



archphila.org/arise

**ARCHDIOCESE OF PHILADELPHIA
RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PARISH MINISTRY
DURING THE POST-PANDEMIC PERIOD
May 20, 2021**

Guidelines for the celebration of the Sacred Liturgy and the Sacraments

- Please see the “Liturgy and Sacraments” section of: <http://archphila.org/arise/>

Guidelines related to Catholic Schools

- Please see: <https://aopcatholicschools.org/covid-19-information/>

Guidelines for CYO

- Please see: <http://www.cyophilly.com/covidprocedures/>

Guidelines related to Religious Education / PREP

- Please see: <http://phillyocf.org/webinars/>

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR
NON-LITURGICAL PARISH MINISTRIES**

Our Catholic Faith is essentially incarnational. Because God became man and effected our salvation in a human body, we believe in the centrality of the in-flesh, in-person encounter between the person, Christ, and the community. For this reason, the in-person life of the Church is irreplaceable.

As COVID restrictions continue to lift, parishes are encouraged to resume in-person events and meetings whenever possible. The following directives contained in the May 19, 2021 Liturgical Guidelines of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia also apply to non-liturgical ministries for adults in parishes:

- All parishes and institutions in Bucks, Chester, Delaware and Montgomery Counties are free to lift all building sanitation, distancing and capacity restrictions on Monday, May 31, 2021.
- All parishes and institutions in Philadelphia County are free to lift all building sanitation, distancing and capacity restrictions on Friday, June 11, 2021.

- The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) issued new guidance on the use of face coverings and masks as of Thursday, May 13, 2021. According to this guidance, people who are fully vaccinated against the coronavirus no longer need to wear masks or follow social-distancing restrictions in most indoor and outdoor settings, except as required by state and local laws or other regulations. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania automatically adopted the relaxed measures on Thursday, May 13, 2021. However, the City of Philadelphia is still waiting to announce the adoption of the relaxed measures.
- The CDC guidance on the use of face coverings and masks does not allow for an easy observance since they apply differently to different groups of people at the same time—those fully vaccinated and those not vaccinated. These principles are to be observed:
 - People are to be respectful of a person's choice not to wear or to wear a face covering or mask in parishes in the Archdiocese.
 - The non-use or use of a face covering or mask is not to be imposed unilaterally in parishes throughout the Archdiocese.
 - To promote inclusion and reduce fear, it is recommended that announcements or signage indicate, in accord with the CDC guidance, that those who are fully vaccinated no longer need to wear a face covering or a mask. Those who are not fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to wear a face covering or a mask.*

** The masking guidelines above are to be observed on the “honor system.” People are not to be required to show proof of vaccination in parishes of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.*

Moderating Livestream and Virtual Options

While the pandemic has shown us that Zoom meetings and other virtual offerings can be very beneficial, we also need to be discerning about our use of these tools to ensure that we are serving the incarnational nature of our faith. As the pandemic winds down, it is recommended that parishes consider gradually reducing virtual options in order to assist people in making the effort to attend events in person where possible.

The following principle can be used to assist with discerning whether or not to offer a virtual option: *The more personally or spiritually significant a ministry is, the more important it is to meet in person.*

For example, ministries that aim to draw people into a personal encounter with Jesus, form them in the faith, develop bonds of community or invite personal sharing and vulnerability, should exercise a preference for meeting in person. On the other hand, for meetings that are more practical in nature, such as logistical planning or discussions of practical matters, it is less important that the meeting/event be in person.

Overall, let us be creative in finding the balance between an overarching preference for in person parish events and ministries while also acknowledging and remaining open to the benefit of virtual offerings, especially when it will allow a ministry to reach people who might otherwise not be able to participate, such as parents with young children.