



Latest Adjustments on COVID-19 Protocols

May 15, 2021

As you may have heard, on May 13, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control issued a statement indicating that the fully vaccinated no longer need to wear masks nor socially distance in any setting except when federal, state, local, or territorial laws, rules, and regulations (including those of businesses) require such. In consort with this statement, the State of Minnesota's mandate on indoor mask wearing was adjusted to follow the CDC's recommendation, with strong recommendation that those who are not fully vaccinated wear masks indoors – effective May 14, 2021. Likewise, the City of Duluth is no longer enforcing the mask ordinance as of May 14, with allowance for private businesses and nonprofits to still require them at their own discretion.

With consideration of these statements, the Diocese of Duluth has said that as of May 15, 2021, those who come to worship may choose to wear a mask or may choose to not wear a mask.

The decision on masks being immediate, the Diocese of Duluth is retaining details that were given in an earlier statement, issued May 7, 2021, for the lifting other protocols and restrictions on future dates up to July 1, 2021. Accordingly, St. Benedict will be lifting restrictions and/or reinstating normal practices as follows:

For May 22/23 – Solemnity of Pentecost: Congregational singing during Mass/other worship services will resume – with hymnals being made available in the pews.

Beginning on Friday, May 28:

Regarding the Church and spaces within:

- Social distancing signage will be removed.
- Hand sanitizer will be removed from the building entrances.
- The sanitizing of pews after every Mass will end.
- All pews will be opened up for seating.
- Doors at the entrances of the church proper will no longer need to remain propped open.
- Holy Water fonts will be refilled.
- The Sacrament of Penance will return to the confessional (no longer offered in the Gathering Space).

Regarding the offering of Mass:

- No physical distancing will not be required at the communion rail.
- Masks will only be required for use by the ministers during the distribution of Holy Communion – with this requirement being lifted on July 1, 2021.

In addition, we will be able to resume full use of the facility, with social gatherings, and such events as funeral lunches will be able to take place in the social hall.

As we continue to remove toward normal, might we continue in praying for an end to COVID-19 and for the good health of all.

In Christ through Mary,

Rev. Joel M. Hastings

Fr. Joel Hastings