



THE CHANCERY  
OFFICE OF THE VICAR GENERAL  
ARCHDIOCESE OF NEW YORK

MEMORANDUM

To: Brother Priests  
Department Directors

From: Father LaMorte 

Date: January 18, 2021

Subject: *SOME THINGS TO KNOW*  
<https://archny.org/monthly-combined-mailing-from-the-vicar-general/>

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**REQUIRED ANNOUNCEMENT ON FINANCIAL INTEGRITY HOTLINE** The Archdiocese of New York is committed to safeguarding the stewardship of its people. As part of that effort, we periodically write to the Catholic community to advise them whom they may contact and what steps they can take if they have suspicion of financial impropriety.

Please find an announcement in English and Spanish to be included in your Sunday bulletin. Its wording was approved by the presbyteral council. If your parish uses another language, i.e., Chinese, French, German, Italian or others, I am asking that you have it correctly translated and send a copy of your bulletin with these translations to my office. Additionally, publish this announcement every February and August.

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*“The Archdiocese of New York takes stewardship of your donations seriously. If you have knowledge of or reason to suspect misconduct, please report your concerns via a toll-free hotline at 877-820-0541 or on the internet at <http://www.reportlineweb.com/ADNY>. Both are available 24 hours per day.”*

*“La Arquidiócesis de Nueva York toma la administración de sus donaciones seriamente. Si usted tiene conocimiento o una razón sospechosa del mal manejo financiero, por favor reporte sus inquietudes a través de la línea gratuita de atención telefónica al 877-820-0541 o en la Internet, en <http://www.reportlineweb.com/ADNY>. Ambos están disponibles las 24 horas del día.”*

**ADVISORY FOR BLESSING OF THROATS AND DISTRIBUTION OF ASHES** With concerns about the coronavirus still with us, the Blessing of Throats on Wednesday, February 3 might simply be offered with hands extended over the assembly (see *Book of Blessings*, no. 1628). If offered within Mass, it may be prayed after the general intercessions or may take the place of the final blessing (*BB* 1626).

As to Ash Wednesday on February 17 and the distribution of ashes to the faithful, and with guidance from the USCCB committee on divine worship, this procedure will be followed within the Archdiocese of New York:

- The priest will offer the prayer for blessing of ashes;
- He sprinkles the ashes with holy water without saying anything;
- He then addresses all those present and only once says the formula as it appears in the Roman Missal, applying it to all in general: “*Repent, and believe in the Gospel*” or “*Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return*”.
- The priest then cleanses his hands, and puts on a face mask;
- He invites the faithful, wearing masks to stand side-by-side, two meters apart, before the altar rail or altar step;
- Immediately after the priest places ashes on the forehead of the person, moving from left to right, without saying anything, he cleans the finger he used with an alcohol sanitizer wipe before placing ashes on the next person;
- The imposition of ashes should take no longer than a few seconds in front of the priest.

In promoting the distribution of ashes, the faithful might be reminded that only those in good health would present themselves. It was also suggested that the hours for the distribution of ashes be limited to Mass or a Liturgy of the Word with a definite beginning and end so as not to expose the priest to others for any great length of time.

**THE KENEDY AND SONS OFFICIAL CATHOLIC DIRECTORY (OCD)** Each pastor should have received correspondence from the OCD by email or letter requesting updates for the 2021 edition. If you have not received this, contact Mary Meade at the office of the vicar for clergy at [mary.meade@archny.org](mailto:mary.meade@archny.org) or (646) 794-3233. Visit [ocdedits.com/login](http://ocdedits.com/login) to review and update your organization's information. This needs to be completed to confirm that listings in the OCD are recognized as exempt under section 501(c) of the tax code.

**CHRISTIAN UNITY OCTAVE** Today begins the 11<sup>th</sup> Week of Prayer for Christian Unity with the theme, *Abide in My Love. . . You Shall Bear Much Fruit*. During this period, special intentions for Christian unity may be included in the universal prayer. Masses may be selected from *Masses for Various Needs and Occasions* (nos. 17, 18, 19) in accordance with liturgical norms (cf. *GIRM*, 373-374).

**CARDINAL'S ANNUAL STEWARDSHIP APPEAL** Although we have faced many difficulties over the past year, thank you for your commitment to the appeal which has raised \$19,000,000 to date. This was largely due to the leadership of our pastors and committee members. A successful appeal is directly affected by the involvement of the pastor. For most of our parishes, the 2021 appeal will kick off next Sunday, January 24. Campaign managers are working hard to support the Church through this crisis, so rely on them as a resource. As in 2020, they will encourage highly personalized outreach to your parishioners, especially those who are loyal supporters, those who may have not participated last year, and parishioners who have completed their *Renew + Rebuild* pledges. The development team can also support online giving, digital communications, and parish-based planned giving. There will be a thirty-minute planned giving seminar specifically for pastors on Tuesday, January 12 at 2:00 on Zoom, which will cover these topics: how to talk about planned giving with parishioners; how to include family in estate planning; why it's important to have a will, even for priests. You may contact Jane at [jane.kyr@archny.org](mailto:jane.kyr@archny.org) if you would like to attend.

**HOLY DAYS OF OBLIGATION 2021** On Sundays and other holy days of obligation, Catholics are obliged to participate in the Mass and to refrain from unnecessary work and all spiritually-distracting activities in conformity with the code of canon law. "Obligation" means "ya gotta do it!" It's the Church's way of stressing the importance of the mystery, person or event being celebrated. During 2021, the following days will be observed: Friday, January 1 (Mary, Mother of God); Thursday, May 13 (Ascension of the Lord); Sunday, August 15 (Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary); \*Monday, November 1 (All Saints); Wednesday, December 8 (Immaculate Conception); Saturday, December 25 (Nativity of the Lord).

*\*By special indult from the Holy See in 1994, Catholics are not obligated to attend Mass when either Mary, the Mother of God, the Assumption or All Saints fall on a Saturday or a Monday. Pastors, however are encouraged to offer a convenient Mass schedule for those who wish to attend.*

**CATHOLIC CENTER HOLIDAY SCHEDULE** During 2021, the Catholic Center will observe the following holiday schedule: January 1, January 18, February 15, March 17, April 1 (1:00), April 2, April 5, May 13, May 31, July 5, September 6, October 11, November 1, November 11, November 24 (1:00), November 25, November 26, December 8, December 24, and December 31. It will also close at 1:00 on the ten summer Fridays (July 2, 9, 16, 23, 30, August 6, 13, 20, 27 and September 3). To reach the chancery after hours and on weekends, call Community Answering Service at 877-582-2996. Add this number as "*Chancery Emergency*" to the list of contacts in your mobile telephone.

**SHARE THE WORD** Please give access to all your priests and staff members to the material which is pertinent to them, enclosed in the monthly mailing from the office of the vicar general. For it to succeed, we recommend that this *Some Things to Know* be posted in the public area of the general office.

**RECONCILIATION MONDAY** Bishop Dominick Lagonegro has been coordinating Reconciliation Monday since it began in 2011. He has recommended and the cardinal has approved the following dates:

+Lenten Reconciliation Monday: March 29, 2021, April 11, 2022 with the dioceses of Brooklyn and Rockville Centre are from 3:00 PM to 9:00 PM.

+Advent Reconciliation Monday: December 20, 2021, December 19, 2022 with the diocese of Brooklyn are from 4:00 to 8:00 PM. Remember the value of honoring these hours in every parish.

**SAFEGUARD YOUR SACRAMENTAL REGISTERS** In accordance with the code of canon law, each parish is to maintain registers for recording baptisms, marriages and deaths. Generally, registers for confirmation, first holy communion, RCIA and the anointing of the sick are also maintained. In the baptism register are also to be noted confirmation and those things which pertain to the canonical status of the Christian faithful (marriage, adoption, reception of holy orders, perpetual profession in a religious institute, or change of rite). These notations are always to be included on the baptism certificate. Each parish is to have its own seal. Documents regarding the canonical status of the Christian faithful and all acts which can have juridic importance are to be signed by the pastor or his delegate and impressed with the parochial seal. As new registers need to be ordered, if at all possible the pages should be made of acid-free paper. As registers become worn, they are to be rebound by a professional binder. Sacramental registers are to be stored in a locked, secure place, preferably one which is fire-proof or fire-resistant. The registers may be removed only by authorized personnel. The loss or destruction of any sacramental register should be reported immediately to the office of the vicar general.

**OFFICE HOLIDAYS** On Monday, January 18, the Catholic Center will be closed in observance of the birthday of Reverend Martin Luther King. On Monday, February 15, it will be closed for Presidents' Day. Leave your message in the department's voice mailbox and it will be returned on the next business day. To reach the chancery after hours and on weekends, call Community Answering Service at 877-582-2996. Add this number as "*Chancery Emergency*" to the list of contacts in your mobile telephone.

**PRIEST COMPENSATION** Each September since 2010, His Eminence, Cardinal Dolan has amended the base stipend for his priests with a cost of living adjustment of one, two or three percent. This is understood not to be a raise, but rather an attempt to reach parity with the priests of neighboring dioceses. Considering the effects of the child victims act and the coronavirus pandemic upon the Church in New York, we decided to break with tradition and revisit this benefit again in January. As promised, the deferment of such an increase will be deferred because of these tough financial times for our people, parishes, and archdiocese and subsequent lay-offs of personnel. Although disappointing, we are grateful for your understanding. Nevertheless, if you find yourself strapped, drop a note to the vicar general.

**NO ONE TO ANSWERED THE PARISH TELEPHONE?** With modern technology today, an urgent contact with a priest should be easily facilitated, especially whenever there is no secretary at the parish office. Different churches use different systems, such as commercial answering services, a dedicated “duty priest” mobile phone, call forwarding, etc. What should be avoided is any parish system where no priest can be contacted for several hours for a crucial matter.

**NEW PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS TOOLKIT AND PLANNING GUIDE FOR NEW YORK CITY FAITH COMMUNITIES** New York Disaster Interfaith Services (NYDIS) at the request of the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) and the Fund for Public Health of New York, has released a new Pandemic Preparedness Planning Toolkit. The Toolkit has been developed to assist lay and ordained religious congregations in developing a pandemic preparedness plan identifying the best way to serve congregants, staff, clients, and neighborhoods during pandemics – such as COVID-19.

The toolkit is comprised of three sections relevant to the response, relief, and/or recovery phases of a pandemic and also includes customizable templates to assist in the effective communication of messages and documents. The sections are as follows:

- Planning how to best help congregations prepare to serve their community;
- Effective communication during a pandemic;
- Maintaining continuity of operations and services for a congregation and outreach programs.

A free toolkit and vaccine update webinar has been *tentatively* planned for:

- Spanish Speaking Religious Leaders on February 9, 2021 from 3:30pm – 5:00pm
- English Speaking Religious Leaders - TBD.

The links to the webinars are forthcoming. For additional information and to access the previous webinars, please click on the below link:

<https://thrivenyc.cityofnewyork.us/toolkit-and-webinars-for-faith-leaders-on-promoting-mental-health>

**ANNUAL REPORT ON SACRAMENTAL PARTICIPATION (*Status Amingarum*)** Thank you to all who have completed the new online sacramental report. As you know, every year we collect Mass attendance numbers, sacramental figures, religious education and regional or parish school enrollment, staffing and volunteer personnel data for each parish church and worship site. The information that you provide is helpful for parish planning in the archdiocese and for responding to the reports that are required by the Holy See and the Episcopal conference. Currently, there are 13 parishes whose data has not yet been submitted because they failed to hit the “Finalize” button. Of course, if you are among those who still have not completed the report, try to attend to this right away so that we have 100% participation. Are you still experiencing difficulty? You may contact Fred ([fred.scialabba@archny.org](mailto:fred.scialabba@archny.org)) who will be happy to help with this new platform.

**LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT, HEALTH CARE PROXY, FUNERAL MASS ARRANGEMENTS** Each time we call attention to the need for a Last Will and Testament, priests do have one drawn and a copy deposited on file with the office of the vicar for clergy. When doing so, you might consider naming a brother priest as executor. One can only imagine the pain that survivors endure when one of us dies without a Will. A Last Will and Testament is required of all pastors. But it is desirable for all of us, along with health care proxies and plans for the funeral Mass and burial.

**PRIEST RETREAT REVISED SCHEDULE** Due to the ongoing public health crisis, the retreat for incardinated priests of the archdiocese in March is postponed until the week of May 3-7 and will be preached by His Eminence. Remaining dates are October 4-8 (Bishop Colacicco) and October 18-22 (Bishop Whalen). An additional week is scheduled for November 29-December 3 for all religious order and international priests. New registration information will be coming shortly.

**2020 INCOME TAXES FOR PRIESTS ONLY** Institutional Commodity Services (ICS) is again offering at a discount the latest version of Scott Hoselton's familiar manual, *2020 Income Taxes for Priests Only*. Again this year, there are several new changes in tax law. This manual will help you or your accountant sort out how to report federal stimulus payments, paycheck protection program loans, COVID-19 sick leave and above-the-line charitable deductions for those who do not itemize. As you know, priests are subject to special income tax rules. Information on how to order is included in this mailing. You can [order online here](#) or call the ICS customer care team at 646-794-2600. Also, if you are ordering church supplies from ICS, be mindful that ashes may be canceled or adjusted by Friday, February 5. Palm orders are due Tuesday, February 16 and may be canceled or modified by noon on Thursday, March 4.

**OPTIONS FOR ON-SITE FORMATION IN A YELLOW ZONE** The department of youth faith formation has developed options for parishes to be able to offer in-person religious education and youth ministry in yellow zones. The current NYS policy specifies that if a parish is in a state designated yellow zone COVID micro-cluster, all in-person religious education and youth ministry should go completely remote. Enclosed you will find a memo for pastors and a Yes/No Test infographic that will help parishes decide if they can offer faith formation at their parish site. To ask questions, contact [ela.milewska@archny.org](mailto:ela.milewska@archny.org).

**JUST ONE MORE THING** Every few days, try on your jeans to be sure that they fit. Pajamas will have you believe all is well in the kingdom. If you keep stress-eating at this level, the buttons on your shirt will start socially distancing from each other.