



BISHOP DIMARZIO ANNOUNCES CHURCHES IN BROOKLYN AND QUEENS TO RETURN TO FULL CAPACITY, AMONG OTHER COVID-19 GUIDELINE UPDATES

The Most Reverend Nicholas DiMarzio, Bishop of Brooklyn, has announced that **effective this weekend, May 22-23**, all Catholic churches throughout Brooklyn and Queens can return to full capacity. The change was made among a listing of COVID-19 policy guidance updates.

“It is a good day,” **said the Most Reverend Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio**, citing the forms of limitations on churches that have been in effect since last March. “Our churches are at full capacity once again, though we continue to keep restrictions in place knowing there are people yet to be vaccinated. We are not giving up our guard and as a community, it is very important that we continue to provide the safest environment possible for all to worship.”

The State of New York, following recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), has relaxed many of the current restrictions due to lower rates of infection, and higher numbers of people being vaccinated against COVID-19.

Because of that, with the pastoral care of the people of Brooklyn and Queens in mind, Bishop DiMarzio is issuing the following guidelines:

*Brooklyn and Queens churches may open to full 100% capacity. There is no longer a need to rope off a pew between the occupied rows.

***Social distancing is still required for those who are not vaccinated.** Unvaccinated parishioners should distance themselves from others who are not members of the same household.

***Masks are still mandatory in church for those who are not vaccinated.** However, everyone is encouraged to wear masks while in church.

*Hymnals and missalettes can once again be used.

*Lectors can read from the main pulpit.

*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion may resume their ministry with proper hand hygiene before and after assisting in the distribution of Holy Communion.

*Collection baskets may resume as normal.

*The Offertory Procession with the gifts of bread and wine can resume.

*Choirs with vaccinated members can operate as normal; unvaccinated choir members must continue to maintain social distancing.

*Altar servers may resume their ministry with proper hygiene protocols.

*Hand hygiene is still required and disinfectant use should be encouraged. Additionally, it is wise to provide disinfectant at church entrances.

The Diocese of Brooklyn is relying on the honesty of the faithful as to their vaccination status.

The dispensation from attending Holy Mass, which has been in effect since the start of the pandemic, will be lifted the weekend of June 5-6, on the Feast Day of Corpus Christi (The Solemnity of the Body and Blood of the Lord).

Although the dispensation will be lifted, those who are feeling ill and those caring for the sick, continue to be dispensed from the obligation to attend Mass.

Parishes are encouraged to continue live-streaming of Mass, and DeSales Media will continue the broadcast of the Holy Mass on the Diocesan cable channel, NET-TV, which can be seen on FIOS by Verizon (Ch. 548), Spectrum (Ch.30), Optimum (Ch. 30), or the channel’s website at netny.tv.