

# origins

CNS documentary service

## Guidelines for Phase 1 of Reopening Churches

### Archdiocese of Baltimore

The Archdiocese of Baltimore released some of the most detailed guidelines for the reopening of churches amid the coronavirus pandemic. As Maryland officials eased the state's stay-at-home order, the archdiocese May 12 released plans for Phase 1 of reopening churches that do not include the resumption of regular Sunday or weekday Masses. Archbishop William E. Lori later announced that Phase 1 of reopening would commence on May 15, and that he hoped a return of regular Sunday and weekday Masses would begin the weekend of May 30-31, Pentecost.

*“Daily and Sunday Masses will continue to be held without the presence of the faithful during Phase 1.”*

Phase 1 of the reopening plan deals with weddings, funerals, other sacraments, private prayer, parish ministries and parish operations. In line with state rules, only 10 people may be present for weddings and funerals. The guidelines note that everyone but the priest must wear a mask (the priest may wear a mask if he chooses), and the pastor must “see to it that these obligations are enforced without exception.” The guidelines also note that the priest or extraordinary minister of holy Communion must wear a mask while distributing Communion and must use hand sanitizer prior to distribution. Nobody is to wear gloves while giving or receiving Communion, and receiving in the hand is highly recommended. The priest or extraordinary minister of holy Communion must use hand sanitizer between communicants if someone receives Communion on the tongue. The guidelines follow.

#### PART I

#### Wedding and Funeral Masses And the Sacraments

##### Overview

**a**fter consultation with regional vicars and the priests and laity of the diocese — including the presbyteral council and the archdiocesan pastoral council — this instruction is given to update, clarify and determine the methods to be observed in the various phases of the resumption of “limited public worship” in the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

*continued on page 74*

2249A



#### contents

- 73 Guidelines for Phase 1 of Reopening Churches  
*by the Archdiocese of Baltimore*
- 88 Datebook
- 88 On File

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