

# Response to Coronavirus Public Celebrations of Mass

DIOCESE of ARLINGTON

## GUIDE for the LAY FAITHFUL

September 21, 2021

Changes are based upon direction from Bishop Burbidge based upon the recent release of Executive Order 79.

### What To Know

On May 28, Executive Order (EO 79) lifts nearly all previous directives. It changes masks requirements. **Our churches will follow these changes and operate similar to pre-COVID-19.**

**Dispensation** • All the faithful of the Diocese of Arlington are dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation until June 25. **The dispensation will be lifted as of the weekend of June 26-27, 2021.** The statement of The Bishops of The Province of Baltimore And The Archdiocese of Washington is [here](#).

**Schedules** • Bishop Burbidge has requested that all parishes return to pre-COVID schedules for Mass, Adoration, and access to the parish.

**Livestreamed Masses** • At the pastor's discretion, livestreamed Masses may continue for the benefit of the homebound.

**Person-Per-Gathering Limits** • Per EO 79, there are no gathering limitations. Parishioners should expect to see larger crowds as they return to Mass.

**Social Distancing** • Per EO 79, there are no social distancing requirements.

**Disinfecting** • Per EO 79, there are no pandemic-like requirements for disinfecting and cleaning. Parishes should still continue a reasonable and effective cleaning regimen.

### Preparing

**Face Coverings** • Parishes shall follow the guidelines of EO 79 and the CDC's "Interim Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People":

- Fully vaccinated persons are not mandated to wear face coverings, but may choose to do so.
- Unvaccinated persons are encouraged to wear face coverings per EO 79.
- No one shall inquire into the vaccination status of parishioners.
- No one shall be barred from entering a church or facility for not wearing a face covering.

**Sign-ups** • Because there are no gathering limits, sign-up platforms will be discontinued.

**Hand Hygiene** • Parishes have the *option* of providing hand sanitizer.

### Celebrating

**Liturgical Elements** • The following liturgical elements that were suspended or modified may now be reintroduced:

- Holy water in founts
- Worship aids
- Singing by full choirs and the faithful
- Collection baskets
- Presentation of the gifts by the lay faithful
- The sign of peace (without physical contact between non-family members)

### Communion

- The Diocese continues to suppresses the distribution of the Precious Blood until further notice.
- At the pastor's discretion - deacons, instituted acolytes, and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may distribute Communion.
- Parishioners should follow the procedures of their parish for the distribution of Communion.
- Each communicant retains the right to decide how to receive, either on the tongue or in the hand.
- It is not permitted to receive Communion in the hand while wearing gloves. If you are wearing gloves and will receive Communion in the hand, please remove your gloves prior to the reception of Communion.

\* References include Virginia's Executive Order 79 ([https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/executive-actions/EO-79-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Ten-Ending-of-Commonsense-Public-Health-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-\(COVID-19\).pdf](https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/executive-actions/EO-79-and-Order-of-Public-Health-Emergency-Ten-Ending-of-Commonsense-Public-Health-Restrictions-Due-to-Novel-Coronavirus-(COVID-19).pdf)) and CDC's Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>).

*This revision dated Sep 21, 2021, supersedes the*