

Dear Parishioners of Sacred Heart,

Rev. Michael Hall, Director of the Office of Worship, has informed us that with the following directive from Bishop O'Connell nearly all of the diocesan pandemic-based restrictions on liturgical celebration are removed. It does, however, very strongly indicate that any individual parish protocols moving forward are at the discretion of the pastor and parish leadership, who know their ministry needs as well as the comfort level with the easing of pandemic protocols within their parish particularly surrounding the distribution of Holy Communion under both species.

Last week, all priests received the following directives from the Office of the Bishop:

Following some inquiries from pastors and after consultation with the Episcopal Council and staff of the Office of Worship of the Diocese of Trenton, the Bishop has approved the following post-pandemic liturgical protocols for the Diocese of Trenton:

Parishes are asked to do everything possible to encourage a return to Mass in our parish churches. Where determined to be pastorally beneficial for the sick and homebound, however, livestreamed Masses should continue to be available as determined by the pastor/administrator.

*Beginning Ash Wednesday, February 22, 2023, the practice of distributing Holy Communion under both species at Mass may be resumed as determined by the pastor/administrator, provided he has sufficient deacons and extraordinary ministers to assist. The pastor/administrator is in the best position to determine the needs and health context of his parish community. COMMUNION UNDER BOTH SPECIES IS **NOT** REQUIRED AT MASS EXCEPT FOR THE PRIEST CELEBRANT AND CONCELEBRANTS SINCE THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS FULLY PRESENT BODY, BLOOD, SOUL AND DIVINITY IN EITHER/BOTH SPECIES.*

In light of this directive, I have asked Merry Marcellino, Coordinator of Ministries, to determine the availability of all Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion to distribute Holy Communion under both species and their preference for which Sunday Mass/Masses at which they would like

to minister. **Ministers will not be required to drink from the chalice even if they minister it to the congregation.** Once we hear from the Extraordinary Ministers we will determine a date for the return of the distribution of Communion under both species. Hopefully, this will begin sometime before Easter.

Also, beginning the First Sunday of Lent, February 26, 2023, Deacons and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion will no longer be required to wear a face mask when distributing Holy Communion, although they are free to do so if they wish. They will, however, continue to sanitize their hands before they receive and distribute Holy Communion, under either species to the members of the congregation.

Thank you very much for your presence and participation at Sunday Mass here at Sacred Heart and for sharing your time, talent and treasure to sustain and strengthen the faith of our Community.

May you continue to have a blessed Lent.

Father John