



## **MEMORANDUM**

To: All Priests; All Parishes; All Schools  
From: Father Robert Hughes, V.G.  
Date: August 9, 2021  
RE: **COVID-19 Updates and Recommendations**

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On Friday of last week, Governor Murphy held a press conference announcing that the wearing of masks will be mandatory for faculty, staff, students and visitors to all schools in New Jersey when the school year begins. The Office of Catholic Education will follow-up directly with our schools and provide the necessary guidance. Parish Religious Education Programs are **expected to follow the Governor's mandate and to consult the guidance provided by the Office of Catholic Education.**

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS** – The faithful, who are fully vaccinated against COVID-19, are not required to wear masks. This may change as infection rates across the State continue to rise. Pastors may wish to encourage Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to wear masks while distributing Holy Communion but this is not being mandated at the present time. Hand sanitizing prior to and after the distribution of Holy Communion should be a regular practice at this time. Children under the age of 12 should be wearing masks indoors as they are not eligible for vaccination; **altar serves under the age of 12 must wear masks** while serving at the altar. The distribution of the Precious Blood remains restricted.

No further restrictions are warranted at this time. A reminder that restroom facilities and frequently touched surfaces (bannisters, door handles, etc...) should be cleaned and sanitized regularly. Offertory processions and collections taken by the ushers may continue. The Sign of Peace may be conducted – people should be reminded that it is not necessary to shake hands.

Live-streaming of the Mass should be limited to one Sunday Mass per language group in the parish. While bishop does not favor the live-streaming of daily Mass, most parishes have ignored his directive to discontinue the practice. As such, Bishop will not decide to restrict the live-streaming of daily Mass until after he hears from the Presbyteral Council next month.

Any questions, please let me know.