

Considerations for the Celebration of Christian Initiation during a Pandemic

Adults and Children of Catechetical Age

Baptism (RCIA, nos. 218-230)

- The minister should not touch the water during the blessing.
- Baptism is to be done by pouring, not immersion.
- Two possible ways to keep the water sanitary:
 - Water is blessed in the font and then a large vessel used to withdraw enough water to use for all baptisms.
 - Water is blessed in individual vessels near the font, then poured over each person's head back into the font.
- For multiple baptisms, fresh water is poured from the single (or multiple) vessels for each person rather than withdrawing it from the font.
- Only use freshly laundered towels for drying off the candidate's head.
- The Anointing after Baptism is always omitted when Confirmation follows immediately (RCIA, no, 228).
- The Clothing with a Baptismal Garment (RCIA, no. 229) may be omitted.
 - If the Baptismal Garment is retained, it is placed near the font prior to baptism so that godparents, not the minister, can pick it up and give to the newly baptized. This is to limit the number of people who handle it.
- The Presentation of a Lighted Candle (RCIA no. 230) is never omitted.
 - Only the minister should touch the Paschal Candle.
 - The Baptismal Candle is placed near the font so that godparents, not the minister, can pick it up themselves and light it from the Paschal Candle. This is to limit the number of people who handle it.
- Empty, clean and sanitize the font following Mass.

Confirmation (RCIA, nos. 231-236)

- 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.