

COVID-19 Worship Guidelines Update

Effective June 15, 2021

In light of the color tier system being lifted by the State of California, the following are modifications of previously recommended liturgical practices. Although most of the state's *legal* mandates are being lifted, we must continue to adhere to *recommendations* from the CDC and local health officials for the safety of our people.

Capacity

There is no longer a government-restriction on capacity for indoor services, provided there is adequate ventilation. Most tape and signage promoting social distancing may be removed.

Masks and Social Distancing

If you have been vaccinated you do not need to wear a mask indoors. However, non-vaccinated persons, including minors, must wear masks indoors. If Mass is outdoors no one needs to wear a mask.

Cleaning

The cleaning of commonly touched surfaces may be reduced but still maintained. Hand sanitizer should still be available at all entrances.

Fonts and Worship Aids

Standing holy water fonts filled with holy water may be reintroduced. Hymnals and missalettes may, once again, be used, although single-use worship aids are still safer. It is still recommended that multi-use worship aids (like hymnals) be cleaned on a regular basis.

Music

The singing of hymns and acclamations may resume. Small vocal ensembles (choirs) may sing unmasked if all singers are vaccinated and they maintain a six-foot distance from each other.

Processions

Processions may resume, including the presentation of the gifts at the Offertory. Persons presenting the gifts should be masked if they are not vaccinated. A covered ciborium would be best for preserving the hosts from any possible contamination before and during the procession.

Sign of Peace

The Sign of Peace should still be exchanged without physical contact, except for family members.

Precautions Regarding the Priest

All previous precautions regarding the preparation of the gifts and the segregation of hosts for the faithful from the priest's host may be eliminated, provided the priest has been vaccinated. An unvaccinated priest should remain masked for the Eucharistic Prayer, but may remove the mask while preaching at a distance from the people.

The Eucharist

It is strongly encouraged that the faithful receive Communion in the hand, however provision should be made so that anyone who wishes to receive on the tongue may do so, from a priest. If the priest does not feel comfortable with this, he may delegate to another, trained minister.

We are not authorizing the distribution of the Precious Blood for the time being.

Ministers of communion should remain masked for the foreseeable future. It is also *recommended but not required*, that they be vaccinated for their own protection and that of the people.

Communion Vessels should continue to be thoroughly washed after each Mass, once they have been purified.

Home Visits

With caution we can begin to expand Eucharistic outreach to the sick by priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers. It is *recommended* that the minister and recipient be fully vaccinated and masked. Not all hospitals or nursing homes allow outside ministers at this time, so be sure to check before making arrangements.

Anointing of the Sick

When anointing the sick, it is recommended that the priest be vaccinated and masked. Masks will probably continue to be required in health care facilities, for patient visitation, and for the celebration of Mass.

Sacrament of Penance

The use of traditional confessionals and rooms of reconciliation may be resumed, provided the room is well-ventilated. The priest and penitent, if unvaccinated, should be masked.

Restoration of the Obligation to Attend Mass

The faithful are encouraged to return to participating in the Sunday Mass if their health permits. Bishop Barber will soon be issuing a Pastoral Letter on the beauty and centrality of the Eucharist in our lives. The lifting of the dispensation from the Sunday Mass Obligation will come into force on Sunday, August 15th, the Solemnity of the Assumption. The usual dispensations allowed by canon law will be explained in the bishop's letter.

Misc.

Gatherings before and after Mass are safer outdoors.

Taking people's temperature is not required or necessary.

The passing of collection baskets may resume.

Altar servers may be reintroduced, following established diocesan policies. If they are unvaccinated, they must follow the same precautions, listed above.