



DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

Date: June 3, 2020
To: Pastors, Parish Administrators, and Business Managers
From: Dennis Honan
Subject: Detailed Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Churches in the Diocese of Manchester

Disinfecting after Mass or other services

- These guidelines are based on the measures established by Bishop Peter Libasci for the resumption of the *Celebration of Mass with a Congregation* that implements the advice and guidelines from the CDC and EPA for cleaning and disinfecting *Houses of Worship*. CDC/EPA recommendations can be found here:
 - CDC Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith
https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fphp%2Ffaith-based.html
 - CDC/EPA cleaning and disinfection guidance
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
 - EPA approved disinfectants
<https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm>
- Disinfection process
 - Identify and train adult staff and/or volunteers who are willing to disinfect high-touch surfaces after each Mass.
 - Ask the attendees to clear out of the church quickly so that disinfecting can begin. It takes about 4 to 5 volunteers about 20 to 30 minutes to disinfect a church with a reduced capacity of about 150.
 - The volunteers or staff doing the disinfecting should use latex gloves and masks.
 - Some churches keep track of the available pews that were not occupied during the Mass, so that they would not need to be disinfected except for the areas that may have been touched by people walking by.
 - The front, back and tops of pews should be disinfected. Basically, any surface that could have been touched during Mass.
 - All other high-touch surfaces should be disinfected including doorknobs, handles, kneelers, railings, microphones, shared instruments, and bathrooms.
 - Remove items that can reduce the need for frequent handling and require disinfection. These include hymnals, missalettes, and other books.
 - Soft and porous materials, such as area rugs and seating, may be removed or stored to reduce the challenges with cleaning and disinfecting them.

Disinfecting after Mass or other services (continued)

- Disinfectant
 - Use an EPA-approved product. The list can be found here: <https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm>
 - If an EPA-approved product is not available, alternative disinfectants can be used:
 - Mix 1/3 cup of bleach added to 1 gallon of water: or
 - Use a 70% alcohol solution.
 - Note that bleach has a very strong smell which may not be well tolerated by parishioners and requires sufficient ventilation.
 - Bleach, alcohol, and other products may damage woodwork finishes, especially older surfaces, and should be avoided. Be sure to check for damage in an inconspicuous area or use a product that will not be harmful (**Bioesque** (see below) or **Benefect Decon 30** are EPA-approved, indicate they are not harmful to woodwork and are recommended by the Archdiocese of Boston).
 - Do not mix bleach or other cleaning and disinfecting products together. This can cause fumes that may be very dangerous to breathe in.
 - Keep all disinfectants out of the reach of children.
 - Always read and follow directions on the label. Follow the EPA or manufacturers guidance on how long the product should be left on a surface before being wiped off or cleaned. Typically, 4 to 10 minutes.
 - If you cannot remove pew cushions, or other porous materials, mist them with a disinfectant that is approved for porous materials (e.g. Bioesque) and allow to air dry.
 - Ensure adequate ventilation.
- Cleaning
 - High touch areas that were disinfected throughout the day should be cleaned at least daily (to remove any residual disinfectant and dirt) or when there is visible dirt. Use your normal cleaning products and process.
 - Follow your normal plan for routine cleaning of other parts of the church with your normal cleaning products and process.
- Outdoor Areas
 - Outdoor areas generally require normal routine cleaning and do not require disinfection. You should maintain existing cleaning and hygiene practices for outdoor areas. High-touch areas outdoors should be both cleaned and disinfected, however.

Bioesque – I have spoken with several parishes in Boston who are successfully using this product.

- The EPA Registration number is 87742-1 and is on the approved CDC/EPA COVID-19 Disinfecting list
- Product website: <https://bioesquesolutions.com/botanical-disinfectant-solution/>
- It comes in 5 gallon containers. The product is ready to use (not concentrate) and should not be diluted.
- It contains no bleach or chlorine, and no harmful chemicals and should not be harmful to any wood surface.
- Can be used on porous and non-porous surfaces, include fabric seats.
- The product can be used to disinfect surfaces such as pews, door handles, doorknobs, cloth seat cushions, kneelers, railings, microphones, shared instruments, and bathrooms. If it is being used on a food surface, that surface should be washed with soap and water after being disinfected.
- A hole can be drilled in the middle of the lid and a 5 gallon pump dispenser can be inserted and used to refill spray bottles. Pumps for 5 gallon containers should be available from Home Depot or local hardware stores, though none of the Boston parishes I spoke with felt a need to use the pump.
- The product should remain on a surface for 4 minutes, per the EPA, before being wiped off.
- In speaking with the Boston parishes, they are using 2 application methods:
 - Spray the product on the pews, wait 4 minutes, then wipe off. This would entail putting the product into spray bottles that can be obtained from your local hardware stores; or
 - Soak cloths in the product (e.g., dip them into the container) and then wipe the pews. Keep the cloths wet – do not let them dry out. This will dry within a few minutes and does not need to be wiped after application.
- It has a pleasant lemon smell that dissipates quickly.
- It requires about 1 qt. of the product to disinfect a church that holds about 200 people (reduced capacity) for each disinfection (i.e., after each service).
- Bioesque can purchased from Prospect Hill Company in Brockton, MA. <https://www.prospecthillco.com/>. The company and product have been recommended by the Archdiocese of Boston to their parishes. Prospect Hill is a church supply company that primarily supports Catholic churches.
- The Diocese has purchased a limited supply if a parish is unable to obtain the required disinfectant locally. It comes in 5 gallon containers and are priced at \$124.95 each (pass through cost). Please contact Deb Keane at 603-663-0155 or dkeane@rcbm.org for more information.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 603-663-0112 or dhonan@rcbm.org.

In Christ Jesus,

Dennis Honan
Director of Operations and Administration