



May 20, 2021

Dear Pastors, Priests, Principals and Agency Heads,

After extensive consultation, and in the light of recent changes in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) national guidelines, please be advised of the following changes to COVID-19 guidelines for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgies and the operation of our parishes, schools and agencies of the Archdiocese of San Antonio. It seems time for us to move forward with all faith and vigor for the benefit of God's people.

In regards to the Mass and other Liturgical celebrations, the following guidelines are presented:

1. The use of masks and face coverings is not required for those who are fully vaccinated. We highly encourage those who are not vaccinated to wear masks or face coverings. We will not require proof of vaccination. We also highly encourage all to be vaccinated. There are ample opportunities for this.
2. Those who are ill, are asked to stay home until they are past all symptoms for 24 hours. Pastors have the authority to grant dispensations from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass on an individual basis for those who need such consideration.
3. Social distancing is encouraged if possible. However, it is not required at this time.
4. All locations should continue to consider how to appropriately sanitize their facilities as needed.
5. Hand sanitizers should continue to be available at appropriate locations.
6. Printed materials and hymn books may return for use.
7. Collection baskets may be passed during Liturgies to members of the congregation.
8. The offertory procession of bread and wine may resume.
9. All ordinary and extraordinary ministers of the Eucharist are encouraged to wear masks during the distribution of Holy Communion. They are also to sanitize their hands before and after the Communion Rite.
10. Holy Communion on the tongue is once again permitted.

11. Altar servers are encouraged to return at Masses.
12. Music ministries may return to normal as prior to the pandemic, as it is a prominent element of all Liturgies.

The following restrictions are to be still in effect at Mass and Liturgical celebrations:

1. Holy Water fonts are to remain empty until further notice.
2. At the Sign of Peace, the faithful are encouraged to continue to greet each other with a simple gesture, as has been the practice for the past year.
3. If there are more than one priest concelebrating at Mass, each is to have his own chalice and should personally purify that chalice. Intinction is prescribed for multiple priest concelebrants. The deacon, if receiving the Precious Blood, must have his own chalice.
4. The Chalice is NOT to be shared with the Assembly.

The following observations are made regarding Parish operations:

1. Retreats based in the parish are still at the discretion of the pastor, as has been the case.
2. Pastors are encouraged to return employees to the office if that has not been the case.
3. Funerals, weddings, visits to the sick and other such pastoral activities should continue with appropriate care.
4. Parish rentals remain, as always, at the discretion of the pastor.

In Jesus,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Boulette". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

The Most Reverend Michael J. Boulette, D. Min., V.G.
Auxiliary Bishop of San Antonio
Moderator of the Curia