

June 8, 2021

Phase 5 COVID-19 Protocols (Clarification)

The state of Illinois is expected to enter Phase 5 on Friday, June 11, which means that all sectors of society will fully reopen. The Diocese of Joliet will follow Illinois public health guidelines and offers the following details for all church services effective June 11, assuming the state does enter Phase 5.

If the state does not enter Phase 5, we will continue with the previously issued “Bridge Phase” protocols.

Masks

In accordance with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, fully vaccinated individuals can participate in indoor and outdoor activities, large or small, without wearing a mask or physical distancing. (“Fully vaccinated” refers to people who are two weeks past their last required COVID-19 vaccine dose.) Individuals who have not been vaccinated should continue to wear masks.

- To provide for varying comfort levels, it is suggested that a seating area be set aside, if possible, for parishioners uneasy with sitting with unmasked individuals.
- Fully vaccinated priests, deacons and extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion are no longer required to wear masks and face shields.
- Per CDC guidance, children younger than 12 should continue to wear masks since they have not yet been approved for vaccination.

Capacity and registration

Full capacity is allowed, and registration is no longer required. However, pastors may want to retain their registration systems in case a spike in COVID-19 cases occur in the coming fall and winter.

Vaccination status

Employers have the legal right to ask staff if they have been vaccinated. However, the diocese will not require employees or the general populace to provide their vaccination status. Yet we strongly encourage vaccinations for all ministers.

Dispensation

The dispensation to attend Sunday Mass remains in place for the time being, with the intention of providing our parishes and our parishioners the opportunity to navigate and adjust to these new guidelines and protocols.

Hand sanitizer

It is recommended that hand sanitizer be available, but not required for entering/exiting the church and/or at the reception of Holy Communion.

Church sanitation

Sanitation of the church is required only once a day, per the CDC.