliation in a church reflect the updated guidance by government officials, healthcare professionals and church authorities.

These guidelines are based on the current requirements for groups of 10 or less in the church at any time exclusive of all ministers and an usher or greeter.

Parishes should adapt only as necessary, however, **being careful not to violate social distancing and sanitizing practices.**

Parishes or pastors may **not** alter number of allowed persons, social distancing, face covering, or sanitizing guidelines contained here.

### Preparation

1. The floor of the church should have tape marks designating where penitents are to wait in line (or designated markings in the pews), all observing proper social distance in all directions.
2. A “greeter,” or some agent of the parish, should meet the penitents outside the church or in the vestibule, hand out masks (if they have not brought their own), and require use of hand sanitizer. The greeter should also remind individuals that if they have a fever or are ill, they should not enter.
3. Greeters are to maintain social distancing of penitents waiting to enter the church.
4. Masks should be worn for the entire time the penitents are in the church. Per IDPH and CDC guidelines, those with breathing difficulties can be exempted from this requirement, but those individuals must observe the strictest of social distancing from anyone not living in their domicile.

### Rite of Reconciliation/Confession

1. The priest should don a mask for the entire time he is hearing confessions.
2. In order to maintain social distancing, the traditional “confessional” is not to be used. Instead, a space or spaces in the church should be designated to celebrate the rite, such as is often done during celebrations of Communal Reconciliation (Form II).
3. The priest’s chair should be set with a “screen” to his right or left (e.g., a suspended piece of fabric or a cloth panel) in order to provide for anonymity, with a chair for the penitent on the other side of the “screen” opposite the priest’s chair (maintain social distance).
4. Another chair should be placed at least six feet in front of the priest’s chair, facing him, for those who wish to celebrate the rite face to face.
5. An appropriate distance should be provided from those waiting to receive the sacrament, in order to maintain confidentiality of the penitents who are celebrating the rite (i.e., confessing).
6. In giving the penance, the priest should request that the penance be fulfilled outside the church. That is, that no penitent remains in the church after confession to fulfill the penance.

## **Post Rite and Cleaning**

1. After each penitent leaves, an assisting minister, greeter or the priest shall sanitize the chair used.
2. Pews used while penitents waited need to be cleaned and wiped.