



ARCHDIOCESE OF SAN ANTONIO OFFICE OF THE AUXILIARY BISHOP

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May 14, 2021

Dear Brother Priests, Principals and Agency Leaders,

There is much to be joyful about in regard to the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States. Infection rates, hospitalizations and deaths continue to trend in the positive direction. The number of vaccinated individuals increases daily. Almost 40% of the population of Texas has had at least one dose of a vaccine. In Bexar County, 51.4% of the population has received at least one dose, and many of our rural counties have similar percentages. As a result of these positive trends and because of the new guidance from the CDC, whose advice we have been following up to this point, we feel that it is now sufficiently safe for us to make additional changes to our COVID-19 protocols:

- We will continue to invite people in our parishes, schools and agencies who are not fully vaccinated, to wear masks when they are indoors and around others. Mask usage is no longer required for outdoor activities. Verification of vaccination will not be required; it is our hope that everyone will act honorably in this matter for the sake of the common good.
- We will encourage, but no longer require, social distancing measures. This means that parishes, schools and agencies can resume normal operations.
- We ask that individuals who are feeling ill or are symptomatic to please stay home and not return to work, school or church until they have had resolution of their symptoms for at least 24 hours.
- Parishes, schools and agencies should continue to sanitize their facilities regularly.
- Individuals are encouraged to continue proper hand sanitation.

I know that many will find these changes to be too much, too soon, and also some will suggest that we still ask too much, but if we all use common sense and act responsibly, we can continue to minister and operate as safely as possible. We will continue to monitor the advice of health officials and make changes to our protocols as the progress of the disease unfolds. We must be mindful of those more vulnerable around us, always!

If you haven't received a vaccine, we highly encourage you to do so as soon as possible. Vaccines are the most important tool we have to end this pandemic. Vaccines are now widely available at many pharmacies and medical clinics. In an effort to help individuals get vaccinated, we are partnering with WellMed to provide "pop-up" shot clinics at our parishes and schools in the near future. Of course, please consult your health care professional.

We ask that you continue to pray for an end to the pandemic.

In Jesus,

The Most Reverend Michael J. Boulette, D. Min., V.G.
Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio
Moderator of the Curia