



February 28, 2022

STEP 2 Health & Safety Guidelines

Dear Father, Deacon, Parish Colleagues,

On the weekend, Premier Jason Kenney announced new public health actions that will move the Province of Alberta to Step 2 of the 3 Step plan for easing COVID-19 protocols.

Step 2 Principles

- People are asked to exercise respect, charity, and kindness toward others and to recognize the varying comfort levels of people, especially during these steps of transition.
 - The wearing of masks is no longer required by the Province, but people are free, if they choose, to continue the use of facemasks, including the clergy and those serving in a liturgical capacity.
 - **Note: It is possible that some municipalities may have a municipal face-covering bylaw or any other health and safety measure that is not in alignment with the approach of the Province. Please check with your municipality when in doubt.**
- People who have symptoms not related to a pre-existing condition should avoid going to the church or being in public as a courtesy to others.
- Promote proper hand hygiene by having hand washing/sanitizing posters visible and placing hand sanitizer stations in convenient and accessible locations.
- Make every effort to encourage respiratory etiquette (e.g., coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow, promptly disposing of used tissues in a lined garbage bin).
- Parishes that have been livestreaming Masses are encouraged to continue providing this service for two reasons:
 - Allowing the parishioners to decide for themselves whether to attend Mass in person or via livestream depending on their comfort level and/or health condition(s).
 - Maintaining this option in case the Province implements new restrictions during a resurgence of cases and/or another wave from a new variant of concern.

Step 2

Effective March 1:

Remaining provincial school requirements (including cohorting) will be removed.

Screening prior to youth activities will no longer be required.

Capacity limits will be lifted for all venues.

Limits on social gatherings will be removed.

The provincial mask mandate will be lifted in most settings. However, masking will still be required in high-risk settings, including on public transit, at Alberta Health Services-operated and contracted facilities and all continuing care settings.

Restrictions on interactive activities, liquor service and operating hours will be lifted

Mandatory work-from-home requirements will be removed.

Source: <https://www.alberta.ca/release.cfm?xID=819882426C7C0-9FF7-BD6E-D0E4C55C8732EBD2> (based on information available on February 28, 2022)

Liturgical Music Ministry

- Congregational singing is allowed.
 - The use of hymnbooks may resume.
- Choirs may resume their ministry
 - The use of a cantor/cantors without a choir remains a valid option.
 - Parishes are able to decide the size of the choir for their church.
- In addition to the entrance hymn, communion hymn and the recessional hymn, the singing/chanting of the gloria (when indicated), responsorial psalm, gospel acclamation, offertory, and Mass parts may resume.
- **Note:** Par. 4 of the Roman Missal, “During Lent, it is not permitted to decorate the altar with flowers, and the use of musical instrument is allowed only so as to support the singing. Nevertheless, Laetare Sunday (the Forth Sunday of Lent), Solemnities, and Feasts are exceptions to this rule” (page 192).

Sunday Collection

- Parishes have the ability to decide whether to continue with the current practice of having the collection baskets/boxes near the entrance of the nave or to resume the passing of the collection baskets.
- Parishes that have collection baskets with the long handles are also permitted to have ushers use them in the collection.
- Any of the approved second collection will be collected in the same manner as the Sunday collection.

Presentation of the Gifts

- Parishes have the ability to decide whether to continue with the current practice of having the hosts and wine placed on a credence table in the sanctuary prior to Mass or to resume the offertory procession for the presentation of the gifts of the hosts, wine, and the Sunday collection.

Sign of Peace

- At this time, the congregation is asked to exchange peace with people outside of their household with a bow and not by a handshake.

Holy Communion

- Hand sanitizer should be made available at the credence table and near communion lines.
- Priests who are celebrating and concelebrating must receive both the Body and Blood at every Mass.
- Deacons, servers, lay ministers, and the faithful receive only under one species – the consecrated host.
- Children celebrating First Communion will also only receive under one species – the consecrated host.

Concelebration

- Concelebrants are allowed to receive Holy Communion by self-intinction. Other chalices will be provided. At this time, only the celebrant partakes of the Precious Blood from the main chalice.

Funeral Receptions, Parish Social Gatherings, and Private Functions

- Funeral receptions, parish social gatherings, and private functions may now resume in parish halls.
 - It is recommended for Step 2 that food and beverages be served at food/beverage stations at funeral receptions and parish social gatherings to avoid commonly touched items and surfaces.
 - It is also recommended for Step 2 that servers serving at funeral receptions and parish social gatherings wear face masks when serving food.

Suggested Announcement

It is recommended especially for the first weekend of Step 2 that the following points be announced prior the celebration of Mass to inform parishioners of the changes to health and safety protocols.

Good morning / Good evening.

During this time of transition in the Province's easing of health and safety restrictions, we are all asked to exercise respect, charity, and kindness with one another and to be conscious of the varying comfort levels of people especially in the following areas:

The wearing of masks is no longer required by the Province but people are free to continue the use of facemasks if they choose to. This applies to everyone including the clergy and to anyone serving in a liturgical capacity.

It is possible that some municipalities may have a municipal face-covering bylaw or any other health and safety measure that is not in alignment with the approach of the Province. Please follow your municipality.

There has been no mention of physical distancing in Step 2, in order to respect people's personal space and comfort level, however, it would be a prudent practise to allow for some distance between people of different households.

- At this time, for the sign of peace, we are asked to exchange peace with those outside of our household with a bow or a nod and not by a handshake.
- In social settings, it would be charitable not to presume that others are comfortable to shake hands or to hug.

People who have symptoms not related to a pre-existing condition should avoid going to the church or being in public as a courtesy to others.

We are all encouraged to observe proper hand hygiene by sanitizing our hands at any of the sanitizerstations in the church or by washing our hands regularly with soap and water.

We are encouraged to observe respiratory etiquette, such as coughing or sneezing into a bent elbow and the prompt disposal of any used tissues in trash cans.

In Step 2, we are grateful that congregational singing may now resume in the Archdiocese.

We take this opportunity to thank all of you for your cooperation in observing the health and safety restrictions for almost two years now. At this time, we pace our walk together toward the easing of these restrictions with alot of care and concern for the good of everyone.