



DIOCESE OF ALLENTOWN
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
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MEMORANDUM

6 May 2021

TO: *All Parishes, Priests, Deacons, and Seminarians*
FM: *Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert*
RE: *Lifting of additional COVID-19 Restrictions*

As we continue to celebrate *The Year of the Real Presence*, I am pleased to share with you that after much prayer, discernment, discussion, and new Commonwealth COVID guidance, the Diocese of Allentown will lift the majority of COVID-19 liturgical restrictions, effective Pentecost Sunday (22-23 May 2021). It is my hope and prayer that this news along with the Solemnity of Pentecost will engender a great hopefulness in our local Church.

Please note that the Pennsylvania Bishops have not lifted the dispensation regarding Sunday Mass attendance. However, capacity restrictions in the Diocese of Allentown will no longer be in place.

While the easing of restrictions will occur in the coming weeks and there will be no capacity restrictions in your local churches, common sense hygienic practices and the wearing of facemasks will remain in effect. Pastors are encouraged to keep in mind that some of the faithful are still uncomfortable with public gatherings and may need to pastorally accommodate them in the weeks ahead.

I ask that in this new phase you begin encouraging the People of God to return to Mass in a gradual manner, especially if they are of sound health, vaccinated, and have resumed other activities in public.

Reverend Keith A. Mathur, Director, Office for Divine Worship, has enclosed a memorandum outlining the restrictions that will remain in place in all five counties of the Diocese of Allentown, until further notice.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter and for your heroic pastoral zeal during these past fourteen months.

Enclosure



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TO: *All Parishes, Priests, and Deacons*
FM: *Reverend Keith A. Mathur, Director*
RE: *Modifications to the COVID-19 Guidelines*

His Excellency, Most Reverend Alfred A. Schlert, has modified the restrictions to the Sacred Liturgy within the Diocese of Allentown, effective 22-23 May 2021, the Solemnity of Pentecost, at which time **NO CAPACITY LIMITATIONS** will be required in parishes and institutions within the geographical territory of the Diocese of Allentown.

The following Guidelines remain in place, until further notice:

#5 - In accord with the updated mitigation standards of the Centers for Disease Control, it is not necessary to continue to sanitize pews after each liturgical gathering. The Church should be cleaned on a weekly basis. Door knobs and other points of contact should be sanitized on a more regular basis. The faithful should continue to utilize hand sanitizer prior to entering the Church. If there has been someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 72 hours, you must clean and disinfect the Church immediately.

#21 – For the distribution of Holy Communion, the Priest, Deacon or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion must wear a facemask.

#22 – Facemasks are to be worn by all of the lay faithful.

#24 – Stations with sanitizer should be placed near the entrance of the Church, in the Sacristy, and a small table with a corporal and hand sanitizer should be placed near the Communion station. If the Priest or Deacon senses that his fingers have made contact with a person's hand or if a person receives Holy Communion on the tongue, the minister must dip his finger in an ablution cup filled with rubbing alcohol or sanitizer.

#28 – Altar servers are permitted; however, their duties may not include holding the *Roman Missal* or other liturgical books in front of the Celebrant.

#31 – A *schola* is permitted that is properly distanced in a choir loft. Each Pastor may determine the suitable number of people able to sing based on the size of the loft. A full choir is not permitted.

40 – The Exchange of the Sign of Peace is not permitted

41 – The Reception of Holy Communion by the Faithful remains under one species (the Sacred Host) only.

All other Guidelines are abrogated.

At the discretion of the Pastor, if he feels that he needs additional time to implement a particular guideline, he has the authority to do so in his local parish.

As always, if you have additional questions, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Thank you for your kind attention to this matter.