

## Update to the COVID-19 Safety Plan for Diocese of St. Augustine Effective August 16, 2021

Due to the alarming increase of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations – the following guidelines are to be implemented for the Diocese of St. Augustine by August 16, 2021.

We encourage everyone who is eligible and with the consultation of their medical doctor to receive a vaccination. Those who are ill or have severe underlying health conditions are encouraged to participate in the Mass via live stream from the safety of their homes.

- Social Distancing:
  - Those with serious health conditions should consult their physician before attending gatherings where contact with others could put them at risk.
  - Social distancing should be maintained and observed by all when possible. Family members may sit together.
- Masks:
  - Because not all members of our communities are vaccinated (for COVID-19), and some people may have conditions that require them to use a mask (such as underlying medical conditions), it is strongly encouraged that all parishioners wear a mask during Mass.
- Cleaning and disinfecting:
  - Thorough and repeated cleaning of high-contact surfaces and objects should be maintained.
  - Prepare and maintain clean bathrooms. Provide adequate soap and water for handwashing.
  - Provide hand sanitizer at all entrances.
- Modified Phase I of the COVID-19 Safety Plan:
  - Please remove all missalettes and hymnals from the pews, as the variants of COVID-19 are much more communicable and easier to spread to vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals. Vaccinated individuals can be carriers and infect others without being aware.

- There should be no physical contact during the sign of peace.
- It is recommended that Communion only be received in the hand. If Communion is administered on the tongue:
  - Those parishioners wishing to receive the Eucharist on the tongue should wait until the end of the Communion line.
  - The Minister of Holy Communion must sanitize their hands or fingers between each communicant to avoid contamination.
  - Ministers are required to wear masks during the distribution of Holy Communion.
- Distribution of Communion:
  - Communion will only be under one species, the Body.
  - Only the principal celebrant and deacon(s) receive from the chalice (must be wiped by the celebrant and turned before passing to the next deacon). Intinction by the deacon is not permitted.
  - Concelebrants will intinct rather than consume from the chalice.
  - No other ministers will receive the precious blood.
- Baskets for the Offertory Collection will be placed at entrances or use long-handled baskets.
- Choirs are recommended to wear masks unless they can socially distance.
- It is preferable to suspend the Offertory Procession

Based upon the original Covid-19 Safety Plan, we will advance to Phase 2 or Phase 3 on a county-by-county basis, dependent on vaccination and new case metrics.

**Parish Office Personnel in an Office Setting:**

- All employees should wear a mask when not in their personal workspace at the discretion of the Pastor.
- Masks should be worn at all meetings.

*Approval date: August 12, 2021*