



Office of the Bishop

Diocese of Rockford

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August 20, 2021

Dear Monsignor/Father,

In light of the rising numbers of COVID-19 cases and what we are told is a rapid spread of the Delta variant, I find it necessary to make some temporary modifications to the Diocese's COVID-19 protocols, set forth below.

Masks and Social Distancing

Effective immediately, during the distribution of Holy Communion at Masses, Communion Services, and whenever Holy Communion is distributed including to the homebound and hospitalized, priests, deacons, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to wear masks, regardless of their vaccination status. They should also sanitize their hands just prior to distributing Communion.

Except for the above, I reiterate from the Diocese's most recent guidelines of June 10, 2021, that those who are fully vaccinated do not need to wear a mask at Mass. No one is to be asked about their vaccination status or to document that status, and the cooperation and good will of all is presumed in this matter.

Any restrictions that may from time to time be implemented by your city or county should be referred to Ellen Lynch before implementing them if they would impact sacramental activities.

Accommodations

As stated in my letter dated June 10, 2021, parishes and Diocesan facilities should continue to accommodate those who are not vaccinated and those who may feel more comfortable seated around others who are wearing masks or who wish to social distance. Thus, please designate a space in the church for parishioners who wish to social distance and wear masks during Mass or find some other way to accommodate such people at Mass. Parishes may have to revisit the amount of space they currently offer and expand it depending on parishioners' needs.

Liturgical

Holy Communion will continue to remain under one species for the faithful, and if inadvertent contact is made when someone is receiving on the tongue, the hands of the person distributing Communion should be sanitized before giving Communion to the next person. Please continue to omit the Sign of Peace and remind the faithful that the Sign of Peace is being omitted. Continue the use of only long-

handled collection baskets held by ushers or a centrally located collection basket for envelopes to be deposited.

Cleaning, Disinfecting and Sanitizing

Please continue to clean surfaces regularly as a preventative measure, and to make hand sanitizer available for employees, parishioners, and visitors in your churches and offices.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ *David J. Malloy*

David J. Malloy
Bishop of Rockford