



## DIOCESE OF FORT WORTH

### MEMORANDUM

**To:** Priests, Deacons, Center  
**From:** Very Reverend Jonathan Wallis, VG *JW*  
**Date:** April 9, 2021  
**Subject:** Revised COVID protocols

Please be advised of the following changes, effective immediately:

1. All parishes: Maintain existing social distancing protocols while opening all pews. Continue physical distance of three (3) feet between individuals or families.
2. Masks are no longer required at Mass in counties with at least 75% of the residents who have had COVID-19 and/or have received 1 or 2 doses of the vaccine. The World Health Organization (WHO), currently lists 75% as within the range to reach herd immunity.
  - A. Data will come from county health departments. Diocese Nurse, Nancy Eder, will update the data weekly.
  - B. Pastors and parish staff will be contacted once the county where their parish is located has reached the 75% threshold.
  - C. If there is an increase of 20% in week-to-week COVID cases in a county, parishes in that county will return to the procedures described in Bishop Olson's pastoral letter of September 25, 2020.
3. Reception of Communion is allowed in the hand or on the tongue for parishes in counties in which masks are no longer required, according to bullet point 2. If bullet point 2.C comes into effect, parishes will return to Communion in the hand only. Pastors are free to establish how both forms of reception of Communion will take place (separate Communion lines, etc.).
4. Continue sanitizing all parish facilities per protocols outlined in Bishop Olson's pastoral letter of September 25, 2020 and the December 21, 2020 Guidelines for Parish Gatherings Outside of Mass.
5. Reopen in-person faith formation according to parish meeting protocols outlined in the December 21, 2020 Guidelines for Parish Gatherings Outside of Mass.
6. Food may be served at parish meetings, maintaining six feet of social distancing between individuals or families. Food must be pre-packaged, and buffet lines are prohibited. Masks should be worn except to eat and drink. Food and drink should be consumed while standing/sitting stationary.