



ARCHDIOCESE of BALTIMORE

WEEKLY COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR JANUARY 27, 2022

Updated Protocols - While the positive rate and case counts of COVID-19 remain high, the good news is the current trends are looking favorable. Currently, the Maryland is at a positive rate of 11.59% compared to a high this month of 28.56%, cases per 100,000 are reported as 73.82 versus a high of 210.39 and hospitalizations have fallen from a high of 3,428 to 2,234. In light of these positive developments, each parish should once again re-evaluate your parish and ministry activities. As part of that evaluation be mindful of the following considerations:

1. All parishes are to verify if their jurisdictions continue to have in place safety mandates including masking. If your local jurisdiction continues to have mandates related to safety mandates, parishes located in those jurisdictions have an obligation to follow those mandates. In particular, if masking is required as of the safety mandates, masking use remains in place until orders are lifted by the authorizing agency.
2. Liturgical ministers in those jurisdiction where masking is not mandated by local order, are no longer required to be masked. While masking is not mandated in those counties, we do encourage those liturgical ministers who are vulnerable to the COVID-19 to consider continued use of masks during services.
3. All parishes, regardless of masking mandates within the local jurisdiction, are to make a full and good faith effort to encourage all attendees to be masked while attending mass.
4. For parishes that modified parish ministries and other operations during the month of January, those parishes are encourage to re-evaluate your ministries. Carefully evaluate all ministries and activities that are occurring at your parish and determine, to the extent possible, determine based upon the nature of the activity and those participating if appropriate to transition back to in-person meetings and gatherings. This effort to evaluate parish activities for resumption should include re-evaluating third party use of facilities such as Scouts, community groups and other such gatherings for possible resumption for in-person gatherings.
5. For in-person ministry activities, masking will be not be required unless required by county orders. Also, depending on the size of the group, the location of the gathering and the age of those attending, parishes may want to strongly encourage masking. All other safety protocols including, hand sanitization, best attempts of social distancing (a minimum of 3 feet) and proper contact tracing in the event of a positive case occurring among the attendees, must be undertaken.
6. Parishes can resume scheduled individual third party users of facilities for events such as a wedding reception, family reunions etc. Any events reserved moving forward should include the stipulation that the parish has the option to cancel the event due to COVID-19 safety concerns.

7. Catholic Center support to parishes can resume being provided in-person. Catholic Center staff are encouraged to work with parishes to ensure adherence to any protocols the parish may have in place relative to safeguarding against the introduction and spread of COVID-19 at the parish.

8. Parishes can resume scheduling in-person social gathers including bull roasts, fish fries and other such activities. Parishes are encouraged to have sound COVID-19 protocols in place to prevent the introduction and spread of COVID-19 at these events. Also when and where feasible parishes should continue offering services as such events that allow individuals to participate in the event through such efforts as curb side pick-up for food based activities.

9. During liturgical celebrations, each parish is to continue carefully evaluating the logistics involved with choirs. If the parishes determine the choir can safely perform based upon spacing and other considerations, then the parish can continue with choirs. However if a parish is concerned about the feasibility to continue with the choir due to logistics, then the parish should begin using only a single cantor. The final call on how to proceed will be determined by the pastor.

10. All parishes must carefully adhere to proper hand sanitization following the distribution of communion on the tongue. It has been suggested an alcohol spray may be more effective and less messy. Example: Hand Sanitizer.

Parishes can continue with making holy water available in fonts. However, proper hand sanitization needs to be available for those who wish to sanitize prior to or following the blessing of themselves with the holy water.

Each parish should communicate safety measures to its congregations and visitors. (building signage, social media, email, Flocknote, web posting, bulletin, announcements during Mass).

As conditions change, hopefully continuing for the better, The Archdiocese and COVID-10 Taskforce will make every effort to update the above protocols in a timely manner.

These updated protocols will also be posted online: <https://www.archbalt.org/coronavirus-guidelines/>

Safety Webinar – OSHA is offering a free webinar for COVID safety for businesses. As the exposure to and spread of COVID in the workplace remains a top concern for both employees and workers, the FEMA Region 3 Regional Business Emergency Operations Center (RBEOC) has partnered with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to conduct a webinar on ways to improve the health and safety of your workplace. To register: OSHA COVID Webinar for Businesses Tickets, Thu, Feb 3, 2022 at 1:00 PM | Eventbrite

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