



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

DIOCESE OF DALLAS

DECREE

INTRODUCTION

On April 21, 2021, I issued a decree which updated the original June 17, 2020 Phase Three decree of the diocesan reopening plan. As indicated at that time, the opening of the Diocese is to occur in four phases. While this decree does not begin Phase Four, it does replace both the initial Phase Three decree issued on June 17, 2020 and the updated decree issued on April 21, 2021.

These guidelines are subject to change, specifically if there are concerns over increased cases of infection in the Diocese.

PHASE THREE UPDATE 2

Therefore, at this time, in consultation with the Presbyterate, following local civil and health authorities' guidelines, and out of a desire to help combat the virus and limit the flock from exposure or risk, I hereby present this decree. All changes from the prior update are shown in **Red**.

General

- **Disinfection protocols are left to the discretion of pastors.**
- Face coverings are **encouraged where appropriate, and at the direction of pastors.**
- While all are encouraged to seek out a vaccine for COVID-19, **parishes may not require that members of the faithful present proof of vaccination** for entrance into a church or parish building.
- The **Pastoral Center** continues its opening process. Sacramental services (including the work of the Tribunal) remain functioning at full capacity.
- **Parish Offices** continue to be opened at the discretion of the pastor.

Mass

- **Per the November 10, 2021 decree lifting the dispensation, all Catholics in the Diocese of Dallas** have the obligation to attend Mass "on Sundays and other holy days of Obligation" (canon 1247).

- Those who are presenting symptoms consistent with COVID-19 *should not* attend Mass.
- **It is left to the discretion of pastors to determine the proper gathering and seating requirements** for Mass celebrations. Pastors are to be cognizant of the needs of their parishes and should be mindful of the concerns of the faithful.

Pastors may determine all seating arrangements in their churches according to the needs of the faithful.

- **Mass schedules** are determined by the pastor, taking into consideration the needs of his community. Sunday Masses and other devotions will continue to be livestreamed. In addition to parishes, the Diocese continues to broadcast live Masses and recorded events on the Diocese of Dallas website and local television. During such Masses, there will be an act of spiritual communion.
- Hymnals, worship aids and other papers, such as contribution envelopes or visitor cards, may be distributed during Mass at the discretion of the pastor, but sheet music should remain available for those requesting it.
- Holding hands during the Lord's Prayer is not encouraged, especially between different family units.
- **The Sign of Peace may be utilized at the discretion of the pastor. Individuals should respect the desires of those around them during the Sign of Peace.**
- Cry rooms and nurseries may be utilized.
- The collection basket may be distributed, and gifts may be brought up in procession, but collection baskets may remain available at entrances and exits. Individuals are encouraged to donate online if possible.
- **The imposition of ashes on the forehead may be utilized on Ash Wednesday and during Lent.**
- **For any liturgical celebration that includes reception of Holy Communion**, the following requirements must be met:
 - The faithful who are present at these liturgical celebrations are free to forego reception of Holy Communion and make an act of spiritual communion.
 - All vessels must be sanitized before celebration.

- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are permitted to distribute Holy Communion. Pastors should be aware of the needs and concerns of all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended at this time.
- Priests should sanitize their hands before approaching the altar prior to the beginning of the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Deacons, installed acolytes, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion should sanitize their hands before distribution.
- Those distributing Holy Communion **are encouraged to** wear face coverings during distribution of Holy Communion, **and at the direction of the pastor.**
- Those receiving Holy Communion are encouraged to receive communion on the hand.
- Individuals should remove face coverings and gloves before approaching to receive communion.

Other Sacraments and Gatherings


- **All other sacraments and parish gatherings among the faithful** may continue at a capacity and in a way determined by the pastor. Pastors are to use their discretion in determining what events are appropriate in light of the circumstances.
- **Communion as Viaticum, Anointing of the Sick and Confession** are to be given in danger of death where possible. In the event where COVID-19 is indicated, please contact the emergency number (469-401-7717).

This decree remains in effect until it is modified or revoked.

Given on March 1, 2022 in the Diocese of Dallas.



Gregory Caridi
Chancellor



Most Reverend Edward J. Burns
Bishop of Dallas

