



12521 Inwood Road
Dallas, TX 75244
stritaparish.net

May 14, 2021

Dear St. Rita Catholic Community:

I wanted to respond to the happy news of the CDC's recent guidelines for those who have been vaccinated, that for many activities, outdoors and indoors, neither masks nor social distancing are recommended. This is truly wonderful news, but what does this mean for St. Rita Catholic Community?

Beginning immediately, masks will no longer be required for FULLY VACCINATED INDIVIDUALS (2 weeks after completion of vaccination). This, however, does **not** affect the School. Protocols at St. Rita Catholic School will stay in place until further notice, as we await guidance from the Catholic Schools Office. Following CDC guidelines, however, **we still ask those who have not been vaccinated to continue to wear masks and practice physical distance.** We also continue to encourage masks for those who feel comfortable doing so for any reason. Also, **socially distanced seating will remain available in the sanctuary of the church until further notice.** Please note the CDC's recommendation, doing away with masks and distancing, is *only* for people who have been vaccinated. Please note also that the CDC states, "*If you have a condition or are taking medications that weaken your immune system, you may NOT be fully protected even if you are fully vaccinated.*" Thus, for many it remains wise to continue to wear masks even if vaccinated; this, no doubt, includes many of our older and immunocompromised members. And, as always, if you are not feeling well, please stay home.

All our other protocols, particularly those related to the distribution of Holy Communion, will remain in place. **Also, I have asked our Clergy and all those in ministries of service and hospitality (Ushers, EMs, and Servers) to continue to wear masks until further notice.** I ask this of them so that we may not hinder our service to the vulnerable among our population who must continue to take precautions; to make *all* feel safe, this is the right thing for we in ministries of service to do. Further changes will be forthcoming; however, I simply need time to discuss these developments with my team and other trusted advisors. Thank you for your patience!

As we move forward together, I want to thank you all for your patience, and I encourage you all to remain patient. **Know that we still have many members who must continue to take precautions and for whom it would be an act of charity and solidarity for us, the fully vaccinated, to care for and stand with them.** All along, I have asked us to be patient and gentle with one another, because that is the biblical thing to do and how Christians should relate to one another. Thank you all for leaning into that charitable spirit! Also, thank you for being patient with us at St. Rita. The reason for our slowness, quite simply, is that we want reasonably to care for all our members, tending especially gently to our most vulnerable members. As much as physical safety, the practice of mutual charity is the reason for everything we do. Which is why I ask you to continue to be patient and gentle with each other. Let us respect each other and each other's decisions, and let us continue to do our best to make everyone as comfortable as possible. Because our gathering around the Altar must be an act of exactly that sort of gentle, patient charity. And so, let us continue in that beautiful spirit, trying our best to be like Christ to each other.



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Please keep us in your prayers as we are praying for you! I will certainly keep you informed as things develop further. Let us also give thanks to those countless souls who worked so hard on the frontlines of this pandemic, caring for the sick and keeping us safe and keeping us supplied. And, of course, let us keep in our prayers too those who have died from this terrible virus. May they never leave our memory or our prayers. May light shine perpetually on them.

In Christ,
Fr. Joshua J. Whitfield
Pastoral Administrator