

Diocese of San Bernardino



Office of the Vicar General

Date: September 7, 2022

TO: Pastors and Administrators, Brother Priests, Parish Staff

FM: Msgr. Lopez *MLJ*

RE: New Parish COVID Guidelines

Dear Fathers and Parish Staff Members:

We offer thanks to Our Lord for the marked improvement in the situation of the COVID virus in our State and Counties. In consultation with the Episcopal Vicars, Vicars Forane, and Offices of Priest Personnel and the Emergency Operations Collaborative (EOC), Bishop Rojas is pleased to offer the following news for all parishes here in our Diocese.

Effective September 12, 2022, parishes may fully operate at pre-COVID standards, with only one minor restriction. The exception is that we will not offer Holy Communion from the Cup for the Assembly yet.

Worship/Liturgy/Sacraments

- No mandates of any kind are required for worship conducted within the parish church itself, or when worship is conducted in a parish building temporarily used for worship, liturgy, or sacraments.
- Regular and thorough sanitizing is recommended until March 2023, the official end of pandemic/endemic and flu season according to the State agencies.
- Social distancing of three (3) feet remains recommended through March 2023, especially for weddings, baptisms, and other Sacraments where attendees may arrive from out of state/country.
- Masks should be available for attendees at all services, particularly for those services which draw large numbers of attendees.
- Pastors/Administrators may implement previous COVID protocols for Mass, weddings, baptisms, and other Sacraments as they deem necessary to ensure the health and safety of the community. This is at the option of each Pastor and Administrator.

Ministry Programs

- All ministries may resume and operate at pre-COVID standards. There are no restrictions.
- Masking, reasonable social distancing, and sanitizing remain recommended for large gatherings, to ensure the health and safety among attendees.

Parish Offices

- Office operations may resume pre-COVID, with continued diligence on safe social distancing and sanitizing of facilities. There are no restrictions.
- Pastors/Administrators may elect to require previous COVID protocols, such as masks, as deemed necessary and appropriate.
- Evening/weekend meetings, held within parish offices, should be adequately sanitized pre-arrival of regular office staff the following day.
- Masks and sanitizers should be available for visitors and guests of the parish office, at the time of arrival; this is not required – but strongly recommended.
- Parishes with schools, where joint meetings among school and parish staff are required, may resume all meetings with no restrictions.

Additional correspondence from the Offices of Human Resources and EOC with respect to case reporting for employees/non-employees will be sent under separate cover. Parish schools operate under separate COVID requirements, which are provided to the principals through our Office of Catholic Schools. The March 2023 date is a projected date for the official end of the COVID virus in the State of California and our area. Please contact Ann Marie Gallant in our EOC Office for any questions on our new parish guidelines.

On behalf of Bishop Rojas, thank you for your generous and faithful service to your communities and families during the COVID pandemic. Our prayers are for continued healing for the sick and for continued cooperation with our local health agencies in strengthening the overall health of our communities through health education, vaccination, and wellness promotion. May Our Lord bless you in your valued and important priestly service. Thank you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Msgr. Lopez", with a long horizontal line underneath it.