



Roman Catholic Diocese of Saskatoon
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February 18, 2022

UPDATED - DIRECTIVES FOR SACRAMENTS BEYOND COVID-19

Dear Pastors and Clergy; Parish Life Directors; Faithful Brothers and Sisters of the Diocese of Saskatoon:

As you will be aware, the Government of Saskatchewan released their plan to remove COVID-19 restrictions in the province. The [plan](#) outlined a timeline to remove the two Public Health Orders in place. The [proof of vaccination](#) or negative tests ended February 13, 2022. The remaining [public health orders](#) requiring masking in indoor public spaces and mandatory five-day isolation for individuals with positive COVID-19 tests remain in effect until the end of day, February 27. All public health orders in Saskatchewan will be removed as of February 28, 2022.

The general dispensation to the faithful from the obligation to attend Mass continues to remain in effect for the present time. However, those who are not elderly or health compromised are strongly encouraged to make the Sunday and holy days of obligation.

We acknowledge COVID-19 is clearly still in our communities. Throughout the pandemic, pastors, parishes, and the lay faithful practiced several measures to mitigate the risks. We encourage everyone to continue the practice of daily health screening, staying home if you test positive or are not feeling well, practicing good hand hygiene, and regularly disinfecting commonly touched surfaces.

Please make note of the following:

Liturgical Practices

Appropriate cleaning of high use areas within the church is encouraged and hand sanitizer and/or alternate sanitizing options should remain available throughout the church. Pastors may still choose to have collection baskets (or any other materials) stationary and not to be passed from one family to another, however, the use of the offertory basket is not prohibited. The Sign of Peace should continue to omit contact such as shaking hands. Instead, a simple gesture such as a bow or nod is encouraged.

Although the use of masks in the church and other church facilities is no longer required – churches will continue to make available masks for use by those who still prefer masking.

The use of masks by priests and extra-ordinary Ministers who distribute Holy Communion are encouraged. Pastors are to use discretion regarding the non-use of a mask based on factors that may include the age and health of the general congregation, the dynamics of the parish community and the health of the pastor.

The priest and Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist should continue to sanitize their hands immediately before and after distributing Communion. Physical contact should be avoided when placing the host in the communicant's hands. Sanitize intermittently as necessary. Distribution of the Holy Communion (Blood of Christ) from the chalice continues to be omitted to the assembly. For those who are gluten intolerant, special arrangements are to be made with the pastor. Those who choose to receive on the tongue should continue to be the last to receive, and hand sanitizing between each communicant or related family members is required.

Ash Wednesday

The distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday will again be carried out similar to last year. The Priest takes the ashes and sprinkles them on the head of each one saying "Repent, and believe in the Gospel", or "Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return." Similar to the distribution of Holy Communion, masking by the celebrant and those who assist in the distribution of ashes is encouraged: discretion should be used if considering not using a mask.

I understand various perspectives and emotions that may be shaped by individual life circumstances or experiences. I appreciate these changes will be well received by some and reservedly by others - and I ask for empathy, compassion, and respect toward those with different perspectives. While we have all experienced the disorder in society - we have also witnessed many examples of generosity and kindness.

I express profound gratitude for your perseverance in faith and charity during these times of challenge as our parishes throughout our diocese offer the Sacraments, ministry, and support to our people and communities.

Let us do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God. (see Micah 6:8)

Sincerely in Christ,



✠ Most Reverend Mark A. Hagemoen