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*Cathedral Square Plaza*

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

**To: Priests, Deacons and other Parish Leaders**  
**From: Bishop Edward C. Malesic**  
**Date: 21 May 2021**  
**Re: Post Pandemic Protocol Instructions**

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***These guidelines take effect 2 June 2021***

I wrote to you last week indicating that the Catholic Bishops of Ohio announced the lifting of the dispensation to attend Sunday Mass and Holy Days of Obligation for their respective dioceses, except for those who are ill, have significant health risk factors or care for someone who is immune-compromised or ill, as well as those who have significant fear or anxiety of contracting the coronavirus in a large group of persons (posted on the diocesan website). The decree will be forthcoming rescinding the previous dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation. This decree will become effective with the Sunday Masses for the Solemnity of the Most Holy Body and Blood of Christ, June 5-6, 2021.

I remain grateful for all of you who have worked tirelessly to continue the mission of Christ throughout the many hardships of the pandemic. I want to thank you in advance and assure you of my prayers as we move into the post-pandemic time and encourage the faithful to their full and active participation in the Eucharist and the life of the Church. As we enter this new period, I ask that you use patience; kindness and understanding with all those you encounter as well as ensure your own good health and well-being. Pastors and others should presume people's good will in following these directives. They should not inquire of anyone as to whether or not they have been vaccinated. May God continue to bless you and those you love as you do your best to provide for the spiritual and pastoral needs of those entrusted to your care.

**1. Face Masks**

Facemasks are no longer required, but are strongly suggested for those who have not yet received the COVID-19 vaccine or are otherwise vulnerable. Respect is to be shown to those following CDC and state and local guidelines, as well as for those, who for personal reasons, choose to continue to wear facemasks and practice social distancing. All signage requiring the wearing of face masks should be removed. A sign encouraging the use of face masks by the unvaccinated and those who are particularly vulnerable can be displayed. A sample will be provided.

**2. Social Distancing**

Social distancing is no longer required. The use of all pews/seating areas is permitted.

**3. Holy Water**

The use of Holy Water fonts is permitted. Holy Water should be replaced and basins should be cleaned regularly.

**4. Liturgical Processions**

Liturgical processions at the beginning and conclusion of the liturgy as well as offertory processions are permitted.

**5. Offertory collection**

The offertory collection is permitted.

**6. The Sign of Peace**

The sign of peace among the faithful is permitted. It should be exchanged without physical contact between persons who are not of the same household or family.

**7. Liturgical Ministers**

Liturgical ministers (altar servers, lectors, ushers, musicians, cantors, choirs, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion) are permitted.

**8. Holy Communion**

The distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended until further notice.

It is highly recommended that one receive Holy Communion in the hand, but the right to receive on the tongue remains in place. A table with sanitizer should be located near the distribution station for those distributing Holy Communion who accidentally physically contact a communicant, sanitizing immediately after contact and before proceeding to the next communicant.

Priest concelebrants and deacons should continue to receive by intinction.

**9. Greeting of the faithful**

Clergy may greet parishioners, but with special care if the cleric has not yet been fully vaccinated or is otherwise vulnerable.

**10. Hymnals**

Hymnals and other books may be returned to the pews.

**11. Cleaning of Church**

A general cleaning of the church and other public places should take place on a regular schedule, with special attention given to frequently used surfaces such as door handles, bathroom fixtures, etc.

**12. Entrance Hand Sanitizers**

You are asked to continue to provide hand sanitizers at the church entrances and other public spaces.

**13. Miscellaneous**

- Pastors should ask the faithful who are not feeling well to remain at home.
- Live Streaming of Masses should continue when possible.
- Visitation to the homebound, hospitalized and nursing homes is permitted urging those visiting to use good hygiene and to refrain from visiting when they are not feeling well.
- Care should be taken to continue following CDC, state, and local guidelines with regard to activities with children who have not yet been fully vaccinated.

Please continue to pray for a complete end to the pandemic, for all those who died from the pandemic and for those who have lost loved ones, employment or have been adversely impacted by the pandemic.

A sample sign which can be displayed in the entrances of Churches and other indoor public spaces is attached.