



## DIOCESE OF SACRAMENTO

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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

March 11, 2022

Dear Friends in Christ:

The forecasted rates regarding COVID-19 for infections and hospitalizations indicate a positive downward trend in Northern California. The current status as well as the forecasted trends are positive but there are still prudent reasons for caution and charity.

I am adjusting the COVID-19 guidelines for schools, churches, and other parish facilities, effective Monday, March 14, 2022:

- The wearing of face masks is still strongly encouraged but not required during celebrations of the Sacrifice of the Mass, parish events, school classes, and religious instruction. People may choose to mask at any time.
- All ministers of Holy Communion are required to wear a face mask for distribution of Communion.
- When administering the sacrament in close proximity to the recipient, the minister is required to wear a mask. For example: The signing of the cross, anointing, and pouring of water during the Rite of Baptism, the anointing during the Anointing of the Sick, the anointing during Confirmation, the imposition of hands for Absolution during Confession.
- The elderly, those with vulnerable health conditions, as well as their caregivers should consult with their doctor on what precautions to take to avoid serious illness.
- All those eligible to receive vaccinations are encouraged to do so. Anyone with medical concerns should consult their doctors.
- The offering of the chalice during the distribution of Holy Communion is still suspended.
- The use of hand sanitizer and the frequent washing of hands is strongly encouraged.
- Hand sanitizer should be available for all ministers of Holy Communion as well as communicants who wish to make use of it.
- Disposable cotton swabs are not required for Baptism and Confirmation.
- Disposable cotton swabs are strongly recommended for the Anointing of the Sick. Care should be taken to properly discard them following the celebration of the Sacrament.
- The use of water for Baptism may return to the traditional practice.
- The distribution of palms for Palm Sunday may return to the traditional practice.
- The Rites for Palm Sunday and the Easter Triduum may return to the traditional practice. In the Good Friday Service, during the veneration of the cross, it is strongly recommended that the faithful should not kiss the Cross.
- The sanitizing of pews; restrictions on number and functions of ministers; limitations on hymns, chants, and rehearsals are no longer required.

If you have any questions or concerns, consult with the Bishop's Office 916-733-0200 or the Department of Catholic Schools 916-733-1115.

Please join me in prayer during this Season of Lent that all may have health of mind, body, and soul. Through the intercession of our Blessed Mother Mary, may God's mercy bring an end to the pandemic around the globe, healing to all the afflicted, protection of those who care for them, eternal rest to all who have died and comfort for those who mourn.

Respectfully,

+Jaime Soto  
Bishop of Sacramento