



Mass and Ministry COVID-19 Guideline Updates

Archdiocese of Oklahoma City

February 22, 2021

As we move into the second year of the COVID pandemic with vaccinations underway, the guidelines for Mass, receptions and parish gatherings will begin to transition back to a more normal situation. Below are updated guidelines **effective March 1**.

The new and updated guidelines are in bold. Archbishop Coakley asks all parishes to follow the guidelines to ensure the safety of parishioners and guests while maintaining a welcoming environment. City, state and federal ordinances should be followed. The diocese will continue to monitor the situation and make adjustments as needed. Thank you for your patience.

Guiding Principles

- 1. Faith: As parishioners are able to return to Mass, especially with broadening vaccination efforts, strongly encourage them to attend/return;**
2. Subsidiarity: In applying these guidelines pastors and their staffs are encouraged to adapt them to their unique circumstances and local conditions;
3. Charity: Out of concern for our vulnerable brothers and sisters, [CDC guidelines](#), including mask wearing and social distancing ought to be the norm.

Mass

1. Cloth face coverings must be worn by congregants age 6 and older and servers except when receiving communion;
2. Cloth face coverings must be worn by those distributing communion;
- 3. Attendance at Mass can be increased to 50% or more capacity as long as social distancing between households is maintained in the pews;**
4. The dispensation for Sunday Mass remains in place;
- 5. Hymnals can be returned to the pews;**
- 6. Choirs and congregational singing are allowed with provisions for social distancing among choir members; consider limiting the size of the choir; masks should be worn even while singing;**
7. Holy water can be returned to fonts;
8. Nurseries are allowed; cry rooms are optional depending on space;
9. Please consider providing printed bulletins;
10. Please encourage parishioners to stay home if they are ill or have symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness;
11. Collections are allowed with trays/baskets on long poles or collection stations; please avoid passing collection baskets; transfer to one container without touching;
12. It is recommended that hand sanitizer be provided in each pew where parishioners are to be seated OR at stations near entry points and exits and locations for sanitizing before communion. Its use should be encouraged when entering and leaving the pews for Mass. Contact Miguel Mireles for questions about sanitation resources – mmireles@archokc.org.

Communion

- 1. Distribution of communion must be returned to the traditional placement during Mass;**
- 2. Receiving in the hand should be encouraged. Precautions should be taken with parishioners who receive on the tongue. Clergy and communion ministers MUST sanitize their fingers after distributing communion on the tongue. Small dishes of alcohol on nearby stands have worked well, but how to sanitize will be left to the discretion of the pastor;**
- 3. Parishioners are encouraged to sanitize their hands before receiving communion.**

In-Person Faith Formation and Other Ministries

1. Cloth face coverings must be worn by all participants age 6 and older except for:
 - a. Outdoor programs that involve separation of households or families;
 - b. The activity (e.g., eating or sports) makes mask wearing impossible.
2. Social distancing should be observed;
3. COVID-19 waivers must be obtained by all participants of in-person faith formation and other parish ministry. This is a sample [waiver](#).

Receptions and Social Gatherings

- 1. Large parish-wide social gatherings are permitted as space and social distancing allow. Outdoor spaces are encouraged;**
- 2. Receptions with dancing are still prohibited;**
- 3. Guests should be encouraged to eat and drink at tables;**
4. Smaller social gatherings/receptions/meetings may be held with pastor approval where:
 - a. Attendance allows for social distancing of individuals or by household given the size of the room or gathering space;**
 - b. Food service/distribution – should provide individual servings or have staff/catering employee/volunteer serve; please do not distribute self-serve buffet style or in common buckets/bowls/platters;**
 - c. Cloth face coverings are worn by all participants age 6 and older;
 - d. Social distancing is observed;
5. City, state and federal ordinances and mandates should be followed.

Since COVID-19 began threatening Oklahoma in March 2020, the archdiocese has issued various mandates, updates and guidelines, including:

[Timeline and Procedures for Resumption of Public Mass](#) (5/6)

[Cronología y Procedimientos para la Reanudación de las Misas Públicas y Vida Sacramental](#)

[Timeline and Procedures for Resumption of Ministry Activity](#) (5/22)

[Cronología y Procedimientos para la Reanudación](#)

[Archdiocese Encourages further COVID precautions](#) (7/2)

[Mask Requirement](#) (7/9)

[Carta a los fieles: requisito de máscara vigente a partir del 11 de julio](#)

[Fall 2020 Faith Formation: Guidelines](#) (Updated 9/10)

These documents contain more specific guidance and remain relevant and important sources of information. These earlier documents, however, are superseded by this document to the extent that they are inconsistent with the mandates and guidelines set forth here.