



# MEMORANDUM

TO: PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND LITURGY PLANNING TEAMS OF THE DIOCESE OF PUEBLO  
FROM: DIOCESE OF PUEBLO OFFICE OF LITURGY  
SUBJECT: MASKS AND THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION  
DATE: March 8, 2022

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## THE WEARING OF MASKS BY THE ORDINARY AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION DURING THE DISTRIBUTION OF HOLY COMMUNION AT MASS.

The season of Lent invites us to respond to the invitation of Holy Spirit by following Christ into the desert clinging more deeply to Him who gives us the fullness of life (c.f., Jn. 10:10). The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) reaffirms, “the Eucharist is the heart of the Church and the heart of our lives as Catholics. In the Holy Eucharist, Jesus Christ himself draws near to each one of us personally and gathers us together as one family of God and one Body of Christ” (USCCB, June 21, 2021). We give witness to these truths when we gather for Mass and every time one presents himself to receive Christ in the Most Holy Eucharist.

Below are 4 points to consider as pastors and pastoral teams seek to take prudent steps forward within the Eucharistic Liturgy, so that the faithful may more deeply encounter our Saviors’ presence in the Most Holy Eucharist.

1. During the cold and flu season it is important to remember that even with best practices, the risk of infection exists anytime a person leaves their house. Anyone in a higher risk category or showing symptoms of illness should be encouraged to stay home and seek medical attention if necessary. Remaining home to avoid infecting others is an act of Christian charity.
2. Parishes should continue to remain vigilant in sanitizing the worship space.
3. Masks for the faithful should be available for those who choose to wear them, but they are not required to attend Mass.
4. The wearing of masks by either the Ordinary Minister of Holy Communion (priest or deacon) or the Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion is now optional. This decision should be made by the pastor in consultation with his pastoral team and considering the most current county health information. Upon the advice of the Pontifical Faculty at the Thomistic Institute,  
*More care should be taken to avoid adopting hygiene measures that could become a counter-sign to the liturgical and sacramental signification of the priest’s actions at Mass. ...We do not recommend that a priest wear a mask for the distribution of Holy Communion during Mass, and we caution that the frequent and obvious use of hand sanitizer during Mass is to be discouraged.*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Pontifical Faculty at the Thomistic Institute Working Group On Infectious Disease and Pastoral Care, “Guidelines on Sacraments and Pastoral Care”, [COVID GUIDELINES — Thomistic Institute](#), Washington DC, July 24, 2020.