



www.holyfamilyportage.org

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Public Health Considerations, Effective March 7, 2022, **as they apply to Holy Family Parish, Portage**

I have been monitoring the recommended guidelines for public gatherings since the pandemic began. I have done my best to follow what came from our Bishop and the National Center for Disease Control (CDC), in what I asked people to observe while on Church property. I decided to use the CDC as the standard because that organization has had recognition for expertise in matters of public health all over the world. Many of those who work for them have done so under multiple Presidential administrations across political parties. As of this date, their recommendations for Cambria County have been relaxed as the following bullets indicate. Please note that if the CDC issues changes, I will follow those recommendations.

- ❖ The vaccines and the boosters are deemed safe and effective for most people and so you are encouraged to talk to your doctor and get those vaccines, if appropriate for you.
- ❖ You are welcome to wear a mask, if you so choose.
- ❖ Those who are not fully vaccinated, who have health issues or are caring for someone who has health issues are strongly encouraged to wear a mask while indoors.
- ❖ If you are sick or caring for someone who is, please stay home until you and/or your loved one has recovered.
- ❖ Continue to wash your hands and to use the hand sanitizer that is provided at the entrances of the Church.
- ❖ You are obligated to attend Mass each weekend and Holy Day of Obligation, unless you are prevented from doing so.

- ❖ If you cannot attend Mass in person, you are encouraged to watch a Mass provided in the media (our website with links to Masses from Holy Family is: www.holyfamilyportage.org). If you want to receive Communion, you may do so after the 4 PM Saturday Vigil Mass at about 5 PM or after the Sunday 10:30 AM Mass at about 11:30 AM, near the handicapped ramp in the alleyway between the Church and School Buildings.
- ❖ Now that we are more fully open, please make a greater effort to join in singing at Masses with music.
- ❖ The Sign of Peace continues to be exchanged only verbally or with a bow among those who are not of the same family.
- ❖ Communion will continue to be distributed only in the form of the Consecrated Hosts, the Body of Christ. You are encouraged to receive Communion on the hand, instead of on the tongue.
- ❖ The use of the offertory envelope deposit boxes has been working, so for the present time, please continue to place your monetary offerings in the wood pedestal drop boxes near the Church entrances.
- ❖ With modifications made to the Confessional, I will use the Confessional on the left side of the Church (looking toward the Altar) each Saturday afternoon.
- ❖ We may return to parish gatherings and events, as long as we take appropriate health precautions. These include wearing gloves when handling food, etc.
- ❖ At Holy Family Parish, we will continue to sanitize all areas that are used by the public on a regular basis and as appropriate.

May God continue to guide and protect us as we do our best to look out for the well-being of our brothers and sisters.

Fr. Tom Stabile, T.O.R.