



MEMORANDUM

TO: Priests in the Archdiocese

FROM: Most Rev. Salvatore J. Cordileone
Archbishop of San Francisco

DATE: February 15, 2022

RE: Reopening for public Masses, part 15
Ash Wednesday
Protection of the Blessed Sacrament

Reopening for public Masses, part 15

With the state of California loosening its COVID restriction policies, it seems timely that we do the same for the Archdiocese, especially with regard to mask mandates. After discussing this with the Presbyteral Council at its recent meeting, I am now declaring that the celebration of Mass may return to what it was before the pandemic, with the following qualifications.

1. It is no longer necessary for people inside of church – both the assembly and the liturgical ministers – to wear masks. At the same time, I ask you to follow the consensus of the Presbyteral Council on this point, and post a sign at the entrances to the church stating, “Masks are recommended.”
2. Doors and windows should be kept open to the greatest extent possible, as ventilation is the most effective way to prevent outbreaks of infection.
3. Communion should be given only under the species of bread.
4. If a book-bearer will need to stand within three feet of the one speaking for more than ten minutes, then a lectern should be used instead.
5. The safety practices for cantors and choirs remain in effect as per my previous memo of November 22, 2021, namely:
 - Cantors are to wear a mask only if they cannot be more than 12 feet away from the closest person;
 - Choir members do not need to wear masks so long as they can remain at least 12 feet away from the closest person in the assembly or sanctuary, and at least 6 feet apart from each other.

6. Likewise, the safety practices for concelebrated Masses also remain in effect as per the same memo except for the mask requirement, that is:

- Sufficient extra chalice(s) should be set out for any concelebrating priest(s);
- If more than one concelebrant is to communicate from the same chalice, then they are to communicate themselves by intinction.

The following should be further noted:

1. Should anyone seeking entrance to a church have a physical or personal difficulty in wearing a mask, they should not be denied entrance for not wearing one.

2. No one is to be required to show proof of vaccination before entering any church facility. (I remind you that the vaccinated spread the COVID virus at approximately the same rate as the unvaccinated.)

3. People wishing to receive Communion on the tongue must be allowed to do so. It should be remembered that, when administered properly, there is no greater danger in spreading the virus by Communion on the tongue than in the hand. Furthermore, it is not necessary to require people who intend to receive Communion on the tongue to come up for Communion at the end of the line.

4. The celebration of Baptism may resume to how it was carried out before the pandemic.

5. The celebration of Confirmation and of the sacrament of Penance is to continue in the manner as is currently being observed.

Ash Wednesday

For the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday, the usual customary practice in the United States may be followed, i.e., tracing the sign of the cross with the ashes on the forehead while reciting the proper formula. However, sensitivity should be given to any parishioners seeking ashes who prefer that they instead be sprinkled on the head. I leave it to the discretion of the celebrant whether or not to make such an announcement before the rite of imposition of ashes.

Protection of the Blessed Sacrament

In a recent telephone conversation I had with the Prioress of the Carmelite Monastery of Cristo Rey, Mother told me of an incident in their chapel in which a woman in the main part of the chapel walked off with the host after taking it in the Communion line. The priest followed her, catching up to her at the back of the chapel and insisting she give the host back. Instead, she threw it on the floor. Mother is concerned that there may be other such incidences in which consecrated hosts are stolen for the sake of desecration in satanic rituals. I have, in fact, heard of similar such incidences happening in the Oakland Diocese. Given the presence of satanic cults here in the Bay Area, and simply out of general respect for the Blessed Sacrament, I urge you to give extra-special attention to protecting the Sacrament especially when it is being distributed in

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the liturgical assembly. The simplest way to do this is to place ushers at the Communion stations to insure the Sacrament is not abused in this way. They should, of course, be given some preparation for this service beforehand. My own experience has shown me that this is a simple but effective way to ensure there is no such profanation of the Sacrament.

Thank you for your attention to these important matters, and for all you do to provide pastoral care to the people of God in our Archdiocese.