February 22, 2022

Dear Parish Catechetical Leaders:

The Archdiocese will follow the amended NM Public Health Order of February 17, 2022 and those requirements listed in the Policies for the Prevention and Control of COVID-19 in New Mexico from the NM Department of Health and protocols from the New Mexico Environment Department. Since the pandemic has not yet come to an end, there is still unpredictability with regards to future modifications to the Public Health Orders. Every parish should be ready to make changes in accordance with any promulgated health orders in the future. As of now and out of an abundance of caution for the unvaccinated and vulnerable among us, please abide by the following directives:

- From this day forward, masks will be optional for all those participating in parish Faith Formation programs. However, the use of masks remains strongly recommended, especially for those over 65, those with medical conditions that make them more vulnerable to the virus, those caring for persons in the previous two categories, and those who are unvaccinated.

As noted previously, please continue with the following:

- Maintain social distancing 6’ apart (3’ is for schools that have had their airflow or purifiers checked and certified).
- Provide opportunities for frequent hand washing or have hand sanitizer available
- Notify parents of close contact and possible exposure of their child to any member of your catechetical staff or any child/youth testing positive for COVID-19.
  - Caution – only speak of positive cases when making notifications and do not mention anyone by name.
  - Maintain a cleaning schedule prior to children/youth entering the facility, particularly high touch surfaces and sanitize spaces occupied by COVID-19 infectious individuals.
  - Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep them out of reach of children. See CDC guidelines for cleaning facilities: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility | CDC
- All catechists who will be providing in-person Faith Formation should be vaccinated against COVID-19. It is recommended that those who cannot or choose not to be vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus should not participate as an in-person/gathered catechist this year.

All pandemic related policies and protocols are subject to change as the situation of COVID-19 positive cases changes. Current protocols and any changes will be posted on the Archdiocesan website.