



Diocese of Davenport

Office of the Bishop

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Update to Diocese of Davenport Protocols – October 27, 2021

The number of deaths and new hospitalizations of adults infected with COVID-19 continues to decrease. This trend is expected to continue over the next four weeks. Progress is being made in reducing the risk of infection from the COVID-19 virus. Booster vaccinations are currently available for adults 65 years and older, and for adults age 18 and older who live in long-term settings, or have underlying medical conditions, or live in high-risk settings. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is expected to authorize a COVID-19 vaccine for children 5 to 11 years of age in the first or second week of November. Soon after this occurs, additional relaxation of some safety protocols by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) is expected. Until then, a change is being made to the protocols for singing in parishes and school-related liturgies and other events.

Effective immediately, the following safety protocols are in effect for the parishes, schools, and chancery in the Diocese of Davenport.

1. It is urged that masks be worn by everyone (over the age of 2) at any indoor gathering or public space, including the liturgy. Priests, deacons, and other ministers are urged to set a good example in this regard.
 - a. At the liturgy, masks must be worn by those distributing communion.
 - b. If any gathering consists only of those vaccinated, masks may be omitted.
2. Parishes should practice social distancing measures in a manner that works best for their community. There should be regular cleaning and disinfecting of spaces, and hand sanitizer should be readily available.
3. Regarding music ministry, the keys to preventing spread include: vaccination, masking, good ventilation, volume (loudness), limiting time, and distance apart. Therefore, at this time:
 - a. One or two cantors may be used. They must be masked. It is strongly encouraged that they be vaccinated. Volume should be kept to a minimum with the use of amplification.
 - b. The assembly may sing, as long as those singing are masked and sing softly (no louder than a normal speaking voice). Those not vaccinated and/or not masked ought not to sing. Congregational singing may include the Mass parts and responses/antiphons. The singing of the Gloria and of hymns remains limited to the cantor(s) at this time.
 - c. Music rehearsals may take place, with proper precautions (see background document).
4. Parish and school events should reduce the risk of infection as much as possible. In addition to masking and social distancing, “carry-out” food is safer than “eating-in.” Maintain good ventilation and shorten the amount of time large groups are gathered. Groups renting parish spaces must be made aware of this policy.
5. The sign of peace continues to not be exchanged physically and the chalice is not shared. Altar servers are permitted, but must be masked and should be vaccinated if eligible. The gifts may be presented in procession by bearers who are masked.
6. Those ministering to the sick and dying should be vaccinated and must be masked. Those ministering to patients with COVID-19 must be vaccinated and masked. An anointing that involves a group ought to be done with an instrument. Small confessionals, as well as reconciliation chapels with poor ventilation, should not be used.
7. Everyone who is medically able should be vaccinated as soon as possible.

These protocols are in keeping with the CDC guidelines and the encouragement of the Holy Father, Pope Francis, who stated: "Being vaccinated with vaccines authorized by the competent authorities is an act of love. And contributing to ensure the majority of people are vaccinated is an act of love. Vaccination is a simple but profound way of promoting the common good and caring for each other, especially the most vulnerable."