



DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

June 1, 2021

Dear Friends in Christ:

Starting Friday, June 18, 2021, Pastors may accommodate the faithful for the celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass as well as other sacramental and worship services at 100% of the seating capacity in the parish churches.

I am rescinding the general dispensation from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass. Starting Sunday, June 20, 2021 all the Catholic faithful in the Diocese of Sacramento are obliged to personally attend and actively participate in the Sunday celebration of the Sacrifice of the Mass (Canon 1247). Pastors and the faithful are counseled that individuals are not obligated to attend the Eucharist on Sunday or other obligatory solemnities if they are sick, have a vulnerable health condition, are caring for someone with a vulnerable health condition, or have other serious reasons (Canon 1245; Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2181).

All the faithful are reminded of the perennial obligation to keep holy the Lord's Day by observing Sunday with prayer, spiritual reflection, works of mercy, fellowship, and rest.

Pastors and the faithful should continue to observe sensible public health precautions:

- Practice frequent hand washing and use of hand sanitizer.
- Refrain from hand shaking and other forms of physical contact with others outside of one's household.
- Continue to clean the pews at least twice on Sundays and other days when there are multiple services.
- Facial masks are still encouraged.
- Priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers should continue to use facial masks for the distribution of communion. During the distribution of communion priests, deacons, and extraordinary ministers should have sanitizer available for use when needed.

For communion, the distribution of the cup is still suspended.

The exchange of the sign of peace during Mass may resume. The faithful should refrain from gestures of physical touching with persons outside of one's household. A respectful bow or wave is encouraged.

Congregational singing may resume. Musicians and choirs should observe sensible public health precautions. Pastors should use their discretion based on local circumstances regarding the use of facial masks by musicians, cantors, and choirs.

Liturgical processions may resume: Entrance procession, the gospel procession, the procession of the offertory gifts, and the recessional procession.

It is recommended that the collection baskets be handled only by the ushers rather than passed from person to person.

Holy Water may be made available to the faithful in the traditional fonts at the entrance of the church.

Livestreaming the Sunday celebrations of the Sacrifice of the Mass for the benefit of those who cannot attend in person due to illness or other circumstances noted above is encouraged.

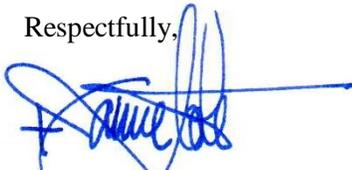
All the faithful are encouraged to receive the COVID-19 vaccination when available. Consult with your doctor regarding any personal health concerns.

Other ministerial, catechetical, and social gatherings may resume while also observing sensible public health precautions as outlined above. Pastors should take additional precautions for the handling of food and the provision of materials to avoid the use of shared utensils. Avoiding self-serve options for food and drink is encouraged.

The return to regular congregational gatherings will be welcomed by many. Mutual respect, charity and patience should be cheerfully exercised so that all the members of the Body of Christ are welcomed and encouraged by this blessed opportunity. Over the course of the long pandemic journey we have learned the personal duty we have for one another's spiritual and physical health whenever we gather and even when we are apart. The risks of infection still threaten us. Our communion with the charity and mercy of Christ will help safeguard us and lead us on the path of holiness together.

May the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary and St. Joseph, her most chaste spouse, bring an end to the pandemic and fill us with the joy and hope of the Lord Jesus.

Respectfully,



+Jaime Soto
Bishop of Sacramento