



DIOCESE OF SYRACUSE

THE CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS IN TIME OF PANDEMIC

UPDATES

The following summary is based on updates made to the diocesan *Instructions for the Celebration of the Sacraments in Time of Pandemic* after consulting new guidelines provided by the CDC, NYS and the advice of medical professionals.

GENERAL

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention issued [Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People](#) on May 13, 2021. Effective May 19, 2021 NYS has accepted the CDC guidance and updated [its own rules](#) and regulations regarding masks and social distancing for fully vaccinated individuals. Considering these changes, the Diocese of Syracuse has updated its protocols to include modifications to its requirements of mask wearing, social distance and other related items as specified below.

It is important to note that appropriate measures are being taken to accommodate the faithful with the awareness that they include both vaccinated and unvaccinated members. **We rely on the goodness and honesty of our people to follow State guidelines regarding those fully vaccinated and unvaccinated.**

PARTICULAR: THE HOLY SACRIFICE OF THE MASS

- Parishes are no longer required to pre-register for Mass. Parishes may continue to use the screening processes they have in place at their own discretion.
- Parishioners who are **fully vaccinated** are not required to wear a face mask at Mass.
- All who prefer to continue wearing facial covering and social distancing are free to do so.
- Those who are **not** fully vaccinated should observe social distancing of six feet from individuals not in their household. They are to wear a face mask at Mass. Even if fully vaccinated, social distancing from those who are wearing a mask is requested.
- If possible, it is highly recommended to create “a physical distance section” within the church for those who are required to wear masks and engage in social distancing and/or for those who may be fully vaccinated but wish to continue to follow distancing practices.
- It is no longer necessary to block off every other row of pews. Parishioners may be seated in a staggered fashion while respecting six feet of social distance, where required.
- Deacons, lectors, servers, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, ushers, and sacristans must continue to follow prescribed handwashing and sanitizing practices.
- The Offertory procession with the gifts of bread and wine may resume. Offertory collections with baskets may resume by ushers. They should not make physical contact with parishioners.
- The Sign of Peace is optional and there still should be no physical contact.
- The distribution of Holy Communion using hand sanitizer, **masks**, distancing, etc. is to continue.
 - Ciboria are to continue to be covered or placed to the side of the altar during the Eucharistic Prayer.
 - The Precious Blood is still not to be offered.
 - While in the Communion line, communicants should maintain social distancing from those not in their household.
- Congregational singing continues to be permitted. Choirs comprised of vaccinated members may resume normal activities. For any unvaccinated member, social distancing must be maintained, and a mask must be worn.

GUIDELINES FOR THE CHURCH BUILDING AND LITURGICAL OBJECTS

- Spaces of worship no longer require frequent sanitation, but should be sanitized once a day, particularly high touch surfaces (i.e. doorknobs, restroom, etc.)
- All Communion vessels should be properly cleaned after Mass with hot, soapy water (after being purified according to the rubrics).
- Hand sanitizer should continue to be available at all church entrances and in the Sanctuary where it can be easily used by celebrants, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, and others serving or attending Mass. (Liturgical Note: Please do not put hand sanitizer on the altar but on the credence table.)
- Holy Water fonts should remain empty at this time. However, Holy Water dispensers are approved for use in the diocese. Baptismal fonts should remain empty when not celebrating the Sacrament of Baptism.
- The use of permanent worship aids (e.g., missalettes, hymnals) may resume.
- Bulletins may be distributed at Mass and may also be distributed electronically.

SACRAMENTAL LIFE

- Weddings and funerals should continue to be held.
- Baptism should continue. Clean water must be used for each individual Baptism.
- Parishes should continue to offer Confessions. If Confessionals have insufficient space or ventilation, another location in the Church may be used, respecting both privacy and social distancing requirement, where required.
- Anointing of the Sick should continue to be done with utmost care, following the current protocols.
- Visits to the homebound for Communion should resume with proper caution. Further, visits to parishioners and nursing homes should resume, respecting the protocols in place in those institutions. (masks required in nursing homes, healthcare facilities, schools, public transit, homeless shelters and correctional facilities)
- Churches should open for visitation, and Eucharistic Adoration is encouraged to resume if not done so already, using appropriate precautions, and observing social distancing where appropriate.
- Faith Formation/Catechesis classes should continue following the established protocols.

DIOCESAN/PARISH OFFICES

- Parish and diocesan offices should be open, and staff should return to work. Vaccinated individuals do not need to wear a mask. In office and meeting settings where there are unvaccinated individuals or the vaccination status of all individuals is not known, those individuals are required to continue to follow mask and social distancing requirements. Please note that some fully vaccinated individuals may wish to continue to wear a mask and follow distancing practices.
- It is recommended that upon arriving, employees be required to complete a COVID self-assessment or temperature check and sign a log daily. Temperatures should not be recorded. If an employee has any of the COVID screening conditions or has a temperature over 100 degrees, the employee should be sent home.
- In person meetings may resume.

Questions may be directed to

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