

Diocese of San Bernardino



Office of the Vicar General

DATE: July 28, 2021
TO: Pastors and Administrators
FM: Very Rev. Msgr. Gerard Lopez, VG
RE: New COVID Parish Office/Ministry Rules

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'G. Lopez', is written over the 'FM' line of the header.

Dear Pastors and Administrators:

During the past few days, we have all read much about the Delta virus strain that is increasing exponentially Statewide. Within the past two weeks, the percentage of Delta cases per 100,000 has multiplied ten-fold – increasing from 1% per 100,000 population to 11.9% per 100,000. This Delta spread is increasing the fastest in more densely populated, urban areas where business and social inter-action accelerated since the State reopening June 15th...including Riverside and San Bernardino counties.

In order to safeguard the health and safety of our parish and parish school staff, including our many volunteer ministry members, Bishop Rojas has authorized a few changes to the reopening guidelines for parish office operations, which were previously distributed. These minor changes should not impact your ability to operate your ministries under 'reopening'; they will only change the manner in which we operate these ministries, to ensure maximum safety for all during this time of increased Delta risk.

Effective immediately,

- There will be no joint meetings between parish staff/ministry volunteers and school principals/staff. If necessary, representation of school staff at parish meetings should be done via Zoom.
- Meetings at the parish office should be by appointment only and limited to one household for general parishioners. Such meetings should last no more than 60 minutes.
- Meetings scheduled with parish ministry leaders should be limited to ten (10) participants within the same meeting room, and last no more than 60 minutes. Zoom meetings should be utilized as much as possible.
- Masks must be worn indoors unless working in a private office, or at a work station that is a minimum of six (6) feet from another work station.
- Parish offices should remain closed to the general public/walk-ins, until further notice.

Pastors and Administrators, particularly those operating parishes within low vaccination rate areas or where Delta virus cases have been spiking, may continue to enact more stringent COVID protocols on

ministry operations as they deem necessary for the safety of their parish office staff, ministry leaders and parishioners such as: temperature checks; phased reopening of certain ministry programs; increased use of outdoor space for certain meetings/ministries; limits on social gatherings.

Acknowledging that each parish is unique in its ministry operations, please do not hesitate to reach out to Ann Marie Gallant, in our EOC office, with any questions. We have learned that frequently parishes need a customized approach to their particular activities, based upon the ever-changing COVID Delta rules, which EOC can provide.

These changes do not alter any of the reopening directives previously issued for worship, sacraments or other liturgical activities held within the church or within the parish hall, when it operates as a house of worship.

May Our Lord bless your important ministry in these summer months of renewal and hope, and thank you for your cooperation