

Archdiocese of Baltimore  
Guidelines for Responding to the COVID-19 Virus  
**May 20, 2020**

To limit the amount of information being shared and to make this document as easy to read and helpful as possible, it will be limited to mostly updated/new information. Limited “repeat” information is included in italics. A comprehensive set of guidelines can be found at [www.archbalt.org/coronavirus](http://www.archbalt.org/coronavirus).

**General**

- A. As we move toward the May 30/31 date when *some* parishes will be allowed to open for public masses, please keep in mind that this is only possible:
  - a. If your local jurisdiction is allowing religious services
  - b. Your parish has completed the archdiocesan checklist for reopening.No parish is *required* to hold public masses by May 30/31 even if these conditions have been met but the pastor determines the parish is not ready to do so.
- B. Going forward, it will be permissible to hold liturgies at auxiliary sites on the parish campus in addition to the main church, as long as each site maintains 6-foot social distancing and does not exceed 1/3 of the seating capacity.
- C. Masks are not strictly required if holding an outdoor Mass, but are still strongly encouraged in order to maintain a safe environment.
- D. Restrooms should be made available at both indoor and outdoor masses.
- E. State guidance from the Governor’s office encourages *either* taking temperatures at religious services or asking parishioners to do so at home. The Archdiocese is NOT requiring taking temperatures at the church but instead asks parishioners to take this responsibility personally. To our knowledge no local jurisdiction is requiring that churches take temperatures at services, but please alert the archdiocese at [riskmanagement@archbalt.org](mailto:riskmanagement@archbalt.org) if you hear differently.
- F. In general, we ask that parishes refrain from imposing requirements that exceed archdiocesan or local guidance, and to consult the archdiocese if there is a specific reason for wishing to implement policies that go beyond existing guidelines.

**Communication**

- A. *Repeat information: A page on the archdiocesan website has been established where all pastoral resources will be kept: <https://www.archbalt.org/pastoralresources/>*
- B. *Repeat information: There is one central contact for the Archdiocese for all questions, concerns and reports involving the COVID-19 virus: [riskmanagement@archbalt.org](mailto:riskmanagement@archbalt.org). As more information becomes available and as we learn of other questions or concerns more updates will be forthcoming. Updates will also be posted to <https://www.archbalt.org/coronavirus/>, where you can refer parishioners and others for the latest information and news.*