

COVID-19 PARISH GUIDELINES

Effective August 9, 2021

Please feel free to read or distribute this weekend.

There is a growing concern in our medical communities that the Delta variant could begin to overwhelm local health care facilities, as it is in other parts of the state, country and world. Due to the strong recommendation of the healthcare community, which includes consultation with the local medical community:

There is an expectation that unvaccinated people be masked at all indoor parish functions (e.g. parish meetings, youth events, religious education, RCIA groups, parish social events, weddings, funerals, receptions, etc...) including the Celebration of the Mass. We would also **recommend and strongly encourage all vaccinated parishioners to mask**, because there is growing evidence that vaccinated transmissions can still take place. We are asking these things out of an abundance of caution and out of an abundance of charity for our neighbor.

You may want to make reference to these mandates which are in place until further notice:

Ongoing Mandates:

- The Sign of Peace is to be given without physical contact, or may be omitted.
- The practice of the faithful receiving the Precious Blood from the chalice is suspended.
- The practice of the faithful receiving Holy Communion on the tongue is suspended.
- Congregational singing is to be greatly reduced or eliminated.
- Gathering spaces (churches, meeting rooms, etc.) continue to be cleaned and sanitized regularly.
- Continue with proper handwashing and/or hand sanitizing.

Ongoing Recommendations:

- Parishes are encouraged to continue live-streaming Masses if possible.
- Those who feel ill, are considered high risk, are concerned about exposure to the virus or are unable to wear a mask on parish property, are encouraged to remain at home.
- Those who are eligible for a vaccine (12 years of age and older) are encouraged to become vaccinated. Vaccinated, symptom-free individuals will not be required to quarantine in the event of a positive contact.

There are no capacity or social distancing requirements at this time for the Liturgy.

COVID-19 CATHOLIC SCHOOL REQUIREMENTS

Effective immediately

The Diocese is requiring **ALL** Catholic School students and staff to mask until at least Labor Day. School mandates have been implemented based on the recommendations of physicians in our health care community, and they are endorsed by the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American Medical Association, as well as the CDC and local health department officials.

As usual, these requirements and recommendations are subject to change at a moment's notice and could even become mandated through an Executive Order from the Governor's office. As changes occur, updated information will be provided.

It is our hope and prayer that the Delta variant will not be with us very long. We will continue to encourage vaccinations. We will be relaxing all recommendations and mandates when we are advised by the professionals in our health care communities. May God bless all that we do for the marginalized and compromised.