



Date: August 13, 2021

From: The Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.

Re: COVID protocol update, August 13

Given the rise in COVID-19 cases and the fact that the Delta variant is more transmissible than previous virus mutations, we are updating our COVID protocols for parishes. Effective immediately:

- Masks are strongly recommended for all people entering a parish facility. If your town or county imposes a mask mandate, you should follow that mask mandate. If you feel the infection rate in your county is especially high, you may require masks. Parishes should communicate their current protocols clearly through signage, announcements and/or other communications with all visitors.
- Masks are required for unvaccinated persons at all parish facilities. We are working on an honor system, but your parish should clearly communicate this requirement to those entering the building through signage, announcements or both.
- Vaccines are strongly recommended for all employees and members unless there is a medical reason for a person not to receive one.
- Pastors should strongly recommend that Holy Communion be received in the hand.

Pastors have discretion to be more strict about their protocols in their local churches, but all pastors should at least be following the protocols above. Schools are using a separate protocol based on their research and unique situations. Each school can give parents information on the exact protocol at each site.

To see a full list of parish protocols, you can check the COVID page on our website.

[\(https://archatl.com/come-holy-spirit-fill-and-renew-us/\)](https://archatl.com/come-holy-spirit-fill-and-renew-us/)

The Spanish version will be available later today.

Thank you for your patience and flexibility as we navigate this ever-changing situation. I hope you will join me in continued prayers for an end to this pandemic.