



Guidance for Public Liturgies on Sunday/Weekday Mass

*Revised Directives and Guidance for the
Diocese of Youngstown ~ August 2021*

The following updated temporary Guidance and Directives are being issued by the Bishop David J. Bonnar in light of the current circumstances of an increase in cases of the COVID-19 delta variant virus and are in line with the recent recommendations of the CDC, State of Ohio, and local health departments.

➤ **General Considerations**

- ❖ Those who are ill, have significant health risk factors or care for someone who is compromised or ill, remain exempt from attending Mass on Sunday and Holy Days as well as those who have *significant* fear or anxiety of contracting the coronavirus in a large group of people.
- ❖ Every effort should be made to maintain Sunday/weekday worship to a style that promotes the full, active, and conscious participation of all in attendance as called for by the liturgy and expected by the People of God while maintaining a reasonably safe and comfortable environment.
- ❖ **Facial Coverings:**
 - **Vaccinated Persons:** Those who are fully vaccinated are temporarily encouraged to wear face-coverings while attending Mass or any parish function. Although not mandated, it is strongly recommended for the time being.
 - **Unvaccinated Persons:** Those who are unvaccinated are required to continue to wear facial coverings while attending Mass or any parish function.
- ❖ **Seating:** There are no seating restrictions at this time.
- ❖ **Music/Singing:** There are no new restrictions regarding hymnals, choirs and other instruments and singing at this time.
- ❖ **Distribution of Holy Communion:** Other than as Viaticum to the critically ill, Holy Communion is to be given in the context of Mass or outside of Mass according to an approved rite (*i.e. Liturgy of the Word with Holy Communion*). The distribution of Holy Communion at any other time (*i.e. immediately after Mass, before Mass etc.*) rather than during Mass is prohibited.

- ❖ **Ministers of Holy Communion:** Ministers of Holy Communion should continue to *discreetly* sanitize hands before distributing. At this time it is recommended that face-coverings be worn during the distribution of Holy Communion.
 - ❖ **Distribution of Holy Communion on the tongue:** Ministers of Holy Communion should respect the way the communicant desires to receive the host. For the time being, it is suggested, that those wishing to receive on the tongue continue to receive from the priest.
 - ❖ **Other Liturgical Ministers:** Other liturgical ministers (i.e., Lectors, Altar Servers, Ushers, Hospitality) are to follow the guidance for those attending Mass. They may remove their face-covering when specifically performing their ministry (i.e., proclaiming Scripture).
- **Continuing Restrictions**
- ❖ **Sign of Peace:** The Sign of Peace is not suspended just the gesture of shaking hands. The spoken invitation to offer a sign of peace continues and those present are encouraged to bow to others and offer words of peace. Those from the same household can offer a more expressive gesture.
 - ❖ **Reception of the Precious Blood:** At the present time, the current environment suggests that reintroducing the reception of the Precious Blood from the chalice by the assembly is not prudent. It is hoped, over time and with improving circumstances, an appropriate and proper reintroduction of the reception of the Precious Blood by the faithful will be possible.

Pastors are encouraged to reassess the circumstances of their parish community in the coming weeks. Further guidance will be provided by the Office of Worship as merited.