



This message is for all priests, deacons, parish operations directors/business managers and vicariate teams

With the State of Illinois and City of Chicago poised to enter the 'Bridge Phase' within the week, which allows for increased capacity limits, parishes are hereby permitted to plan for increased attendance for liturgies and non-liturgical gatherings beginning May 14 (assuming no delays to the Bridge Phase), as follows:

- Masses and liturgies: capacity is 60% of the church. Based on measurements taken during the initial reopening efforts, and accounting for the necessity of maintaining physical distancing, this equates to approximately seating in every other pew. This is how to begin managing increased capacity if you have not already done so.
- Social gatherings: capacity is 250 people indoor; 500 people outdoor. This will have an impact on school-related events, such as graduations, and guidance will be provided to principals and school pastors this week, as well.
- Offices: capacity is 60% at any one time.

In all instances, all mitigation efforts remain required – masks are to be worn, individuals are to maintain as much physical distance as possible, hand washing/sanitization is essential. Additionally, registration is still required to manage capacity limits as well as assist in contact tracing efforts, as needed.

A separate update regarding liturgical guidance will be shared in the coming days. We are providing this news about increased capacity now so that you can adjust your reservation systems appropriately and equip your staff and volunteers for potentially increased numbers of Mass attendees this upcoming weekend (assuming no further delays in the implementation of the Bridge Phase).

The Task Force is monitoring the varying dates of full reopening put forth by the State and City of Chicago. We will provide guidance regarding Phase 5 when timelines are confirmed.

Peace,
COVID-19 Task Force



This message is for all clergy and staff in the archdiocese

As you may know, yesterday the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) announced fully vaccinated adults do not need to wear a mask indoors or outdoors or in gatherings large or small, nor do they need to practice physical distancing. In light of this news, our COVID-19 Task Force is waiting for the Illinois Department of Public Health and Chicago Department of Public Health to advise on the application of the CDC's guidance in our local area.

For now, our guidelines will remain the same until we have further clarity from local authorities. Please note the following:

Schools

- Masks will continue to be worn in all archdiocesan schools through the remainder of the school year since the vast majority of students are not yet vaccinated. Note: this is in accord with Illinois State Board of Education guidance regarding masks in school buildings, as well.
- If we need to revise guidelines for year-end activities and events, such as graduations, we will do so as soon as possible.

Parishes and Pastoral Center

- All parishes should continue to require masks for all attendees at Masses and liturgies through this weekend as we work to operationalize the verification of vaccination status at the parish, agency and Pastoral Center levels.
- All staff should continue to wear masks in all archdiocesan offices for the time being, as well.

We will provide an update as early as possible next week on how the CDC's announcement affects any of our archdiocesan operations and guidelines.

As noted, things continue to evolve rapidly as more people are vaccinated and we progress forward to full reopening. We thank everyone for your patience and cooperation, as well as your attention to the many updates that are necessary to share.

Peace,
COVID-19 Task Force