



ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE STATE OF HAWAII  
**DIOCESE OF HONOLULU**  
WITNESS TO JESUS

Memorandum

March 11, 2022

To: Pastors, Deacons, Ministry Leaders & Parish Office Staff

From: Diocesan Covid-19 Task Force

Re: Updated COVID-19 Protocols for Church Activities

This memo announces two changes regarding COVID-19 restrictions:

1. Effective Saturday, March 5, 2022, all four counties in the State of Hawaii have repealed COVID-19 restrictions regarding limiting size of indoor and outdoor gatherings. Also for the counties of Honolulu and Maui, the requirement of showing proof of vaccine or negative test where food is served is lifted.
2. Effective March 26, 2022 the mask mandate will also be repealed. From then on masks are optional for those who feel more comfortable wearing them.

**Pastors and the faithful should continue to observe sensible health precautions including continued sanitation protocols and hygiene.**

Thoughtful planning and communication to the parish community should precede the implementation of any changes.

In general, our activities fall under five categories: 1) Spiritual Services (Mass and other forms of public worship/liturgies), 2) Ministries and Faith Formation, 3) Meetings, 4) Social Gatherings and Facility Use by Outside Entities and 5) Employees and Volunteers.

Refer to your county's website for specific details (please note that these websites may not have been updated as of this memo).

Hawaii Island County -- <https://coronavirus-response-county-of-hawaii-hawaiicountygis.hub.arcgis.com/>

Kauai County -- <https://www.kauai.gov/covid-19>

Maui County -- <https://www.mauicounty.gov/2370/COVID-19-Coronavirus-Information>

Oahu County -- <https://www.oneoahu.org/>



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**1. Spiritual Services: Liturgies (Mass, prayer services, and other forms of public worship/liturgies)**

**All parishes may allow 100% capacity for Mass and other worship services and masking is optional.**

**Mass guidelines:**

- The distribution of Holy Communion under the species of the Precious Blood will continue to be suspended. When there are priest-concelebrants, Holy Communion will be by intinction only.
- Offertory collections should not be collected by passing around baskets or bowls. They can be collected by ushers or by stationary baskets.
- Parishioners not from the same household should continue to avoid physical touch during the sign of peace.
- Pastors should communicate to parishioners that mask wearing will be optional as of March 26<sup>th</sup> and you may exchange any “mask required” signs you have posted to “mask optional”. Each pastor should carefully consider the needs of their parishioners as some may be hesitant about this change. (example: some distancing, outdoor seating, etc.)
- The wearing of a mask by the minister of Holy Communion during the distribution is recommended.

**2. Parish Ministries and Faith Formation (Religious Education, Youth & Young Adult Ministries, etc.)**

In the spirit of synodality, we urge parish leaders to listen to the needs of their parishioners and find creative ways to accompany those who remain hesitant about gathering in-person for parish ministry programs.

Ministries including faith formation that use school facilities must comply with applicable COVID-19 policies of the school. As of the date of this memo, schools still require the wearing of a mask indoors by State law and optional mask wearing outdoors. This restriction for schools may or may not change on March 26, 2022. A separate memo will be provided to communicate any changes regarding school COVID-19 protocols that relate to ministry/faith formation use of school facilities.



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Similarly, official Associations of the Faithful (such as Catholic Scouting Committee groups) that use parish/school facilities must comply with applicable infectious disease prevention policies of their host parish/school. Associations of the Faithful are listed in the [2021 Directory of the Catholic Church in Hawaii](#).

**Masks:** Mask wearing is optional beginning March 26, 2022 unless otherwise stated below.

**Food:** Communal food, potluck, or open food tables and group indoor dining are not permitted unless there are designated person(s) wearing face masks at all times serving food to avoid multiple hands touching food and serving utensils. Pre-packaged, take out or individual meals are suggested.

**Faith Formation:** Faith formation events may resume with no capacity limits.

**Ministry to the Sick and Homebound:** Since this ministry includes entering private homes or health care facilities to offer the Holy Eucharist to health compromised individuals, the Church must take as many precautions as possible. This includes giving the homebound person (or the person's family) the option of asking only for a fully vaccinated minister, as well as wearing a mask.

**Outreach and Food Pantries:** Parishes providing outreach and food pantry ministries are to maintain sanitation.

**Retreats:** Retreats may resume. However, retreat coordinators are to be conscientious regarding issues such as (but not limited to): sleeping arrangements, use and sanitization of shower facilities/bathrooms, meal service/snack and dining facilities.

**3. Parish Business or Operational Meetings (includes parish advisory councils, business meetings, facility or safety meetings, etc.)**

Parish business or operational meetings may resume without capacity restrictions.

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**4. Social Gatherings and Facility Use by Outside Entities**

Parish hospitality and fellowship activities following liturgies, classes, presentations, meetings, etc. are classified by the counties as “social gatherings.” Like parish meetings, there are no capacity restrictions for social gatherings.

Groups who were previously approved to use parish facilities such as Alcoholics Anonymous, non-parish sponsored Boy/Girl Scouts, etc. may resume using facilities at the Pastor’s discretion only if they agree to follow sanitation, food protocols and other requirements outlined in this document.

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**Food:** Communal food, potluck, or open food tables and group indoor dining are not permitted unless there are designated person(s) wearing face masks at all times serving food to avoid multiple hands touching food and serving utensils. Pre-packaged, take out or individual meals are suggested.

**5. Employees and Volunteers**

**Employees:** The Pastor may determine if all parish personnel will return to the parish workplace, if they haven’t done so already. Pastors have the discretion on whether or not to continue allowing a “work from home” or hybrid status for employees who may not need to be present at the workplace.

**Volunteers:** If certain volunteer positions were suspended due to COVID-19 precautions, they may resume at this time while remaining cautious about sanitizing and understanding any remaining directives.

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**Food:** Communal food, potluck, or open food tables and group indoor dining are not permitted unless there are designated person(s) wearing face masks at all times serving food to avoid multiple hands touching food and serving utensils. Pre-packaged, take out or individual meals are suggested.

**Illness:** It is very important that employees and volunteers stay home if feeling ill or showing symptoms of illness.



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**General Infectious Disease Prevention Measures**

**COVID-19 Exposure:** The pastor or his delegate is to immediately report any on-site exposure to COVID-19. Call or text Dara Perreira, diocesan Director of Human Resources, at (808) 342-3241. Ms. Perreira will instruct the parish on next steps.

**Vaccinations:** It is highly recommended that everyone who is eligible be fully vaccinated for COVID-19.

**Consistency in Practice:** All employees and volunteers should know what to do when a participant is ill and be well versed with all policies, procedures, and practices regarding the parish's response to the pandemic.

**Signage:** Post signs in highly visible locations to promote awareness of the parish's protective measures.

**Stay at Home if Sick:** Educate all parents, employees, catechists, and other volunteers about the importance of staying home when sick.

**Reminders for those who attend Church activities:** Please continue to be mindful of the needs of medically vulnerable persons (i.e., elderly, immuno-compromised) when considering mask requirements for your gatherings.

Continue to educate and remind all program participants, catechists, other volunteers, and visitors about general symptoms of illness and have a designated space for those who may need to isolate while at Mass or any parish activity. (Never leave a minor unattended.) Process all persons who show signs of illness with the highest levels of confidentiality, dignity, and respect.

**Ventilation:** When possible, open windows for greater natural air circulation.

**Avoid Sharing Items:** Discourage the sharing of items that are difficult to clean or disinfect. Establish a cleaning schedule for all equipment, materials, and devices that must be shared.

**Separate Personal Items:** Ensure that personal belongings are separate from others.

**Hand Hygiene:** Encourage participants to frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Adequate healthy hygiene supplies/products should be



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available such as soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, and no-touch/foot-pedal trash cans.

**Cleaning and Disinfection:** Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as door handles, sink handles, light switches, etc. at least daily or between use as much as possible. Provide guides and schedules of when hands should be washed and surfaces should be cleaned. All persons should wash their hands before entering the meeting space on any occasion. Restrooms should be checked regularly to ensure soap and towel dispenser are filled.

Questions or concerns may be directed to the diocesan Covid-19 response team:

Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Lisa Gomes

[lgomes@rcchawaii.org](mailto:lgomes@rcchawaii.org) (808) 203-6743

Office of Worship

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Religious Education/Adult Faith Formation

Jayne Mondoy

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Human Resources

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