

Notice of Important New COVID-19 Protocol Directives from Bishop Weisenburger

Hi everyone,

As many of you know I am recovering from Covid-19 but am doing well and expect to be back soon! The attached message from Anne Morales, the Chancellor of our Diocese, is announcing updated Covid-19 directives. I am disappointed that the spike of cases requires this appropriate action to contain the pandemic. I will update you again soon but, in the meantime, please pray and let's do our part to get through this, as hard as it is to endure, we know God is always at our side. Have a wonderful Thanksgiving even in these circumstances. God Bless each of you, know you are in my daily prayers and I am so grateful for yours.

Fr. George

Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Due to the rapidly rising number of Covid-19 infections and the reduced hospital capacity to absorb more of the infirm, earlier today Bishop Edward J. Weisenburger notified all Diocese of Tucson priests that he has enacted the following directives:

1. **Sunday Mass** Sunday Mass will continue indoors, but Holy Communion is to be distributed at the end of Mass so that the communicant can exit the Church without unduly compromising social distancing. Parishioners will continue to wear masks, social distance, and wash their hands before entering the Church. During mass, doors and windows may be opened to allow the circulation of air within the Church according to the judgment of the pastor. Ventilating liturgical spaces might reduce the chance of infection.
2. **Daily Mass** Daily Mass may not be held indoors. Daily Mass can be moved to the outdoors where the movement of air might serve to reduce the chance of infection. Masks, social distancing, and washing of hands are still required to attend. Pastors are encouraged to continue streaming Daily Mass if possible.
3. **Parish offices** Parish offices should be closed, and employees permitted to work remotely from home. Parish's telephones can be forwarded and calls by parishioners ought to be monitored.
4. **Our Lady of Guadalupe Mass and Feast of the Immaculate Conception** These two celebrations can follow the protocols established for Sunday Mass above.
5. **Funerals, Weddings, Quinceañeras, Baptisms, Reconciliation** We are returning to Phase 1 Protocols when celebrating these events.

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In addition, please remember that any priests, deacons or lay ministers that fall within the at risk group (those over 70 years of age or with underlying health conditions) may not minister without the specific permission of Bishop Weisenburger.

Bishop Weisenburger recommended that Pastors implement these directives as soon as practical, but beginning no later than Monday, November 30th. He is planning on meeting with the Diocese of Tucson COVID-19 Committee before the third Sunday of Advent to revisit these directives to determine what modifications we can make for the remainder of the holiday season.

The hope is that by instituting the above will help us mitigate the spread of the virus, keep our priests, deacons, religious, lay ministers, staff, and parishioners safe and healthy, and allow for all of us to have a meaningful and joyful Advent and Christmas Celebrations.

Have a healthy, happy Thanksgiving.

Many blessings,

**Anne Morales
Chancellor
Diocese of Tucson**