

COVID-19 Priest Protocol for Anointing Calls in a non-hospital setting
Updated April 1, 2020

All hospitals, nursing homes and adult family homes should have their own Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) supply and protocols in place for the priest to follow. It is recommended that when receiving the call, the priest ask to talk with the nurse in charge in the setting to understand what procedures and limitations are onsite. If there are any indications that they do not have PPE, priest should have PPE in car just in case.

During this time of crisis, we want to support priests with the best information and medical advice while continuing to provide the ministry necessary to the dying in our midst. This is the best information that the COVID-19 Taskforce of the Archdiocese of Seattle has at this time. The Archdiocese recommends that each priest determine what is safest for their health and safety as they strive to fulfill their ministry.

All anointing calls in a home or nursing home setting, until this crisis is over, will need to include an intake by the priest or representative to ask whether the person has had cough or fever or shortness of breath (or if anyone in the home has those symptoms). If yes to any of these, the priest should assume the person is infected with COVID-19 and take the necessary Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) with them (the anointing kit). Furthermore, the priest is encouraged to call either Nick Schoen, 206-472-3052 or Ed Foster 206730-7204 to accompany the priest to the home to assess the safety of the situation and give guidance on the PPE. Nick and Ed are working with others who may be offered to the priest in this regard.

The kit includes:

- Gloves
- Eye protection (this may be a shield, goggles or full mask)
- Masks (N-95 mask for the priest and surgical mask for the patient) if your kit does not include a second surgical mask for the patient, please call Nick or Ed.
- Gown/Body suit
- Small zip lock bag with a 2x2 gauze pad for Oil of the Sick
- Garbage bag

Directions on putting on/taking off the supplies:

- Perform hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizer) before coming to house
- Put on PPE before entering the setting. Put on gown, mask, eye protection, gloves in that order
- Keep hands away from face, don't touch PPE. Avoid touching anything in the home
- Remove PPE just outside the home, closing door.
 - Take off gloves, eye protection, gown, mask in that order
- Place all items in garbage bag provided and leave at the home for medical waste disposal.
 - It is presumed that medical waste is incinerated, which would properly dispose the Sacred Oil
- Perform hand hygiene (hand washing or sanitizer) as soon as possible
- If hands become contaminated at any time, while removing, stop and perform hand hygiene, then continue with removal.

Anointing directions:

The priest should consider whether Viaticum could be given. If the answer is yes, he is encouraged to use the small zip lock bag to hold the Blessed Sacrament. If the priest does bring the Blessed Sacrament then they should assess prior to the visit whether the person can receive a full size Host or whether they should only administer a small fraction of the Host. Furthermore, he should not take his ritual book or oil stock into the setting. He is encouraged to touch the gauze pad to the Oil of the Sick in the oil stock and again, carry this in the small zip lock bag. The priest may anoint with gloves per Canon 1000 Section 2. Prayers for anointing should be printed and brought into the setting for the priest to use and then dispose of inside the garbage with other PPE items.

PPE Directions:

<https://www.cdc.gov/hai/pdfs/ppe/PPE-Sequence.pdf>

Resources:

<https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/9-RecommendationsforInHomeCareProviders.pdf>

[https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-whenovel-coronavirus-\(ncov\)-infection-is-suspected-20200125](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/infection-prevention-and-control-during-health-care-whenovel-coronavirus-(ncov)-infection-is-suspected-20200125)

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