



Covid-19 Guidelines for Parishes and Schools

Public Health Orders and Guidelines from California Department of Public Health and the Public Health officers from Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara Counties, as well as Public Health officers from the cities of Long Beach and Pasadena have changed considerably over the past few months, and we anticipate more changes to come. The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has created this document to provide answers to the most common questions. This document is located on LACatholics.org and will be updated as new Orders are given or new questions arise.

As we carry out our mission to proclaim the Gospel in the Archdiocese, we are grateful to our parish and school staff and volunteers whose have so generously transitioned our parishes, schools and ministries for social distancing and whose thoughtfulness and thorough attention to detail help to keep us safe and healthy as we worship.

If you have a confirmed case of COVID-19 that involves your parish or school, with a staff member, volunteer, student or visitor, please complete [THIS FORM](#) and follow the instructions for reporting to the Archdiocese.

The State of California has currently established a tiered system for reopening. Every county in California is assigned to a tier based on its rates of new cases and positivity. Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties have all been placed in the “purple” Tier because of their widespread rate of COVID-19 infections. This is the most restrictive re-opening Tier. Houses of Worship and Schools must remain closed with some carve-outs. The good news is that each county appears to be improving and, if the improvement holds, these three counties may be able to move to a less restrictive Tier.

The following guidelines are current as of **October 14, 2020**. Please **do not print these guidelines** as they will be updated on the website as the Orders for the State and each county change. In order to be sure that you are getting the most up to date information, please refer to this website.

Religious Services

1. Whether Religious Services, including, but not limited to the Sacraments, Adoration/Benediction, Quinceañeras, Liturgy, Blessing of the Animals, Faith formation and Prayer Groups can be held indoors or out is subject to the Department of Public Health protocols for the county in which the parish resides. Find your county’s status [here](#).
2. County Public Health updates are posted online: [Santa Barbara County](#), [Ventura County](#), [Los Angeles County](#).
3. County Health Orders *and* the Archdiocese must affirm that new protocols are in place before parishes move from more restrictive to less restrictive guidelines.
4. For full liturgical guidance for each county tier, see [Parish Liturgical Guidelines](#).

For more details on health and safety protocols see here: [California Public Health Guidance for Places of Worship](#) and **if your parish is located in the county of Los Angeles, please fill out, print and post Appendix F found here: [LA County Public Health Guidelines for Places of Worship](#).**

Use of Church Buildings and Facilities

At this time, for parishes in counties in both Purple and Red Tiers, there are to be NO in-person meetings or events at the parish, including religious education, staff meetings, youth events, etc., with the exception of the following:

- Indoor live-streamed Mass
- Outdoor Mass or other religious services
- (Red Tier only) Indoor Mass or other religious service with 25% capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer
- One-on-one counseling with an individual or family living in the same household
- Individual Marriage preparation
- Food pantry or other services for those in need
- Use of parish buildings for health and safety-related ministry, such as AA meetings, blood drives, etc.

Parish Staff and Offices

1. At this time, for parishes in counties in both Purple and Red Tiers, parish offices must remain closed to the public.
2. Pastors may only allow a minimal number of essential parish staff members to continue working in the office. Employees who can work at home are encouraged to do so.
3. While the office is closed to the public, parishes should communicate regularly with parishioners, return calls to answer questions, and reassure individuals and families that our parishes are still there for them in prayer and to help with any needs they may have.
4. For all additional instructions and guidelines regarding employees and volunteers, see the [Parish Office Return to Work Safety Protocols](#) or contact Human Resources at the Archdiocese of Los Angeles.

Religious Education

All Religious Education and Formation programs, including Youth and Young Adult Ministry, may be conducted virtually. However, religious formation may be conducted outdoors within a religious service, liturgy or worship service, so long as 6' social distancing can be maintained between individuals or family units and all attendees wear face coverings. The protocols for religious/worship services would apply.

If your parish is located in the county of Los Angeles, please fill out, print and post Appendix F found here: [LA County Public Health Guidelines for Places of Worship](#).

[Please see guidelines from ORE.](#)

Parish Schools and Catholic High Schools

At this time, K-12 schools in Santa Barbara County may open for in-person education, and those in Ventura County may be eligible to open beginning October 21. Catholic Schools within Los Angeles County remain closed, with the exceptions below, and classes are offered remotely only. Please see Department of Catholic Schools' [guidelines and virtual re-opening protocols here](#).

However, there are certain exceptions. In Los Angeles County, “cohorts” of up to 12 students and two adults are allowed for students with special needs, at-risk students, disadvantaged students, and ESL students. A new waiver program is opening for students in grades TK-2, beginning with 30 schools each week. For further information and questions about our Catholic schools please contact the Department of Catholic Schools.

Cemeteries/Funerals

Catholic Cemeteries and Mortuaries in the Archdiocese of Los Angeles are open for funerals and visitation. [Please see all updates and guidance here](#).

Parish Ministries

All parish ministries must meet and work virtually, with the exception of St Vincent de Paul or other services to those in need. For help making virtual ministry work, please see [Parish Ministry Leader Tools here](#).

Hearts to Serve Hotline

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles has created a helpline: **Hearts to Serve – (855) 423-6780**. The helpline provides information and resources to those in need, especially the elderly and homebound. People throughout the three counties (Los Angeles, Ventura, and Santa Barbara) can find local resources such as food pantries, pregnancy centers, mental health resources and community centers to help families in need. Hearts to Serve will help anyone in need, including parishioners, volunteers, staff, family members, and others in the community.