



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII  
**DIOCESE OF HONOLULU**  
WITNESS TO JESUS

Memorandum

December 2, 2021

To: Pastors, Deacons, Ministry Leaders & Parish Office Staff

From: Diocesan Covid-19 Task Force

Re: Updated COVID-19 Protocols for Church Activities v.2

Effective December 1, 2021, all four counties in the State of Hawaii began relaxing various COVID-19 restrictions. Each county now has the authority to make their own pandemic emergency orders and rules without prior approval by the governor or the director of the Hawaii Emergency Management Agency. **However, the Governor has stated that wearing of masks indoors is still a requirement statewide.**

The protocols and guidance provided here aim to be inclusive of all – without having to disclose vaccination information – in order to encourage participation in the life of the Church while observing the safety and health guidelines set forth by the various counties. **Pastors and the faithful should continue to observe sensible health precautions including continued sanitation protocols and hygiene.**

Thoughtful planning and communication to the parish community should precede the implementation of any changes.

In general, our activities fall under four categories: 1) Spiritual Services (Mass and other forms of public worship/liturgies), 2) Ministries, 3) Meetings, and 4) Social Gatherings.

Refer to your county's website for specific details.

Hawaii Island County -- <https://coronavirus-response-county-of-hawaii-hawaiicountygis.hub.arcgis.com/>

Kauai County -- <https://www.kauai.gov/covid-19>

Maui County -- <https://www.mauicounty.gov/2370/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

Oahu County -- <https://www.oneoahu.org/>



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**1. Spiritual Services: Liturgies (Mass, prayer services, and other forms of public worship/liturgies)**

**There are different capacity allowances for spiritual services:**

**Counties of O`ahu, Maui and Kaua`i:** 100% church capacity allowed. Proof of vaccination not required. No physical distance requirements, although accommodations are highly recommended for those who are vulnerable to infection.

**Hawai`i Island County:** Six feet distancing is still required. Household members may sit together, six feet away from other households/individuals.

The above capacity allowances also apply when using the church for the purpose of preparing persons to receive the sacraments.

**Masks:** Masks must be worn at all times by all who participate at the Mass during the liturgical celebration as a mitigation effort.

**2. Parish Ministries**

In the spirit of synodality, we urge parish leaders to listen to the needs of their parishioners and find creative ways to accompany those who remain hesitant about gathering in-person for parish ministry programs.

Ministries including faith formation that use school facilities must comply with applicable infectious disease prevention policies of the school.

Similarly, official Associations of the Faithful (such as Catholic Scouting Committee groups) that use parish/school facilities must comply with applicable infectious disease prevention policies of their host parish/school. Associations of the Faithful are listed in the [2021 Directory of the Catholic Church in Hawaii](#).

**Masks:** Masks must be worn while indoors and during interaction with others, whether indoors or outdoors. Household members may be seated together.

**Food:** Communal food, potluck, or open food tables and group indoor dining are not permitted. Pre-packaged, take out or individual meals are suggested.

**Faith Formation:** There are no changes to the State of Hawaii Department of Health guidelines for classroom settings. Thus, parish faith formation programs (i.e.,



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child/youth/family catechesis, catechumenal process, preparation for the sacraments, etc.) are to maintain COVID-19 processes and protocols currently in place.

**Ministry to the Sick and Homebound:** Since this ministry includes entering private homes or health care facilities to offer the Holy Eucharist to health compromised individuals, the Church must take as many precautions as possible. *This includes having a fully-vaccinated minister to visit the sick and homebound.*

**Outreach and Food Pantries:** Parishes providing outreach and food pantry ministries are to maintain COVID-19 processes and protocols currently in place.

**Retreats:** Inquire with venue regarding capacity limits and proof of vaccination requirements. Overnight retreats are considered a high-risk activity due to prolonged exposure to attendees. If they must take place, retreat coordinators are to be conscientious regarding issues such as (but not limited to): sleeping arrangements, use and sanitization of shower facilities/bathrooms, meal service/snack and dining facilities, capacity limits and physical distancing requirements for indoor/outdoor activities and group transportation (such as chartered busses), and management of group activities such as singing, socializing, games, etc.

**3. Parish Business or Operational Meetings (includes parish advisory councils, business meetings, facility or safety meetings, etc.)**

Parish business or operational meetings must follow each county's indoor and outdoor maximum restrictions. Social distancing practices should be followed and masks are required indoors. The meeting capacity maximums are as follows as of December 1, 2021:

- O`ahu: No indoor or outdoor maximum, however must comply with vaccine/testing requirements if serving food.
- Kaua`i: Indoor maximum 40, outdoor maximum 100
- Maui: Indoor maximum 10, no outdoor maximum
- Hawai`i Island: Indoor maximum 25, outdoor maximum 40

**Food:** Communal food, potluck, or open food tables and group indoor dining are not permitted. Pre-packaged, take out or individual meals are suggested.



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#### **4. Social Gatherings**

Hospitality and fellowship activities following liturgies, classes, presentations, meetings, etc. are classified by the counties as “social gatherings.” Like parish meetings, social gathering rules also have capacity maximums:

- O`ahu: No indoor or outdoor maximum, however must comply with vaccine/testing requirements if serving food.
- Kaua`i: Indoor maximum 40, outdoor maximum 100
- Maui: Indoor maximum 10, no outdoor maximum
- Hawai`i Island: Indoor maximum 25, outdoor maximum 40

**Food:** Communal food, potluck, or open food tables and group indoor dining are not permitted. Pre-packaged, take out or individual meals are suggested.

#### **General Infectious Disease Prevention Measures**

**COVID-19 Exposure:** The pastor or his delegate is to immediately report any on-site exposure to COVID-19. Call or text Dara Perreira, diocesan Director of Human Resources, at (808) 342-3241. Ms. Perreira will instruct the parish on next steps regarding quarantine and return to the workplace/ministry.

**Vaccinations:** It is highly recommended that everyone who is eligible be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

**Consistency in Practice:** All employees and volunteers should know what to do when a participant is ill and be well versed with all policies, procedures, and practices regarding the parish’s response to the pandemic.

**Signage:** Post signs in highly visible locations to promote awareness of the parish’s protective measures, policies, procedures, and practices such as proper hand washing, proper wearing of masks, physical distancing, and staying home when sick.

**Stay at Home if Sick:** Educate all parents, employees, catechists, and other volunteers about the importance of staying home when sick.

**Checking In:** Continue to screen all program participants, catechists, other volunteers, and visitors for general symptoms of illness and have a designated space for those who may need to isolate (never leave a minor unattended.) Process all persons who show signs of illness with the highest levels of confidentiality, dignity, and respect.



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**Ventilation:** When possible, open windows for greater natural air circulation.

**Avoid Sharing Items:** Discourage the sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. Establish a cleaning schedule for all equipment, materials, and devices that must be shared.

**Separate Personal Items:** Ensure that personal belongings are separate from others.

**Hand Hygiene:** Encourage participants to frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Adequate healthy hygiene supplies/products should be available such as soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.

**Cleaning and Disinfection:** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, sink handles, light switches, etc. at least daily or between use as much as possible. Provide guides and schedules of when hands should be washed and surfaces should be cleaned. All persons should wash their hands before entering the meeting space on any occasion. Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure soap and towel dispenser are filled.

Questions or concerns may be directed to the diocesan Covid-19 response team:

Youth and Young Adult Ministry  
Lisa Gomes  
[lgomes@rcchawaii.org](mailto:lgomes@rcchawaii.org) (808) 203-6743

Office of Worship  
Fr. Alfred Guerrero  
[alguerrero@rcchawaii.org](mailto:alguerrero@rcchawaii.org) (808) 988-6222

Religious Education/Adult Faith Formation  
Jayne Mondoy  
[jmondoy@rcchawaii.org](mailto:jmondoy@rcchawaii.org) (808) 203-6745

Human Resources  
Dara Perreira  
[dperreira@rcchawaii.org](mailto:dperreira@rcchawaii.org) (808) 342-3241