



DIOCESE OF BAKER

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BACK TO NORMAL AT MASS:
UNDOING COVID-19 LITURGICAL RESTRICTIONS
14 May 2021

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Grace to you and peace in the Risen Lord.

Some months ago, Governor Kate Brown took note of the Supreme Court's decisive interventions to undo state and city restrictions on church gatherings throughout the nation. The new legal climate, the Governor acknowledged, led her to change her "orders" about churches to "recommendations" that were not legally enforceable.

This week she did away with most of the orders as well in the wake of new CDC guidance on 13 May, which does not require fully vaccinated people to wear a mask or physically distance in most public places, including churches.

In light of these developments, it is time to do away with diocesan safety precautions mandated for our parishes a year ago (30 April 2020). With this letter they are officially abrogated.

In particular, it is no longer necessary to maintain social distancing or encourage the wearing of facemasks. Of course, people are free to attend church with masks on; but those who serve in a public role at Mass are not to wear masks: priests, deacons, acolytes, altar servers, readers, Eucharistic ministers, ushers, greeters.

Measures to shorten the time for Mass are no longer necessary. Entrance and exit processions should take place. Ushers should take up the Collection and bring it forward to the priest in the Offertory procession. Choirs should sing as before, and the people should join them.

Missalettes should return to the pews, and parish bulletins to the vestibules; but volunteers need no longer sanitize pews between Masses. Priests, deacons, and Eucharistic ministers are not to use hand sanitizer in the sanctuary before and after giving Holy Communion. (Eucharistic ministers may do so in the pew before coming forward, but not in the sanctuary.)

As we take up our normal way of worship once again, let us be mindful especially of the people of India, who continue to suffer the ravages of COVID-19. May our good God restore good health to them as He has so kindly done for us.

In Christ our Lord,

Bishop Liam Cary