



Archdiocese of Boston
Adjustments to COVID protocols
March 17, 2021

Effective immediately:

1. Parishes can resume a normal frequency of Communion calls if the minister of Communion is fully vaccinated. The calls should continue to be brief, just long enough to bring the Sacrament, and should not be extended visits. Family members who are extraordinary ministers of Communion can continue to bring the Blessed Sacrament to their own families regardless of vaccination status.
2. Parishes can use a vaccinated adult altar server at all Masses. The server should wear a mask, and the priest (and deacon) should wear a mask at the times when they are not speaking. When the priest is speaking and therefore not wearing a mask, the server should maintain the greatest distance possible. The server should not hold the missal for the priest.
3. During Holy Week, the congregation may sing the various acclamations appropriate to the services ("This is the wood of the Cross..." on Good Friday, "Light of Christ ..." at the Easter Vigil). Additionally, starting immediately, Mass parts (but not the responsorial psalm) may be sung by the congregation. The congregation should, of course, continue to wear their masks during this singing. This is a first small step in a return to congregational singing; more will follow at a later date.

4. Parishes can use a simplified form of social distancing in church seating: Use only every other pew, and ask people who are not in the same household to spread out to approximately double arm's length between themselves and the person next to them in the pew. In many cases this will add considerable capacity to the church seating.

Some notes on what is above.

- The most important thing in this is common sense. Please do not treat these relaxations of the protocols as more than they are. This is a step toward a restoration of what will eventually be allowed, but it is only a step.
- These protocols do not treat of Faith Formation for children, nor of Youth Ministry. There will be documents on both of those topics soon, but they need more refinement and discussion, and we did not want to delay getting these to you now.
- Please do not lose the capacity to live-stream, or the practice of doing so. This is a tremendous resource for our parishes.
- The current protocol regarding services in Funeral Homes stands unchanged: The priest, deacon, or pastoral minister can only go to the Funeral Home in advance of a wake service, before announced visiting hours, and only with a small number of immediate family present.
- If you have particular questions, please address them to corona@rcab.org.

We need to continue to wear masks, over the mouth and the nose, to maintain appropriate social distance, and to ventilate indoor spaces to the greatest degree possible. None of what is said in this document changes any of that.