

天主教香港教區

秘書長辦公處

香港堅道十六號

電話：(852) 2523-2487, 2525-8021 (內線 441, 669)

傳真：(852) 2521-8781 電郵：chancery@pacific.net.hk
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CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HONG KONG

CHANCERY OFFICE

16, CAINE ROAD, HONG KONG

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CHANCERY NOTICE

POST-PANDEMIC PASTORAL GUIDELINES

Collaborating with the public in combating the Covid-19 pandemic, our Diocese, like other Local Churches affected by the same pandemic, has taken some provisional precautionary measures over the past three years, even to the point of suspending the celebration of public Masses for some long periods.

Now the pandemic in Hong Kong is on the whole being contained and local social life is returning to normal. It is therefore necessary and urgent for Church life to return to normal, with the celebration of the liturgy, especially the Eucharist, as "the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the font from which all her power flows" (*Vatican II Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy*, 10).

From now on, the faithful are to observe again the Sunday obligation. They are to take part in the Sunday Mass and may not just attend an online Mass or personally attend a weekday Mass as an alternative, with the exception of the elderly, the sick and the disabled who are unable to go to church for Sunday Mass. (Note)

The following are the post-pandemic pastoral guidelines announced by Bishop Stephen CHOW, S.J., with immediate effect:

1. Churches should be well ventilated and seats cleansed and disinfected regularly, with sanitisers available at the church entrances, to be freely used by the faithful and other visitors.
2. Those who enter the compound of a church or Mass centre should put on a face mask. The use of holy water at the church entrance should not be resumed yet.
3. The presiding celebrant, concelebrants and readers may at their discretion put off their masks while proclaiming the Word of God or preaching. Altar servers, commentators and choir members should put on a mask during Mass.
4. The use of liturgical booklets and hymnals should not be resumed yet. They may be substituted by projectors or leaflets to be used once only.
5. Sunday collections may be taken up as usual at the Offertory, while bread and wine may again be presented by the faithful.
6. The sign of peace should be expressed by bowing heads, instead of shaking hands.
7. Holy Communion should be received "in the hand" only until further notice. One's hands should be sanitised before and after giving or receiving Communion.

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8. In giving Holy Communion, the minister is to say softly, "The Body of Christ", while the communicant should respond softly, "Amen".
9. The blessing of children may be resumed, but the minister should avoid physical contact with them.
10. After Mass, the seats in the church, the microphones, the altar and sacred objects, etc., should be cleansed and disinfected. Likewise, parish premises for holding meetings/gatherings or frequently visited by the faithful should be disinfected regularly. Food and drinks may be allowed during gatherings, provided the venues are well ventilated and are not overcrowded.

Given at the Chancery Office,
9 February 2023.



Lawrence Lee
Rev. Lawrence Lee
Chancellor

(Note) See Annex to the Chancery Office: Some Reflections on the Active Participation of the Faithful in the Sunday Eucharist.

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Annex to The Chancery Notice

Some Reflections on the Active Participation of the Faithful in the Sunday Eucharist

Online Masses have been a valued service to the elderly, the sick and the disabled who are unable to go to church to take part in the Eucharist. Such broadcasts had also proved helpful when there was no possibility of community celebrations (as during the critical stages of the Covid-19 pandemic). Yet no broadcast is comparable to personal participation or can replace it. The Church has always emphasized the central rôle of the Sunday Eucharist in the Christian life. In the midst of the pandemic, Cardinal Robert SARAH, then Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, sent a Letter on 15 August 2020 to the Presidents of the Episcopal Conferences of the Catholic Church, with the theme : “*Let us return to the Eucharist with joy!*” *On the celebration of the liturgy during and after the COVID-19 pandemic*; for full text in English, visit http://catholic-dlc.org.hk/CCDDS_Prot_N_432-20_EN.pdf). The following are the main points of that Letter:

- *In order to live and to be Christians*, fully realizing our humanity and the desires for good and happiness, we have to be nourished by *the Word of the Lord*, which in the celebration of the Eucharist becomes a living word, spoken by God for those who, then and there during the Eucharist, open their hearts to listen;
- In order to experience the Paschal Ministry by which God accomplished His Salvific plan, we have to participate in the Sacrifice of the Cross, in which the Lord Jesus gives himself unreservedly to redeem mankind.
- *We cannot live without the banquet of the Eucharist*. As children of God and as brothers and sisters, we are invited to the table of the Lord to receive the Risen Christ himself, present in body, blood, soul and divinity, as the Bread of heaven. This is the spiritual nourishment that sustains us on our earthly pilgrimage.
- *The Church community is convoked by God as His family*. We need to meet and have physical contact with our brothers and sisters who share the sonship of God. The Sunday Eucharist is one of the best opportunities for such contact.
- *The Church is the house of the Lord, and as such it is also our home*. It is the place where we experience the provident presence of the Lord, where we go through the most significant stages of our Christian vocation, namely, baptism, marriage, reception of holy orders, religious profession and funeral, and where we have deep faith experiences: prayers, thanksgiving, spiritual joys and sorrows.
- *We cannot be without the Lord's Day*, without Sunday which gives light and meaning to the succession of days of work and to family and social responsibilities.

Broadcasts alone risk depriving us of the sense of adoration and distancing us from a personal and intimate encounter with the incarnate God who gave himself to us not in a virtual way, but really, saying: "He who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and I in him". (Jn 6.56). This physical contact with the Lord is vital, indispensable, irreplaceable.