



MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests of the Archdiocese

FROM: Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone + 
Archbishop of San Francisco

DATE: February 8, 2021
Memorial of St. Jerome Emiliani
Memorial St. Josephine Bakhita, Virgin

RE: Reopening for public Masses, part 12

Dear Brother Priests,

As you all know by now, last Friday the Supreme Court issued an injunction in *South Bay United Pentecostal Church, et al.* lifting California's blanket ban on indoor worship. This decision is consistent with the most recent decisions from the Supreme Court that I referenced in my previous memo to you (December 18, 2020), namely, in the *Diocese of Brooklyn* case and the 9th Circuit Court in the *Calvary Chapel* (Nevada) case. As I also mentioned in that previous memo, these recent court decisions establish the principle that religious worship may not be treated less favorably than the most favored classes of business, meaning at a minimum the rules for indoor retail must also apply to indoor worship. Therefore, houses of worship have to be treated at least as well as retail, which for us in California means 25% indoor capacity at this time.

This recent Supreme Court order is a welcome one. Even so, it does not change the science. The instruction I gave to you in the December 18th memo, then, remains the same: continue to celebrate Mass outdoors when that is feasible, as this adds an additional safety precaution for those gathered, but when in your judgment it would be safer for the people to be indoors rather than out, then bring them into the church while strictly observing the safety protocols of the Archdiocese in every detail. Below you will find a link to the latest version. The four principal practices remain in place: social distancing, masks, sanitation, and ventilation (opening doors and windows). As a reminder, the safety protocols of the Archdiocese are the same basic protocols being followed by dioceses throughout the United States, and as three major infectious disease specialists noted after reviewing the data, these protocols work. Not a single COVID outbreak has been traced to Mass attendance where these protocols are observed. Below you will find a link giving information on this study.

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Please continue to remind your parishioners that those who are sick should not attend Mass, even if it's "just a cold" and they feel well enough to attend, and that the dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation remains in place for now. The elderly and others at high risk from COVID, as well as those who care for them, may choose in good conscience to remain at home.

Safety Protocols

[Archdiocesan Protocols \(English\)](#)

[Archdiocesan Protocols \(Spanish\)](#)

Letter on the evidence-based safety of our protocols by three infectious disease specialists:

https://www.realclearscience.com/articles/2020/08/19/evidence-based_guidelines_to_celebrate_mass_safely_are_working.html