

WHAT DOES TIER 3 MITIGATION MEAN FOR OUR PARISHES AND SCHOOLS?

As of now, the Catholic Conference of Illinois advises that parishes and Catholic schools are permitted to continue in-person worship and learning, even under the Tier 3 requirements that go into effect on Friday, November 20, 2020. This presumes that our parishes are diligently complying with current protocols and schools are operating under approved Covid-19 prevention plans.

Reopening protocols are available at www.diobelle.org. Key components of these protocols that must be followed include:

- Limit attendance to 20% of church capacity or 100 worshippers, whichever is smaller
- Register worshippers and maintain attendance records to assist in contact tracing
- Ask screening questions before admittance
- Wear well-fitted face masks that always cover our mouth and nose
- Sanitize hands when entering the building and before receiving Holy Communion
- Always maintain social distancing of at least six feet
- Sanitize pews and commonly touched surfaces between Masses/services

We encourage everyone to dedicate themselves to these precautions as a work of charity and mercy that we do for love of our neighbors.

Those who have elevated health risks should consider staying home and participating online or by watching Mass on television.

If you have any symptoms or have been exposed to someone who likely has Covid-19, please worship from home and be especially cautious.

Remember, during this pandemic, the obligation to attend Sunday Mass is dispensed. It is not a sin to miss Mass if we do so because of a concern about contracting or spreading coronavirus. Please pray daily and diligently for an end to this pandemic.

A special word about weddings and funerals. Although funerals are specifically mentioned in the Tier 3 mediation guidelines, funeral Masses and funeral liturgies in church buildings can operate under our protocols for Mass. The 20 percent occupancy rule (maximum of 100 people) applies to any act of public worship. Please follow all the other protocols, including the presence of sufficient staff or volunteers to screen and usher the worshippers, sanitize commonly touched surfaces, etc. Special care should be taken to maintain social distancing before and after the funeral liturgy, as people enter and leave the church building. Gatherings, such as wakes or funeral luncheons, are subject to Tier 3 mediation limits on gatherings (10 persons) and are not advised at this time. This same guidance applies to weddings.