

Based on the guidelines of the Center for Disease Control, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and the Diocese of Fall River, **the following policy will go into effect beginning Saturday, May 29<sup>th</sup> in all churches and chapels of the Catholic Community of Falmouth**

- The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass on Sundays remains in effect in the Fall River Diocese at this time. Prudence and caution should be used especially for people more susceptible to illness before returning to Mass. However, for healthy individuals and those participating in other social activities (shopping, eating in restaurants, sports activities, etc.) it is time to return to Mass.
- Indoor seating capacity is increased to 100%; therefore, any previously “roped off” pews will now be opened for use.
- The practice of contact information gathering, or single entrance restrictions is relaxed.
- With regard to masks, those who are **fully vaccinated are no longer required to wear a mask to attend Mass or any other liturgical or social function held on parish property. However, those who are fully vaccinated are free and welcome to continue to wear masks if they choose to do so.** **Non-vaccinated persons are advised to continue wearing face masks and to continue distancing in most indoor settings.** While there is no way for us to enforce this, you are reminded of this current guideline of the CDC and the state.
- Each person is asked to make the best decision for him/herself while keeping in mind the need for a collective commitment to the common good of one’s parish community.
- Liturgical processions (Entrance, Offertory, Recessional) will once again be introduced.
- Congregational singing will be encouraged. Music directors have been asked to use hymns with simple refrains until such time that worship aids can once again be provided. Choirs will be introduced at a later time.
- Holy Water fonts will be filled.

- The passing of the offertory basket will resume once there is an ample number of ushers available.
- Hospitality ministry will resume once there is an ample number of greeters available.
- **The Eucharist will be distributed at the proper time during the Mass** and communicants may receive the Eucharist either in the hand or on the tongue. Communicants should be reminded that **it is not proper to leave the church immediately after receiving communion** (this practice was ONLY allowed because of the seriousness of the state of emergency). All are reminded that it is appropriate after the reception of Holy Communion to return to one's seat, offer a prayer of thanksgiving and await the final blessing and dismissal of the priest or deacon **before** leaving the church.
- Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (Eucharistic ministers) will resume their ministry and are required to be vaccinated. Hands will be sanitized prior to the distribution of Holy Communion and should be especially careful to avoid touching the communicant's hands or tongue. Re-sanitation of minister's hands should take place if there is physical contact. **Eucharistic ministers may use masks if this is their preference** and will receive communion **after** distribution.
- The instruction to "offer a sign of peace" may be given. However, at this time, in respect for the person near you who is not of your household, this "sign" should be done without physical contact.
- Parents of youth altar servers can decide whether or not their children should wear a mask while exercising their ministry.
- Normal cleaning and sanitization of the churches will be carried out each week. We will no longer sanitize surfaces after every Mass.
- Because of the proximity of the penitent and priest in a small confession room, it is advisable for both the priests and penitent to wear a mask. Confessions will return at St. Anthony and St. Elizabeth Seton on Saturday afternoons from 3:15-3:45pm, as well as on Monday evenings from 6-7pm at St. Anthony, Thursday from 9:30-10am at St. Elizabeth Seton and First Saturdays of the month from 8:30-9am at St. Patrick.
- Hand sanitizing dispensers will continue to be made available at the entrances of the church.

- The HVAC air filtration systems installed in the main churches will continue to be used.
- To respect the concerns of all communicants, please avoid unnecessary crowding at the entrances and aisles of the church as well as outside the doors.
- Non liturgical use of the facilities: Meetings **associated with parish programs** may resume only after **following the procedure established prior to the pandemic**. This involves filling out of a facility use form and submitting the form to the business manager. Forms are available through the office of the business manager. This will allow all meetings to be placed on the parish calendar and open a clear avenue of communication between the parish staff and those groups using the hall.
- Non-parish groups will still not be allowed to use facilities until ample time for parish groups to submit their request forms for use of the facilities.
- Visitation of the Extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion to those **AT HOME** will resume and ministers have been retrained for the safe distribution of communion. Ministers must be vaccinated and both ministers and communicants should wear masks. Visitation in hospitals, nursing homes or other assisted living facilities are not at this time allowed and will resume at the discretion of the facility.
- Special policies for weddings and funerals will remain for now in place and restrictions will be lifted in due course.