

Received 6/23/21

From Danielle Cummings, Chancellor:

COVID UPDATE: Pastors, Administrators and Staff were sent the following update to the COVID Protocols:

On June 15, COVID-19 restrictions were lifted throughout New York State. Bishop Lucia therefore wishes to inform you that most restrictions placed on houses of worship in the Diocese of Syracuse are now lifted. Of particular importance, please note the following:

- Masks for those who are fully vaccinated continue to be optional. Parishioners are not to be asked their vaccination status or for proof of vaccination. NYS and CDC regulations continue to maintain the wearing of masks, social distancing practices, etc. for some individuals in certain circumstances: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>.
- There are no social distancing requirements, although we recommend that there still be space allotted in the church for those who wish to remain distanced
- There are no capacity restrictions and no gathering limits, except at indoor venues that hold more than 5,000.
- Holy Communion will continue to be distributed under the form of bread only. There are to be no common or shared Communion chalices. At concelebrated Masses, the manner of reception by the priest continues to be by intinction.
- All Communion vessels should be properly cleaned after Mass with hot, soapy water (after being purified according to the rubrics).
- The Sign of Peace is optional and there still should be no physical contact.
- Holy Water fonts may be filled; however, we encourage you to change the water and clean the fonts on a weekly basis.
- Although frequent sanitation is no longer required, the practice of sanitizing once per day should be maintained.
- 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.)
- Festivals and other parish events may resume.

As you know, the dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and Holy Day Masses was lifted on the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, Sunday, June 6. It should be noted as well that anyone who is frail or at risk due to advanced age or medical conditions is *always* excused from this obligation. Caregivers, too, may have to use prudential judgment about attendance at Mass, carefully considering the risk factors involved. It would be good, therefore, to maintain livestreamed/recorded Masses for those who are still not able to be at Mass in person. Bishop Lucia is most grateful for your leadership and extraordinary efforts during this unique and challenging time.