



# GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO

---

## ΙΕΡΑ ΜΗΤΡΟΠΟΛΙΣ ΣΙΚΑΓΟΥ

### The Divine Liturgy: Special Directives and Liturgical Rubrics June 3, 2020

**The Divine Liturgy:** The Divine Liturgy has been celebrated during the COVID19 pandemic throughout our Holy Metropolis. We have gained much experience during the last few months; the lessons learned will help us continue to establish and refine our liturgical practices during this pandemic.

In an effort to mitigate the risk of infection, the Metropolis offers these special directives and liturgical rubrics for the celebration of the Divine Liturgy. They are to be used in conjunction with other Metropolis Directives ([chicago.goarch.org/reopening-parishes](http://chicago.goarch.org/reopening-parishes)) and special Orders and Directives issued by local authorities. As the current landscape evolves, or as better practices are developed, the Metropolis will make necessary adjustments to its directives.

Certain liturgical practices and customs are temporarily suspended or changed. **The manner in which the Holy Eucharist is distributed, however, will not change.** Even if special requests are made by the faithful, the clergy **may not** adopt practices that are in place in other local Orthodox Churches, Metropolises, Dioceses, or Assembly of Bishops Jurisdictions. Clergy are also **not permitted** to develop their own unique methods of distributing Holy Communion. The clergy are expected to remain patient with those who are afraid or feel apprehensive about receiving Holy Communion during this pandemic; they are to help quell efforts that view participation in the Eucharist the “litmus test” of one’s faith; they are to shepherd and slowly teach the faithful that the Life-giving Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ never leads to one’s sickness or death.

#### **A. General Instructions**

1. Concelebrations: Unless social distancing can be practiced, it is recommended that concelebrations be avoided.
2. Simultaneous Liturgies: In an effort to increase the number of people participating in the Divine Liturgy, parishes with two or more priests may celebrate simultaneous liturgies, however the following conditions must be followed in both services:
  - a. The total number of participants for each liturgy cannot exceed totals permitted by the Metropolis and the local authorities.
  - b. At least one Divine Liturgy must take place in the main church of the parish; the second liturgy may be celebrated in another space within the parish (e.g. chapel, parish fellowship hall).
  - c. Each liturgical space must have a separate entryway.
  - d. The parish must maintain a record of all participants in both liturgies.
  - e. The faithful must be notified in advance which service they are to attend; they may not switch which liturgy they attend.

- f. Prescribed safety measures, including social distancing and the covering of the nose and mouth, must be followed in both services.
3. Multiple Liturgies in a Single Day: Because the number of people who can attend any given service is still limited by local authorities, the Metropolis will consider requests by clergy to celebrate the Divine Liturgy twice per day. A priest must submit a written request that outlines the parish conditions that necessitate a temporary shift in the Church's liturgical tradition. After Metropolis review, if a priest is granted permission to celebrate the Divine Liturgy twice on the same day, he will receive additional instructions that he must follow.

## **B. *Special Safety Instructions***

1. Disinfecting Hands: Clergy and laity must disinfect their hands prior to the start of the Divine Liturgy and at various times during the service.
2. Disinfecting Vessels and Objects: All vessels, tables, and liturgical items must be disinfected before the start of the Divine Liturgy and at its conclusion.
3. Covering of the nose and mouth:
  - a. The laity, including those in the pews and the support staff (e.g. acolytes, ushers, parish council members, sextons, etc.) must wear a facemask or similar covering of the mouth and nose at all times.
  - b. The face covering must be removed when receiving Holy Communion.
  - c. The clergy are expected to cover their nose and mouth when they come in close proximity to others. This includes, but is not limited to, offering Holy Communion to the faithful.
  - d. Sextons and altar servers must disinfect their hands before and after handing or receiving any object.
  - e. Clergy must disinfect their hands before and after handing or receiving any object.
4. Protection of the eyes: Clergy are strongly encouraged to wear protective eyewear when they come in close proximity with others, including while distributing Holy Communion. While a "face shield" is not required, protective eyewear ought to be used.

## **C. *Liturgical Rubrics***

1. Orthros:
  - a. On Sundays, the Gospel should not be brought out to be venerated or placed in the Narthex.
  - b. Censing: To help maintain social distancing, the priest should not follow the normal censing patterns when people are seated in the pews or standing in the narthex. He may cense the altar and the iconostasis as normal, but he should cense the people from the center of the *solea*.

2. Small and Great Entrances: To help maintain social distancing, normal patterns for entrances should not be followed; all entrances should be performed only on the *solea* with minimal participation by acolytes and sextons.
3. Reading of the Holy Gospel: The Holy Gospel should be read from the Beautiful Doors (aka Royal Doors) and not from the pulpit. Acolytes should stay at least 6-feet away from the priest and each other.
4. Blessing after the Epistle Reading: The readers must not approach the priest for his blessing. The priest may bless them from a distance.
5. Distribution of the Holy Eucharist:
  - a. The Eucharist will be distributed to the faithful in the normal manner. Clergy **MAY NOT** adopt other practices.
  - b. Priests **MUST** cover their nose and mouth while distributing the Holy Eucharist; they are also strongly encouraged to use protective eyewear.
  - c. Priests **MUST** use a clean and unused communion cloth for every celebration of the Divine Liturgy. An ample supply of clean communion cloths should be available in the altar.
    1. The faithful should sanitize their hands as they approach the chalice and refrain from touching the communion cloth
    2. The acolyte assisting with Holy Communion, should help ensure that the faithful do not use the cloth to blot their lips after receiving Holy Communion.
    3. If, at any time during the distribution of the Holy Eucharist, the priest feels that the communion cloth is no longer clean, he should immediately replace it with a clean cloth.
6. Antidoron may not be offered at this time. The Metropolis liturgical committee will continue to consider ways to safely distribute *antidoron*.

**Offerings Brought to the Church:** As a general rule, a parish should secure for itself the *prosforon*, *arto*, *kolyva*, wine and oil needed for a service. If parishioners wish to make such offerings, the following protocol must be followed:

1. *Kolyva*: If a parishioner brings a plate of *koliva* for a memorial service, s/he must maintain possession of the plate throughout the duration of the Divine Liturgy and memorial service. At the conclusion of the memorial service, s/he must bring the *kolyva* back home; they must not be distributed to the faithful in attendance.
  - a. **Names for commemoration:** Clergy must instruct the people to email the names that are to be commemorated at least one day prior to the memorial service.
    - i. If a parishioner is unable to email the names and prefers to personally bring the names in an envelope, the support staff in the narthex should instruct the person to open the envelope and deposit the list in a designated basket at the *pangari*. A designated volunteer will bring the names to the priest prior to the start of the memorial service.
2. Prosforon, Wine, Oil and other Offerings: If a parishioner brings prosforon, wine, oil or any other offering to the church, these items must be deposited in a designated holding area in the narthex until the end of the Divine Liturgy. After these items have been properly cleaned and disinfected, they may be used by the priest.
  - a. **Names for commemoration:** As in the case with names for memorial services, names meant to be commemorated at the *proskomide* should be emailed to the priest the prior day.
    - i. If a parishioner is unable to email the names and prefers to personally bring the names in an envelope, the support staff in the narthex should instruct the person to open the envelope and deposit the list in a designated basket at the *pangari*. A designated volunteer will bring the lists of names to the priest prior to the start of the Divine Liturgy.