

August 20, 2021

Dear Parishioners,

The Diocese of Joliet updated their regulations and requirements for parishes on Thursday, August 19th, in response to the delta variant and rising hospitalizations across our collective region. You will find the official document at https://www.dioceseofjoliet.org/siteimages/bishop/COVID19_Guideline_Final_20210819.pdf

The document contains two parts: one regarding the normal operations in a parish, and one regarding schools and religious education programs. In this message, I only concentrate on the first two pages of the document, as it impacts liturgy and general parish life at the moment.

Practically speaking, these recommendations and requirements entail some small changes here at Assumption and at I.C. in Braidwood, which I will speak to this weekend prior to Mass.

If it is not mentioned here, please assume that we will move forward as we have been (cleaning after the last Mass, for example):

GENERAL:

- 1. Masks for all are recommended**, regardless of vaccination status.
- 2. The Parish Center/Rectory remains open and accessible for parish business**, with the mask recommendation.
- 3. No potlucks or family style food.** I am glad we got our potluck in when we did at I.C.! And at Assumption, the Marthas did a wonderful job serving pie and ice cream in a safe way last Sunday.

AT MASS/ALL PRAYER:

- 1. At the sign of peace**, please keep it contactless (unless signing with someone you live with).
- 2. Parishioners are to refrain from singing.** Cantors and music will proceed as normal. Because our hymnals also contain the readings for each Sunday, and this information is allowed, they will stay in the pews as long as we do not sing. I have been very much encouraged by the singing at both parishes, and I would ask that you continue to hold onto those voices for a little while longer!
- 3. Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion must wear masks.** Even though the diocese does not order it, I am also extending this to include Ordinary Ministers (priests and deacons) as well. It makes no sense to single out one group over the other.
- 4. Communion on the Tongue** is still allowed, but communicants wishing to receive in this way should receive in the main aisle of the church such that the required sanitizing of hands may take place after one receives on the tongue. Ordinary and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are to sanitize their hands each time, after distributing on the tongue.

I was hoping we would not see a fresh round of mandates from the diocese in regard to COVID, and I continue to pray that we will be over the hump soon. So thank you for your understanding, and your continued prayers for the health of our people!

God Bless,

-fj

Fr. Josh