



Answering your questions about returning to Mass as of May 29, 2021 in the Diocese of Worcester

1. Did Governor Baker lift the use of masks and other restrictions in churches, too?

As of May 29, 2021 fully *vaccinated* people are no longer required to wear masks or physically distance from others in our parishes, as in other public settings. This applies to attending Mass as well as other parish activities, but does not apply to schools and not to the office spaces.

2. Will someone be checking whether I was officially vaccinated?

We are not policing our parishioners. This is an honor system and we pray that people will be honest and avoid participating unmasked near other parishioners if they have not been vaccinated.

3. What if I am not yet vaccinated? How can I safely return to Mass?

You should continue to attend Mass as you have been over these past months during the pandemic. All parishes are being advised to have a section of the church available for people who want to wear a mask and remain physically distanced 6 or more feet apart. You can always wear a mask anywhere in the church even if you have been vaccinated but are still concerned for personal reasons about the pandemic.

4. Will Mass feel like it did before the pandemic began?

For the most part things will return to normal as your parish can accommodate it. Worship aids (e.g., missalettes and hymnals) can be used again and you will notice more congregational singing. The Diocese of Worcester is recommending waiting until the fall for choirs to resume. For the time being we will not exchange the sign of peace and Holy Communion will not be offered from the chalice.

5. I heard that Bishop McManus is restoring the obligation to go to Sunday Mass. What if I am sick, or have compromised health or care for someone at home whose health is compromised?

The obligation to be at Mass in person never applies to someone who is sick, or has compromised health, or caring for someone who is sick and at risk or infecting someone for whom they provide care at home. For this reason, parishes are encouraged to continue to stream Mass on their social media channels and the Diocese offers Sunday Mass from the Cathedral on select cable access stations and on the internet at worcesterdiocese.org.

6. I've been away from Mass for a while. What if I'm just not ready to go back?

We understand that for some people, you may feel uneasy for a variety of reasons to come back to Mass. All we ask is that you read the letter from Bishop McManus about going to Mass in which he reflects on what the Mass means for all of us as baptized Catholics.