



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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MEMORANDUM

To: All Priests, Pastoral Administrators and Deacons

From: The Most Reverend Salvatore R. Matano + *Salvatore R. Matano*

Date: June 15, 2021, *Month of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus*

Re: Update on NYS Lifting Coronavirus Restrictions

Today we were informed that “effective immediately, [New York State’s] mandated restrictions are lifted across commercial and social settings.” These include “social gathering limits, capacity restrictions, social distancing, cleaning and disinfection, health screening, and contact information for tracing.”

In the same announcement, the State indicated that “Unvaccinated individuals continue to be responsible for wearing masks, in accordance with federal CDC [guidance](#). Consistent with the State’s implementation of the recent CDC guidance, masks are still required for unvaccinated individuals.” No mention was made in the NYS announcement of the need for continued social distancing between unvaccinated individuals or between vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals, except at “indoor venues that hold more than 5,000 attendees.”

Therefore, by virtue of this Memorandum, **the policies, guidelines and permissions previously issued from my office between March 2020 and May 2021, for the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass and the administration of the Sacraments during the Coronavirus pandemic are hereby rescinded with the exception of those noted below.** The instructions of the Universal Church and the Diocese for the worthy and reverent celebration of Holy Mass and the Sacraments are to be followed and no extraordinary considerations that were previously permitted during the Coronavirus pandemic should continue. **The following are to be maintained:**

- Holy Communion is distributed only under one form, namely the Sacred Host.
- The principal celebrant’s chalice is not shared; concelebrating priests should have individual chalices for the reception of the Precious Blood, or they receive both Sacred Species by intinction.

- The exchange of the sign of peace, which is always optional, either continues to be omitted or only encouraged without shaking hands or holding hands, “in a somber manner,” in accord with the Church’s instruction.
- Our churches, as houses of God, should continue to be kept clean, especially commonly touched surfaces. Cleaning in between Masses is no longer required.
- Holy water fonts remain empty.
- Baptisms continue to use only fresh water for each baptism and the fonts cleaned afterwards.
- Churches should continue to assure good ventilation by introducing fresh air, whenever possible.
- It is recommended that some “social distancing” seating should still be offered, as needed.

Our priority and our mutual efforts remain encouraging and welcoming the faithful to regular attendance at Holy Mass each week and the frequent participation in the Sacramental life of the Church. In implementing the above, prudential judgement should be used in serving all those entrusted to your pastoral care.