



DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

PHASE 5 UPDATED MASS AND LITURGY GUIDELINES

The past 15 months have been an extremely challenging time for everyone—physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually. The Diocesan Committee on Reopening Churches greatly appreciates your patience, understanding and hard work as we navigated the waters of the unknown with the pandemic. As the State of Illinois moves into Restore Illinois Phase 5, we are updating current mitigation protocols per the CDC and state and local health department guidelines. We will continue to review our guidelines per local, state and CDC guidance. These guidelines could revert at any time based on their specific guidance.

We want to continue to stress that we establish these guidelines with the most vulnerable in mind; parishes should always err on the side of caution. **Beginning the weekend of June 12-13, 2021**, the following updates pertaining to Mass, sacramental celebrations and social events include:

CHURCH CAPACITY

- Churches can resume to 100% capacity.
- It is recommended that a section of the church be reserved for those who would feel more comfortable to remain segregated, masked and social distanced. Please keep in mind the most vulnerable parishioners.
- Vaccination status will be based on the honor system.

MASKS/FACE COVERINGS

- Vaccinated individuals are not required to wear masks unless they feel more comfortable doing so.
- Unvaccinated individuals should wear a mask and maintain social distancing.

RESERVATIONS

- Reservations/sign-up is not required.
- Parishes should maintain a reservation system in the event there is a resurgence of the virus and we need to revert to previous protocols.

HOLY WATER

Baptismal fonts and holy water stoops may be filled and used.

DISPENSATION FROM SUNDAY OBLIGATION

- The obligation to attend Mass will be reinstated soon by Bishop McGovern in coordination with the Bishops of the Province.
- Worshipers are to be reminded that if they are experiencing symptoms or feel ill, they should stay home from Mass—even after the obligation is reinstated.

HYMNALS

The use of hymnals and missalettes may resume.

VOTIVE CANDLES

If your church discontinued use of votive candles during the pandemic, the use of those may be resumed.

CELEBRATION OF THE LITURGY

Liturgical Ministers

Liturgical ministers may resume full participation in Mass and the liturgies regardless of age.

Greeters and Ushers

- Greeters and ushers may resume their regular roles.
- Ushers are encouraged to take the collection and to usher communicants from the pews during the Communion procession. Ushers are not required to direct people from their pews at the end of Mass.

Servers

- Servers should wear masks if not vaccinated. However, this will be based on the honor system.
- Prior to Mass as they prepare to carry the cross and candles in the opening procession, servers should sanitize their hands or wear gloves. Once they arrive in the sanctuary, they may take off their gloves and place near the cross and candle for the closing recession.
- Prior to preparing the altar, servers should sanitize their hands.
- Albs are optional. Nice clothing and shoes could be worn.

Gift Bearers

The use of gift bearers may be extended to parishioners outside of family members domiciled together.

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion

Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required to wear masks during the distribution of the Eucharist.

Cantor, musicians, choir and wind instruments

Congregational singing, choirs and wind instruments are allowed at this time.

Entrance Procession and Recessional

- Entrance and concluding processions may resume.
- Congregational singing is permitted and encouraged.

Offertory/Collection

- For the foreseeable future, it is preferred ushers take up the collection with the use of baskets on the ends of poles rather than passing a collection plate from person to person and pew to pew to minimize contact.
- It is recommended that the gifts of bread and wine be placed on a tray rather than carried up individually. If it is your parish's custom to carry forward the monetary donations, that may continue.

Sign of Peace

- At this time, instead of shaking hands it is highly recommended worshipers continue to offer the sign of peace with a bow, wave, smile or other appropriate gesture.

Holy Communion

- Holy Communion will remain **ONLY** under the form of the consecrated HOST for the foreseeable future.
- Priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are required to wear masks during the distribution of the Eucharist (even if they do not wear masks throughout the rest of the celebration).
- We encourage parishes to continue to have ushers dismiss communicants from pews to maintain a flow of movement and safe distancing during the Communion procession.

- Communicants should continue to sanitize their hands right before receiving Communion. Churches should maintain sanitizing stations in the Communion procession aisle or ask ushers to dispense hand sanitizer to individuals as they direct them out of their pews. Communicants should not touch their face, clothing, or other surfaces after sanitizing their hands.
- Communion on the tongue will be permitted, but those wishing to receive in this manner should present themselves at the end of the Communion procession.
- After the distribution of Holy Communion, the priest, deacon, and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion should disinfect their hands.

SACRAMENTS

Funerals and Weddings

Follow the same guidelines as Mass.

Baptism and Anointing of the Sick

- It is recommended that masks be worn by the priest or deacon during the celebration of Baptism. Likewise, a mask should be worn by the priest during the Anointing of the Sick.
- At this time, it is recommended the use of cotton swabs or cotton balls for anointing should continue.

Reconciliation

Face-to-face reconciliation may resume. Priests are highly encouraged to wear masks.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD, NURSERIES, VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Children's Liturgy of the Word and nurseries may resume.

- Unvaccinated children and adults should wear masks.
- Physical distancing and hand sanitizing protocols should be followed.
- Outdoor activities for Vacation Bible School are highly encouraged.

ADORATION CHAPEL

Adoration chapels can resume as normal. Pews and common areas should be cleaned and disinfected throughout the week.

POST-CELEBRATION OF MASS AND LITURGIES

Sanitizing/Disinfecting

Parishes should continue to clean and disinfect pews and other high traffic areas of the church.

After every Mass (daily and weekly), it is still required that chalices and patens be washed with soap and water. The vessels must first be abluted by the priest, deacon or instituted acolyte after the distribution of Communion or after Mass. At the conclusion of Mass, after ablution, the chalices and patens should then be taken to the sacristy and washed with soap and water.

Fresh Air Movement

The HVAC system should be on and circulating the air when worshipers are in the building. For parishes with more than one Mass per day, it is recommended to allow fresh air movement inside the church by opening doors and windows and running fans for approximately 20 minutes after all people have left church following each Mass.

OTHER

Pastoral/Nursing Home Visits

- Pastoral visits may resume with caution. Numerous visits on the same day should be avoided. Ministers to the sick and homebound should bring hand sanitizer and use frequently during visits. Ministers are required to wear masks.
- Visits to nursing home and assisted living facilities are allowed based on the rules of the individual facilities.

Funeral Lunches, Meetings, Social Events, Parish Festivals/Picnics

- Capacity is 100% of area/building space.
- Unvaccinated individuals should wear a mask; however, this will be based on the honor system.
- If serving food, food safety precautions must continue to be maintained per the local county health department.
- Any food should be served in ways requiring the least amount of contact as possible. Buffet-style and potluck meals are discouraged.
- Staff and volunteers serving food are highly encouraged to wear masks and gloves.
- It is recommended that food being sold at parish festivals and picnics be put in food containers.

June 8, 2021