

May 10, 2021

Dear pastor,

Gov. Walz's most recent executive order eliminates most of the state's COVID-19 restrictions by May 28. In light of this order, I will be making significant changes to our diocese's pandemic protocols for parish events and liturgies that will take effect later this month. Please read this letter in its entirety and consider making it available to your parishioners via a pulpit announcement and/or in your Sunday bulletins.

First, I want to thank all of our clergy, parish and school staff, and parishioners who have abided by our protocols for over a year now. I firmly believe that adherence to these protocols prevented many more people from becoming ill and saved lives. We Catholics are called to protect life and care for our neighbors, and your willingness to follow our diocese's requirements have been a great witness to these teachings.

In light of the governor's announcement, these changes will be made to our diocesan protocols:

Effective May 23, the Solemnity of Pentecost (including vigil Masses on the evening of May 22), the following will be allowed:

- Holy water in stoups and fonts
- Altar servers holding the Roman Missal/Book and assisting with the lavabo
- Music: The four hymns (for the gathering, preparation of gifts, Communion and recessional) along with sequences
- Passing collection baskets
- Gift procession
- Sign of peace
- Communion under both species and on the tongue

Face coverings must still be worn at Mass and indoor parish events. The Sunday Mass obligation remains suspended until further notice.

Please remind parishioners to be sensitive to those in your parish who may choose to not yet come to Mass or participate in some aspects of the liturgy (e.g. handshaking at the sign of peace) because of health conditions or other concerns. Please make a special effort to ensure all feel welcomed and included during these times of ongoing transition.