

# KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS



KENYA CATHOLIC SECRETARIAT

Waumini House, Westlands

P.O. Box 13475 - 00800, Nairobi

Tel: +254 020 4443133/4/5, / 4443906,4443917

Fax: +254 020 4442910,4441758

Email: [kccb@catholicchurch.or.ke](mailto:kccb@catholicchurch.or.ke) /

[secgeneral@catholicchurch.or.ke](mailto:secgeneral@catholicchurch.or.ke)

Website: [www.kccb.or.ke](http://www.kccb.or.ke)

Our Ref:

Your Ref:

## LITURGICAL GUIDELINES ON THE RE-OPENING OF PUBLIC WORSHIP

### **Introduction**

Since the outset of the Covid-19 crisis, our Churches, Shrines and other places of worship, have been closed to public worship. This was, indeed, a sad but necessary step to take for the health and safety of all our Christians.

We, the Kenya Conference of Catholic Bishops, are aware that the life of our mission stems from the Mass and the Sacraments. It is here that our people are inspired to serve their brothers and sisters in the entire community, and are sent forth to engage in evangelization and charitable works.

Our Christ Faithful are eager to resume public worship in a safe and responsible manner and in coordination with the Government and the Ministry of Health. All of us believe that worship is an essential service. To this end, we are proposing some guidelines that will be in tandem with the latest guidance from the Ministry of Health.

### **1. Requirements from the Ministry of Health**

#### ***a) To promote healthy hygiene practices***

- i) Scheduled environmental cleaning (fumigation)
- ii) Churches to be sanitized and disinfected regularly
- iii) Provide sanitizers at the entrance of Churches
- iv) Check which doors could be propped open before Masses
- v) Train Ushers to receive and escort the Christians to suitable seating arrangement
- vi) Pews or chairs to be sanitized
- vii) Provide Sanitization points with soap and water
- viii) Ministers to wash with water and soap

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INCORPORATING: THE GENERAL SECRETARY'S OFFICE

1.) Commission for Doctrine, 2.) Commission for Liturgy, 3.) Commission for Missions, 4.) Commission for Pastoral and Lay Apostolate, 5.) Commission for Ecumenism, 6.) Seminary Episcopal Commission, 7.) Commission for Clergy and Religious, 8.) Commission for Inter-Religious Dialogue, 9.) Commission for Education and Religious Education, 10.) Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 11.) Caritas Kenya, 12.) Catholic Health Commission of Kenya, 13.) Commission for Social Communications, 14.) Commission for Refugees, Migrants and Seafarers, 15.) Council for Economic Affairs, 16.) Ad Hoc Commission for AIDS Relief, 17.) Canon Law National Office, 18.) Family Life National Office, 19.) Apostolate to the Nomads (A/N/A)

***"You shall be my Witnesses", (Acts 1:8) for the Sanctification and Salvation of all People.***

**b) In ensuring physical distancing**

- i) Identify people who will coordinate entry and exit in the Church
- ii) Ensure physical distance of 1.5 metres
- iii) No physical contact during the sign of peace
- iv) Keep physical distance while going for Holy Communion

**c) In ensuring use of masks**

- i) All members of the Congregation to wear masks including the Ministers
- ii) Avail masks for those who may not have
- iii) Encourage donation of masks
- iv) Provide cheap masks in the Churches
- v) Have a station for masks outside the Churches

**d) To protect the vulnerable populations**

- i) All those with pre-existing conditions to remain at home
- ii) Anybody manifesting symptoms to be asked not to join the Congregation
- iii) Not to include vulnerable and little children in the main Church
- iv) Have specific services for vulnerable with stricter rules
- v) Ensure all elderly persons have specific "carers" who will act as guardians
- vi) Families to sit together with their children during the collection

**e) In ensuring disinfection, cleaning and disinfection of places of worship**

- i) Avail disinfectant and other cleaning materials
- ii) Clean before and after the celebration of the Holy Mass
- iii) Where there are more Masses, ensure cleaning and sanitizing in between the Masses
- iv) Clean place of worship more regularly with soap and disinfectant

**f) In ensuring ventilation of places of worship**

- i) To keep all doors and windows open
- ii) Encourage open air ceremonies and services whenever possible
- iii) Construct worth external dais in most Churches

**g) In keeping contact of members**

- i) People to be asked to write contact papers as they enter
- ii) Emphasise the lack of trust in giving contacts for celebrations

**h) To prevent sharing of materials and items among members**

- i) Use screens for the songs where possible
- ii) Remove all the Missals, Hymnals, Prayer Cards and other paper resources
- iii) Have someone charged with sanitization of microphones



- iv) Collection to be done without processions, without passing from person to person.
  - v) Other collections to have designated station
  - vi) Those in-charge of collections to wear gloves
- i) *Temperature monitoring and referrals***
- i) Avail gun thermometer to take temperature at the entrance of the Church compound where possible
  - ii) If the temperature is above the normal, contact the health officer. Have clear protocols of how to handle illness suspects
  - iii) Train attendants to handle cases
- j) *Considerations for phased re-opening of the places of worship***
- Phase 1: Sunday Masses for non-vulnerable at 15% occupancy or in areas with good spacing; 15% Funeral Masses with 200 attendees with good spacing; Masses to have little singing
- Phase 2: Sunday Masses with 25% occupancy; resumption of individual special Masses for vulnerable groups with generous spacing.
- Phase 3: Sunday Masses for 50% occupancy; liturgical singing; daily for more vulnerable; funerals to have no capping
- Phase 4: Sunday Masses with 100% occupancy; admission of some vulnerable to participate in all Sacraments and group activities
- k) *Considerations during celebration of weddings and other religious ceremonies***
- i) Allow up to 100 people to attend at the initial stages
  - ii) Simplification of the Rite
  - iii) Education on the guidelines concerning festivities
  - iv) Sacrament of Confession with social distance
  - v) Sanitization procedures during the administration of Sacraments where anointing is involved
- l) *Considerations during religious funerals and gravesides/Crematoria last rites and send-off***
- i) Allow up to 200 people in the first phase; ensure minimum movements.
  - ii) Limit the number of those going to the graveside to only the close members of the family and the Ministers
  - iii) Discourage eating during Funerals
- m) *Practical role of religious community in public sensitization and capacity building***
- i) Identify what signage will be necessary to instruct the Faithful regarding fever or flu-like symptoms not to enter the Church.



- ii) Display a poster of Covid-19 on posture display
  - iii) Use other channels available, for example, Magazines or Radios
  - iv) Train all Church Leaders as to capacity build of those managing the activities
- n) *Step by step monitoring of the implementation of these guidelines***
- i) Form and train special Committees
  - ii) Regular meeting of Church Leaders for update and review
  - iii) Have Inter-Faith forums at Sub-Counties
- o) *Proposed sanctions for none compliance with guidelines in places of worship***
- i) Inspection by public health officers and closure of non-compliance places
  - ii) Care to be taken not to harass Priests or Congregation
- p) *How to review and or updating these guidelines***
- i) Collect suggestions through Inter-Faith Sub-Counties review Committees
  - ii) Create systems for feedback and reviews
- q) *Our commitments***
- i) Continue with sensitization of Christians
  - ii) Priests to ensure together with leaders the guidelines of MoH are followed
  - iii) Supervision by our Parish/Deanery Covid-19 Teams
- r) *Role of the National Government in implementation of the guidelines***
- i) Provide a conducive atmosphere to ensure freedom of worship as enshrined in the Constitution
  - ii) Provide masks to poor communities and water tanks
  - iii) Ministry of health to intervene where levels of congestion are high
- s) *Role of the County Government in implementation of the guidelines***
- i) Assist communities by providing health materials
  - ii) Ensure there is water throughout the County and especially in the days of worship
- t) *Role of the Ministry of Health in implementation of the guidelines***
- i) Updating the citizens on any new development of Covid-19 (new symptoms)
  - ii) Avail contacts of Health Officers on emergency call
  - iii) Be always ready for any emergencies



- u) Role of the Ministry of Interior in implementation of the guidelines**
  - i) Assist where called upon, especially in emotional funerals related to Covid-19
  - ii) Ensure security of Congregations, as body is being lowered down.
  - iii) Support the initiative of individual Churches to comply with the guidelines
  
- v) List of available channels of community sensitization within the Faith Community**
  - i) Have a Covid-19 moment in every service, we pass on information and civic education
  - ii) Use of our Faith based Radio Stations by having regular programs
  - iii) Use of Media channels, Priests and community leaders
  - iv) Theme for Church groups
  - v) Small Christian Community gatherings
  - vi) Social Media (WhatsApp groups or Facebook)
  - vii) The different Associations and Movements

## **2. Liturgical requirements**

- a) In the event that capacity restrictions are small, Parishes can consider or be encouraged to organize Masses on a day other than Sunday (or Vigil Mass on Saturday evening) to help spread out population and afford others the opportunity to also be present as permissible
- b) For urban set-up increase the number of Masses
- c) For rural set-up encourage and celebrate Sunday Masses in the Small Christian Community where the number is easily manageable.
- d) Mass to be celebrated for one hour and where there are more Masses we have an interval of 30 minutes to ensure sanitizing
- e) Where Churches have big compounds, to encourage open-air Masses where plastic chairs can easily be arranged
- f) Screens can be used outside the Church building in order to reduce the number inside the Church
- g) All missalettes, hymnals, prayer cards and other paper resources must be removed from pews

## **3. Sacraments and Sacramentals**

### **Sacrament of Baptism**

- a) Holy water fonts should be emptied and remain empty.
- b) Baptismal fonts must be emptied. Water is to be changed and blessed at each baptism, according to the ritual. As always, blessed water is to be properly disposed in a *sacrarium* or directly into the ground
- c) The minister should wear a mask throughout the celebration of the sacrament

- d) To the extent possible, a minimum of 1.5 metres distance should be kept between the celebrant and others during the ceremony. A limited period of proximity during the anointings, the pouring of water, and the explanatory rites is permissible and necessary

#### ***Sacrament of Confirmation***

- a) The anointing associated with confirmation may not take place via the use of a cotton ball or other instrument. The anointing must be performed by the celebrant directly with his hand.

#### ***Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick***

- a) It is recommended during this period to limit the celebration of the Anointing of the Sick to those who are dying and those about to undergo serious surgery. Communal celebration of the sacrament should not be scheduled for this time.
- b) The minister should wear mask and gloves throughout the celebration of the sacrament. As well, he should use hand sanitizer when entering and leaving the room of the sick.
- c) With the exception of anointing itself, the minister should maintain physical distance between himself and the recipient of the sacraments at all times.
- d) The anointing may take place via the use of a cotton, and only once on the forehead or another suitable area of the body. Cotton ball should not be reused and should be disposed immediately.
- e) Priests must follow all guidelines set by medical institutions, including the use of PPE. In most cases, only hospital chaplains will be able to anoint in these settings due to limited access to PPE and the training needed in order to properly wear it.

#### ***Sacrament of Confession***

- a) Confessions should follow safe social distancing practices and be carried out in a well-ventilated area, outdoors, or in the main Church.
- b) In Confession, both the priest and the penitent should wear masks and an impermeable barrier should be placed between the priest and the penitent.
- c) The penitent area, including any surface touched by the penitent, should be sanitized by the penitent at the end of their confession.

#### **4. Ministry and Ministers**

- a) The Priest who is Principal Celebrant.
- b) One deacon (if necessary).
- c) Concelebrating priests (if necessary).
- d) One Lector (who may read all the readings).



- e) One choir director.
- f) Ushers (as few as possible).
- g) Prayers of the faithful can be announced by one person.
- h) Altar Servers (if necessary).
- i) Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should only be assigned where there is a genuine need since initially the attendance will be limited.
- j) Singing should be limited to the liturgical action otherwise for entrance and communion the provided antiphon can suffice.
- k) For the time being we do away with all the processional dances.
- l) Special provision should be made for the collection; baskets should not be passed from one person to another. Instead, set up central collection points where the faithful can place their monetary contributions. Other collections in kind should be arranged at a time outside Mass with suitable precautions in place.
- m) Use of microphone: every minister should use his or her own microphone, otherwise it is sanitized before it is used by another person.
- n) To the greatest extent possible, all ministers (deacons, lectors, acolytes) should maintain the required physical distance of 1.5 metres.
- o) The main Celebrant may place the Missal at the chair or even on the Altar when he recites the presidential prayers, rather than having a server hold the book.
- p) Kissing of the Gospel can be replaced by a bow.
- q) Kissing of the altar can be replaced by a deep or profound bow.

## **5. Communion Rite**

- a) Sign of peace: it should either be omitted or use another gesture for the exchange of peace, but always avoid physical contact
- b) Communion should be received by hand and every minister and communicant should sanitize hands prior to distribution and reception.
- c) If any physical contact occurs between the minister and the communicant, the minister should immediately sanitize his hands.
- d) Both the minister and the communicant should be wearing masks.
- e) During communion the communicants should ensure social distance.
- f) Reception in both species should be done by intinction and where there are concelebrants, the last to commune drinks all the blood of Christ; otherwise, where possible each celebrant can have his own chalice.
- g) Where there is livestreaming, it is important to recite the prayer of spiritual communion.
- h) The minister should perform hand hygiene (e.g., with hand sanitizer) immediately before and after distributing Holy Communion



## 6. Concluding Rites

- a) Announcements should be very brief.
- b) Exit from the Church should be controlled.

## 7. Churches open for private prayers and Eucharistic Exposition

- a) A parish staff or usher or volunteer should be stationed at the front door when the Church is open to ensure that no more than the required number of people are present in the Church at one time and that everyone is seated according to social distancing regulations.
- b) After each visitor leaves, the staff should sanitize that area of the pew.
- c) Doorknobs and other high-traffic areas of the Church should be frequently sanitized.

By giving these guidelines, we are confident that we can assure our Christians of their safety when attending the Church services. We continue to urge you to be patient as we wait for the outcome of the Inter-Faith Council that was appointed by the President to give a roadmap towards re-opening the places of Worship. We shall continue working with the Government and the Ministry of Health officials to realize the goal of bringing back the Church activities to the Catholic community responsibly and expeditiously.

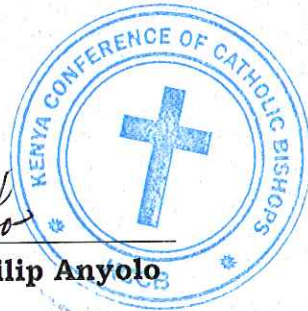
Meanwhile, let us continue praying for this pandemic to come to an end through the intercession of Blessed Virgin Mary and all the Saints. Let us never forget that our help is in the name of God who made heaven and earth.

Signed:



**Most Rev. Philip Anyolo**  
**Chairman**

**KENYA CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS**



Dated: 30<sup>th</sup> June, 2020

