



DECREE

REVISING THE PANDEMIC PROTOCOLS FOR THE CELEBRATION OF PUBLIC MASSES

As Bishop of the Diocese of Erie, in consultation with the Presbyteral Council, I hereby abrogate the pandemic protocols of May 21, 2020, September 21, 2020, and May 10, 2021 as well as any other measures and replace them with the following revised protocols for the celebration of public Masses in the diocese:

PRELIMINARY REMARKS

1. The use of all pews is permitted.
2. 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 are vaccinated.
3. Individuals are no longer required to wear masks when in church. Those who are not fully vaccinated are strongly urged to wear masks while in church, both for their protection and that of others.
4. Dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday and holy day Masses remains in place **until August 15, 2021 (amended July 15, 2021)**.
5. Livestreaming of Masses (both daily and Sunday) should continue wherever feasible.
6. Standing permission continues to be given to priests to trinate on Sundays and holy days and to binate on weekdays.
7. The use of confessionals is once again permitted.

GENERAL NORMS FOR ALL MASSES

1. The following actions remain suspended:
 - Distribution of the Precious Blood
 - Placing of holy water in fonts
2. Entrance and closing processions are permitted, but not the offertory procession. The water, wine and hosts should continue to be prepared beforehand on a table in the sanctuary.
3. Priests may greet parishioners before or after Mass, provided that it is done outside and they do not shake hands.
4. The regular scheduled use of servers, lectors, musicians, and choirs is permitted.
5. The verbal exchange of the sign of peace among the faithful, without physical contact, is permitted whenever it is considered opportune.

6. It is recommended that common surfaces be wiped down between Masses whenever another service will occur within 24 hours.

Entering and leaving

7. Parishioners who are not feeling well are to stay home.
8. It is not the pastor's responsibility to police who is attending.
9. The doors to the church are to be propped open before and after Mass when possible.

Seating

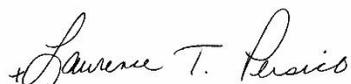
10. Nothing is to be in the pews. Hymnals and other similar items are still not to be used.
11. Hand sanitizer is to be available at the church entrance for parishioners.
12. Collection baskets, with or without handles, are still not to be used in the pews.

Communion Rite

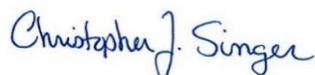
13. Concelebrants and deacons should continue to receive by intinction, except for the one who will purify the chalice.
14. Only those who are fully vaccinated should assist with the distribution of Communion.
15. The Bishop strongly recommends Communion in the hand, but the right to receive on the tongue remains in place.
16. It is recommended that those approaching for Communion should sanitize their hands before entering the line to receive Communion.
17. There is to be a table with purificator or ablution bowl and hand sanitizer at each station for the distribution of Holy Communion. Those distributing Holy Communion who accidentally physically contact a communicant should wipe their fingers on a purificator or use the ablution bowl, and then use the hand sanitizer before proceeding to the next communicant.

I direct that this Decree be published and take effect immediately, anything to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at the Chancery
of the Diocese of Erie
on this 14th day of May, 2021



The Most Reverend Lawrence T. Persico, JCL
Bishop of Erie



The Reverend Christopher J. Singer, JCL
Chancellor