



Memo

Date: July 24, 2020

To: Pastors, deacons, religious, parish communicators, school principals & presidents, parish catechetical leaders and chancery staff

From: Maureen Smith, Director, Office of Communications

Re: Extension of dispensation to attend Mass and update to guidelines for in-parish gathering, July 24, 2020

Archbishop Gregory J. Hartmayer has extended the dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass through **Sunday, August 30**. Those who are healthy, willing and able to comply with safety protocols and who wish to attend are encouraged to do so. Those who are at high-risk of complications from COVID-19 or who are caretakers for the vulnerable are encouraged to participate in an online or televised liturgy.

The Archdiocese of Atlanta has also updated guidance regarding how parishes should respond to exposure or positive cases as well as adding downloadable liability waivers in [English](#) and [Spanish](#). The updated guidance is below.

The full guidelines as well as Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) are available here:

<https://archatl.com/2020renewal/2020/05/instructions-on-resumption-of-in-parish-worship-and-access-to-parish-facilities/>

This week's updates:

Reporting COVID-19 to the Archdiocese

If a minister, staff member, deacon or priest comes into contact with someone who has an active case of COVID-19, he or she should go into quarantine, report the exposure to Deacon Dennis Dorner, Chancellor, and get tested before returning to ministry. If the exposure happened during a liturgy, the parish should notify everyone who may have also attended the liturgy. If the priest's or deacon's test comes back positive, he should report it to the local

health department so they can complete contact tracing.

Please note that people can self-report a positive case, so a pastor or deacon can tell his parish he has COVID-19, but a pastor or parish should not identify an individual who has a case. The pastor can notify the parish with generic language such as: "A person with a confirmed case attended XX Mass." Privacy laws prohibit the release of personal health information.

It is very important for your own safety and for the safety of others that you monitor your health for 14 days from your last possible exposure to COVID-19, and that you remain at home, avoid congregated settings and public activities, and practice social distancing.

If you are not sick, monitor your health for fever, cough and shortness of breath during the 14 days after the last day you were in close contact with the sick person with COVID-19.

Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms.

Quarantine yourself at home except in case of emergency or to be tested for COVID-19.

If possible, stay away from other people living in your home, especially those who are at high risk for getting very sick from COVID-19:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/index.html>

COVID-19 Testing

You should obtain a test for COVID-19 at least once during your quarantine. If you have no symptoms, the test should take place on the 10th day of quarantine. You should obtain a test earlier in your quarantine if you experience any of the following symptoms:

Fever (measured temperature above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit, or you feel feverish)

Chills

Cough

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Fatigue

Muscle or body aches

Headache

New loss of taste or smell

Sore throat

Congestion or runny nose

Nausea or vomiting

Diarrhea

Call your local health department or your doctor to schedule testing. You can find contact information for your health department here:
file:///C:/Users/tvilla/AppData/Local/Temp/covid-19_testing_-_direct_patient_lines.pdf

Please note that even if your test results are negative, you still must remain in quarantine for the entire 14 days. If you develop symptoms of COVID-19 at any point during your quarantine period, please also follow the guidance below for isolation.

If you seek a test on day 10 of your quarantine, ideally your results should be available by day 14. It is recommended that you do not return to work until a negative result is returned. If your results are still pending after your 14-day quarantine is complete, and you decide to return to work, we recommend that you take extra care with prevention measures to avoid exposure to others in the event that your test result comes back as positive.

If you receive a positive COVID-19 test regardless of your symptom status, follow Georgia Department of Public Health isolation guidelines:
<https://dph.georgia.gov/isolation-contact>

Symptomatic persons who are not healthcare personnel with confirmed COVID-19 or suspected COVID-19 can return to work after:
At least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery defined as resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications, AND improvement in respiratory symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); AND, At least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.

Asymptomatic persons who are not healthcare personnel with confirmed COVID-19 can return to work after:
At least 10 days have passed since the positive laboratory test and the person remains asymptomatic.

Note, asymptomatic persons who test positive and later develop symptoms should follow the guidance for symptomatic persons above.

Asymptomatic persons who are not healthcare personnel, and who do not work in critical infrastructure who have a known exposure to a person with COVID-19 without appropriate PPE can return to work after they have completed all requirements in the DPH guidance for persons exposed to COVID-19 found at:
<https://dph.georgia.gov/contact>

Of note, if this person is tested for COVID-19 during the 14 day quarantine period, a negative test result would not change or decrease the time a person is monitored.

Some helpful resources for exposure and testing:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/end-home-isolation.html>