



Diocese of Austin

6225 East US 290 Highway SVRD EB
Austin, TX 78723
(512) 949-2401 · Fax (512) 949-2524
www.austindiocese.org

Vicar General

Temporary COVID-19 Protocols for the Celebration of the Sacraments in the Diocese of Austin *Updated January 12, 2021*

Pursuant to Bishop Vásquez' decree dated April 30, 2020, parishes in the Diocese of Austin ***must*** follow these revised temporary protocols when celebrating the sacraments. These revised protocols replace those published on September 16, 2020.

1. Parishes are to continue with the pre-pandemic Mass schedule for Sunday and daily Mass and weekly confessions.
2. Parishes are to encourage the following parishioners to remain at home and join the community through a livestreamed Mass: (i) those who are showing symptoms of COVID-19; (ii) those who have an underlying health condition making them vulnerable to COVID-19, or (iii) those who live with or care for anyone in the previous two categories.
3. Parishes must strongly encourage households to maintain safe distance between each other when attending liturgies.
4. Parishes must provide hand sanitizing opportunities at entrances and to the liturgical ministers.
5. Parishes must strongly encourage all of the faithful to wear face masks.
6. Parishes must strongly encourage the distribution of Holy Communion in the hand (the species of bread).
7. Parishes are to disinfect the pews and other regularly touched surfaces in between each liturgy.
8. Parishes are to communicate these protocols on a regular basis using the following media: (i) the Sunday bulletin; (ii) the parish website; (iii) parish social media; (iv) signage at entrances and in other conspicuous places on campus; and (v) through spoken pulpit announcements at Mass.
9. Parishes are not to archive the Mass on social media, the parish website, or on another website. Participating in the Mass via livestream is to be done concurrent and together with the parish community in the church. Parishes may archive homilies, either by video or audio, on social media or its website.

These temporary protocols apply to all liturgies and remain in effect until updated or rescinded.

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Very Reverend James A. Misko
Vicar General