



Very Reverend Daniel B. Carson

Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia

Dear Brother Priest,

I write today to provide you with updates. I will continue to keep you informed as we navigate this challenging time.

Vaccine Guidance for Parishes and Schools

FEDERAL UPDATE

In line with the state-based vaccination priority phases, there is now a federal portal as shown in the chart, linked [here](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html), which allows one to choose which vaccine to receive and make appointments with pharmacies and other authorized providers. CDC information regarding the vaccines is available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/index.html>.

MARYLAND UPDATE

The state of Maryland is currently in vaccination Phase 1C, which includes clergy and other essential support for houses of worship. At your discretion, you may consider notifying at least those employees or volunteers whose duties include assisting with Mass or with other parish ministries or functions that involve public interaction. As a reminder, teachers and support staff for schools and childcare programs have already been offered a dedicated process for vaccination. For parishes without schools, please reference the letter linked [here](#) that can be provided to parish staff when registering for the vaccine. In addition to obtaining vaccinations from authorized providers or local health departments, the state is now operating mass vaccination sites.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA UPDATE

The District of Columbia has instituted a pre-registration system, which allows the user to see what vaccine is available at a given DC Health operated site. Vaccination in D.C. is currently in Phase 1C, Tier 1, which now includes residents age 16-64 with some fairly common high-risk medical conditions, including high blood pressure, asthma, obesity, and diabetes, or with intellectual or developmental disabilities. DC school employees should be concluding their dedicated vaccination process. We will continue to provide more information and vaccine availability as details are provided.

COLLECTING EMPLOYEE VACCINATION RECORDS

You may encourage your staff to get the vaccine and remind your staff members that Cardinal Gregory and the Maryland Catholic Bishops have issued a joint letter strongly encouraging all faithful to receive a COVID-19 vaccine. However, there is currently no requirement, either from the government or from the Archdiocese, that employees receive the vaccine. This issue remains under review and may be subject to change in the future.

It is permissible, however, to ask staff members to confidentially provide confirmation and proof of their vaccination. Parish Bookkeepers should confidentially collect and maintain vaccination information for their staff. It is imperative that this process remains confidential and that the pastor and the bookkeeper be the only persons with access to this vaccine information.

The following guidance is to assist you with the steps to request and collect staff member vaccine information, including message and questions to avoid. This guidance applies to the collection of vaccination records for all parish employees, in Maryland and the District of Columbia, when your parish employees are eligible for vaccination in your jurisdiction.

Steps for collecting employee vaccination information:

- Step 1. Please inform your staff that they will have up to 16 hours of Administrative Leave available to receive both required doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, including any time off needed due to any side effects that may arise from the vaccine.
- Step 2. Specifically, for the purposes of this collection of data, please ask your staff members to confidentially:
 - inform you/your bookkeeper if they have received the COVID-19 vaccination; and
 - send you/your bookkeeper, and no other staff members, proof of their COVID-19 vaccination.
- Step 3. Parish Bookkeepers will be provided an excel spreadsheet to record the information.
- Step 4. Please retain the proof of vaccination in each staff member's employee health file.

Do not:

- Do not inform staff members that they are required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
- Do not ask a staff member any further questions if they inform you that they do not intend to receive the COVID-19 vaccination, including why a staff member has not received a COVID-19 vaccination, in order to avoid eliciting information about an employee medical disability.
- Do not task any other staff members, other than your bookkeeper, with requesting or collecting staff member vaccine information. The

communications and responses must be between you or the bookkeeper and each staff member alone.

If you have any questions about this process or this guidance, please contact Nanette Lowe, Executive Director of Human Resources at lowen@adw.org.

Personal Travel during COVID-19 Pandemic

With more people receiving the COVID vaccine and the number of positive cases declining across the country, the governmental guidelines on domestic travel have changed. Employees who plan to travel should review the applicable requirements in the [District of Columbia](#) and/or [Maryland](#) before departing and make arrangements to ensure that they comply before returning or otherwise arriving for in-person work.

District of Columbia residents are still required to [be tested](#) within 3-5 days of their return, and limit activities while awaiting results, unless returning from [exempted states](#). The testing requirements are waived for persons who are fully vaccinated.

Maryland residents are [advised](#) by the Maryland Department of Health, but are no longer required, to be tested within 72 hours of travel and isolate while awaiting results, and be tested a second time after arrival.

The CDC [recommends](#), but does not require domestic travelers to be tested for COVID, even if [vaccinated](#). Further, people should wait two weeks after full vaccination to travel, but travelers who have been fully vaccinated no longer need to quarantine. International travelers to the U.S., including returning citizens, are [required](#) to have a negative COVID test result or documentation of recovery from COVID before boarding a flight to the U.S.

Employees should speak to their supervisor well in advance about their travel plans and discuss whether the employee can work virtually upon their return, if necessary. If an employee does not obtain prior permission to work remotely (or if a position is unable to be performed remotely), the employee may be required to use accrued leave to cover their absence from work.

As always, please remember to follow the CDC-recommended COVID-19 practices: washing hands, staying home if sick, wearing cloth masks, practicing social distancing, and avoiding large groups of people.

Remind the Faithful of Information on the Website

The archdiocesan website is updated regularly. Please see adw.org/coronavirus for information related to the coronavirus, adw.org/live-streamed-masses-and-prayers/ for a listing of live stream Masses and prayers, and cathstan.org and elpreg.org for the *Catholic Standard* and the Spanish-language *El Pregonero* newspapers.

As always, should you have questions or need assistance from my office and the Pastoral Center, please let us know.

With gratitude for your priestly ministry, I am
Sincerely in Christ,
Very Reverend Daniel B. Carson
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