



Office of the Bishop

May 20, 2021

**To:** All Priests in the Diocese of San Diego

**From:** Most Reverend Robert W. McElroy 

**Re:** COVID Guidelines Update

---

As we approach the great feast of Pentecost, the new rebirth in our Church and society, I want to thank you for all that you have done in the past 15 months to serve your people through sacrifice, creativity and faith.

On May 19 the bishops met with all the deans to discuss how parishes could best implement the various guidelines recently issued by public authorities regarding COVID-19 prevention. The following course of action was developed for implementation across the diocese:

For the celebration of Mass, face coverings will continue to be required but social distance between individuals and households can be reduced to 3 ft. Out of respect for those who may have concerns, parishes should continue to offer an outdoor Mass option if possible.

While singing outdoors has already been permitted, the congregation can now sing indoors and be led by a maximum of two cantors and one accompanist. Larger choirs will be permitted after June 15. The use of hymnals and worship aides is left up to each parish to determine.

Reception of communion shall continue to be limited to the Body of Christ, received only in the hand. There shall be no distribution of the Precious Blood until the First Sunday of Advent.

The faithful should be encouraged to exchange a no-contact socially-distanced sign of peace. The offertory collection and the presentation of the gifts can return to normal pre-covid practice.

The use of cry rooms is left to the discretion of each parish if they deem it is safe to do so.

Every parish is encouraged to implement safe practices for the celebration of the sacrament of reconciliation. Pastors should prudentially evaluate what space and rules should govern this at their parish.

Baptism fonts and Holy Water fonts should not be filled until September.

Only those vaccinated may take communion to the sick and homebound. All other ministers, especially Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist and Catechists are strongly encouraged to get the vaccine.

All normal types of meetings and events at parishes can resume on June 15 without size limitations.