

Considerations for Baptism and Confirmation during a Pandemic

BAPTISM OF CHILDREN

- All aforementioned liturgical interventions regarding the celebration of Mass must be maintained.
- The font should be emptied, cleaned, sanitized, and filled just prior to the baptism. Afterwards, the water should be emptied, and the font cleaned and sanitized.
- Baptism should be celebrated with one child at a time, by *pouring* only. Immersion baptism is not recommended at this time.
 - If baptism of more than one child cannot be avoided, water should be prepared and blessed in individual vessels and then poured over the candidate into the font.
- The baptizing minister must wash his hands before and after the celebration, and use alcohol-based hand sanitizer before the post-baptism anointing of the child should his hands become contaminated during the celebration.
- After the baptism is over, all surfaces which have been touched, need to be cleaned and sanitized.
- In addition to the font being cleaned and sanitized prior to the baptism, any and all surfaces that will be touched/used during the celebration should also be cleaned and sanitized, including:
 - the surface of the credence table where the items for baptism will be placed
 - the outside of the vessel containing the Sacred Chrism
 - the exterior of the box containing the baptismal candle
 - the front and back covers of the ritual book itself
 - any surfaces in the church that will be or have been touched by participants
 - consider using a disinfectant wipe to avoid damage to the ritual book and/or box containing the candle
- Only freshly washed towels should be used for drying off the child's head.
- Parents should hold the child throughout the Rite of Baptism.
- The priest/deacon must wash his hands prior to the liturgy. Consider using a podium of some sort (a music stand, perhaps) for the book to limit its handling as the surface of the book could contain traces of the virus.
- During the baptism, the priest/deacon would sanitize his hands prior to the actual pouring of the water and before anointing the child with the Sacred Chrism.

CONFIRMATION

- The Laying on of Hands may be done with outstretched hands over all those to be confirmed; individual contact is to be avoided.
- In a letter dated June 2, 2020, the Vatican's Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments opined that the minister's use of an instrument (e.g. cotton ball, cotton swap...) for the anointing with Sacred Chrism **does not** affect the validity of the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- The minister should be careful to only touch the candidate with the instrument being used, and not to place/rest hand on top of the candidate's head. If inadvertent contact is made, the minister must stop and sanitize his hands before resuming.
- The instrument used for the anointing can only be used once and must be replaced between each candidate.
- The cotton ball or cotton swap is then placed in a biodegradable or compostable sealed bag, which is later to be buried or burned.