

天主教香港教區

秘書長辦公處

香港堅道十六號

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CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF HONG KONG

CHANCERY OFFICE

16, CAINE ROAD, HONG KONG

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CHANCERY NOTICE

DIOCESAN PASTORAL GUIDELINES ON THE RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC MASSES, GROUP GATHERINGS AND HOLY WEEK LITURGY (AMENDED)

As the fourth wave of the Covid-19 epidemic has gradually stabilised, the Government has relaxed its “Group Gathering” measures by amending the *Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G)* to allow religious ceremonial gatherings to resume subject to appropriate precautionary measures. On the basis of such relaxation, announced on 31 March 2021 (effective the same day), Cardinal John TONG has announced related Diocesan Pastoral Guidelines, as follows:

I. RESUMPTION OF PUBLIC MASSES

1. Parish churches (applicable also to “affiliated Mass centres” in what follows) may resume public Masses on weekdays and Sundays with effect from 1 April 2021 (Holy Thursday). During Mass, the faithful may receive Holy Communion.
2. Churches should be well ventilated and seats cleansed and disinfected regularly, with a disinfected carpet at the church entrance.
3. The congregation should be limited to 30% of the normal capacity of the church.
4. Before entering the church compound, the faithful are required to scan the “LeaveHomeSafe” venue QR code or to record their names, contact numbers, and the date and time of their visits on registration forms. The information collected will be kept for 31 days and will solely be used by the Government for contact tracing purposes in preventing further spread of the virus.
[Please refer to “*Health Advice on Prevention of Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) for Religious Assembly (Interim)*”, II, C, (p), issued by the Centre for Health Protection, see the website link: https://www.chp.gov.hk/files/pdf/advice_on_prevention_for_religious_assembly_eng.pdf]
5. When entering the church compound, the faithful should put on a face mask, take body temperature and cleanse their hands with sanitiser. The use of holy water at the church entrance should be suspended.
6. Ushers should see to it that those inside the church keep adequate social-distancing.
7. The use of liturgical booklets and hymnals should be suspended (projectors may be used instead).
8. Sunday collections should be taken up after Mass, with one or several donation boxes provided.
9. The sign of peace should be expressed by bowing heads, instead of shaking hands.

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10. For the time being, Holy Communion should be received only “in the hand”. One’s hands should be sanitised before and after receiving Communion.
11. Once the Mass is concluded, the faithful should leave the church compound and avoid socialising.
12. After Mass, the seats in the church should be cleansed and disinfected.
13. The Parish Priest or those delegated by him should see to it that the foregoing Guidelines are duly observed.

* * * * *

Notes:

- (i) If necessary and feasible, while the Mass is being celebrated in the church, those who are not able to actually take part in the liturgy may be allowed, in an open, spacious area nearby (for example, the parish hall or the open area adjoining the church), to attend the Mass online and receive Holy Communion.

If arranging for Sunday Masses is not feasible under the current situation, a parish may fix one or more time slots for giving out Holy Communion to those who have attended Sunday Masses online and are properly disposed, by adopting a simplified rite provided by the Diocesan Liturgy Commission.

- (ii) If necessary and feasible, a parish may arrange for one or two more Sunday Masses to meet the spiritual needs of the faithful.
- (iii) Children, the elderly or the disabled and those who accompany them to Mass may sit together.
- (iv) Attending the Sunday Mass is an obligation on the part of the faithful. Nevertheless, in so far as the pandemic is not yet completely contained, Cardinal John TONG, as a discretionary measure, permits the following alternatives to attending the Sunday Mass —
 - a. Those who have worries that they might get infected by the pandemic if they come to church to attend the Sunday Mass, may attend it online (and receive spiritual Communion) or perform some acts of devotion, such as reading the Bible, etc.
 - b. Granted that the seating in churches is being restricted at present, one can take part in a weekday Mass instead of the Sunday Mass.

The above discretionary measure will be terminated once the pandemic is fully contained and the local situation is back to normal. A related announcement will be made.

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II. OTHER GROUP GATHERINGS

Sunday schools, catechism classes, gatherings of lay associations and small-group meetings may be resumed, provided all anti-pandemic precautionary regulations are observed (see above I. 5-6; also, food or drinks should not be provided).

III. HOLY WEEK LITURGY

Basing on the Decrees “*In time of Covid-19*” (I) and (II) promulgated by the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments on 19 and 25 March 2020 respectively, the Diocesan Liturgy Commission has provided guidelines for parishes to make special arrangements for the Holy Week Liturgy.

The faithful can also watch online the Holy Week Liturgy (by visiting diocesan website: www.catholic.org.hk and the facebook link of *Sunday Examiner* <https://www.facebook.com/Sunday-Examiner-609821205700415/>).

If necessary, parishes may arrange for the Holy Week Liturgy as suggested at the above Note (i), para. 1, or they may hold the same celebration at several time slots on the same day, or at different places (e.g., the church and the parish hall) at the same time.

1. HOLY THURSDAY – 1 April

Cardinal John Tong will officiate at the Chrism Mass to be held on Holy Thursday (April 1). (Participated only by the members of the Diocesan Curia and the Deans who will distribute the newly consecrated holy oil to the affiliated parishes.)

2. GOOD FRIDAY – 2 April

(a) *Fast and Abstinence*

All faithful who have completed their 14th year are to abstain from meat. Those who have completed their 18th year but have not yet begun their 60th year are also obliged to fast.

(b) *Holy Land Special Collection*

It is the wish of the Holy Father that each year on Good Friday, in all churches, Mass centres and chapels with eucharistic services for the faithful, special prayers be offered and a special collection be taken up in support of our brethren in the Holy Land and the numerous pastoral, charitable, educational and social institutions and projects sponsored by the Church

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there. In view of the enormous expenses, the Holy See is appealing for a more generous support from us.

The collection may take place either during the celebration of the Lord's Passion or during the pious exercise of the Way of the Cross. The collection should be sent to the Diocesan Procurement with a cheque issued for this specific purpose and made payable to "*The Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong*". (The faithful who will not take part in the aforementioned celebration or pious exercise can also make their donations through cash or cheque, sent to the respective parish offices (cheques should be made payable to the parishes concerned, with the indication "*Good Friday Donation to Holy Land*" at the back.)

3. HOLY SATURDAY – 3 April

In view of the pandemic, Cardinal John Tong has granted all priests assigned to parishes and all chaplains the faculty, to be exercised during the Easter Season (i.e., from Holy Saturday evening to Pentecost) this year, to administer confirmation to adults or children who received baptism some time ago, provided they have been properly instructed.

4. If the Sacraments of Christian Initiation for adults will be held on any days during the Easter Season other than Holy Saturday evening or Easter Sunday, parishes may use the Rite entitled "*Sacraments of Initiation (full reception on one single occasion) during Mass*" provided by the Diocesan Liturgy Commission.

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Bearing in the mind the spiritual needs of the faithful and taking into consideration the concrete situations of individual parishes, Parish Priests are to make suitable arrangements for weekday and Sunday Masses, Holy Week Liturgy, the giving out of Holy Communion and group gatherings. If they have difficulties in these matters, they can consult the Diocesan Curia.

Given at the Chancery Office,
31 March 2021.



Rev. Lawrence Lee
Chancellor