

**Revised Diocese of Scranton Guidelines for Public Masses During
the COVID-19 Pandemic.
May 18, 2021**

The Diocese of Scranton joyfully welcomes the faithful of the Diocese of Scranton to return to Masses at all of its parishes. Despite the challenges of the last year, we invite those who have not yet returned to Mass to rejoin us in person to celebrate the Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of the Christian life.

MASK GUIDANCE FOR MASSES

- Individuals who are fully vaccinated from COVID-19 are not required to wear masks while attending Mass or receiving Holy Communion.
- Fully vaccinated individuals are welcome to continue wearing masks at Mass if desired for personal protection and/or comfort.
- Individuals who have **NOT** been fully vaccinated must continue to wear masks while attending Mass. Individuals who are not fully vaccinated must wear a mask while receiving Holy Communion but may briefly remove the mask in order to consume the Sacred Host.
- “Fully vaccinated” is defined as being two weeks after a second dose in a two-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or two weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson’s Janssen vaccine.
- All individuals aged two or older who are **NOT** fully vaccinated, whether indoors or outdoors, must wear a properly-fitting face covering that covers their **mouth and nose** while attending Mass.
- Priests, Deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are still required to wear a face mask during the Distribution of Holy Communion at this time – even if they have been fully vaccinated. This precautionary measure is due to the current wide-ranging vaccination rates among the 11 counties that make up the Diocese of Scranton.
- Parishioners who have a pre-existing medical condition or are taking medications that weaken the immune system, should talk to their healthcare provider to discuss their activities. They may need to continue wearing masks and taking precautions while attending Mass.
- Every parish **MUST**, without exception, post signage in any entrance areas stating that anyone who is not fully vaccinated is expected to wear a mask and anyone with COVID-19 symptoms should not enter.

- Parishes MUST, without exception, make an announcement at the beginning of Mass that anyone who is not fully vaccinated is expected to wear a mask.

OTHER IMPORTANT MASS PROTOCOLS AND SAFETY PRECAUTIONS

- Pews no longer need to be marked for physical distancing. Parishes should remind the faithful to continue to spread out as much as possible.
- Hand sanitizer is to be made available throughout the church as much as possible.
- The Sign of Peace is to be celebrated without physical contact between non-family members.
- Distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended at this time.
- Deacons may exercise the full function of their ministry.
- A small group of singers (maximum six) may be utilized by a parish at this time only if proper physical distancing is able to be maintained.
- Full choirs and congregational singing are not yet able to resume.
- St. Ignatius Church will be cleaned daily. High touch surfaces, including door handles, railings, and bathrooms will be disinfected after each service.
- Outdoor Masses are still permitted. Face masks would still be required for the distribution and reception of Holy Communion.
- In person office hours will resume June 1, 2021 from 9:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.

• While ongoing progress is being made to address the spread of COVID-19 with vaccinations, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass and Masses on Holy Days remains suspended at this time.

**Every parish is encouraged to continue
welcoming the faithful back!**