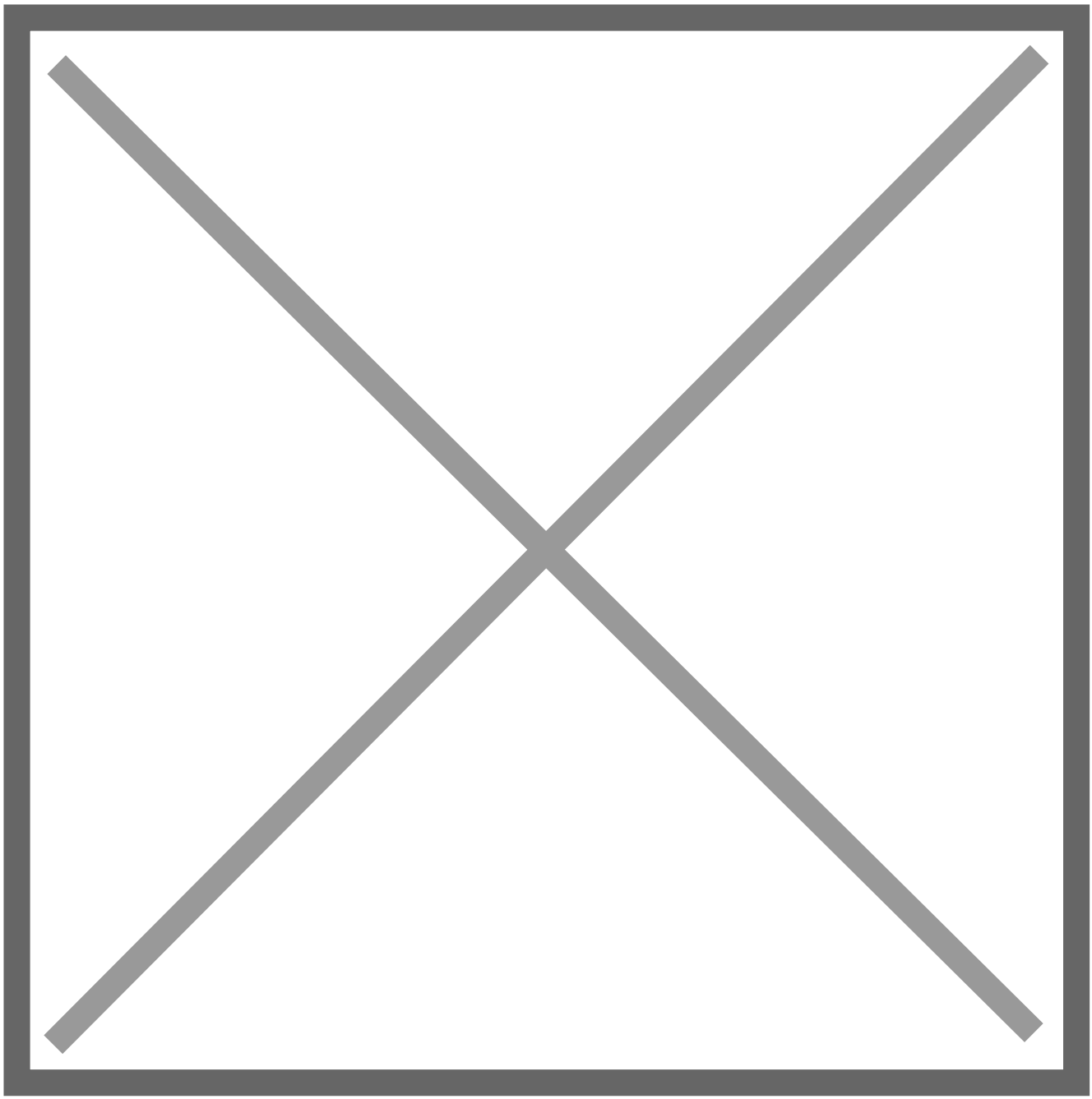
News



Catholics attend a special national Mass on the feast of St. Joseph at the Cathedral of Our Lady of the Angels in Los Angeles March 19, 2021, amid the coronavirus pandemic. (CNS photo/Isabel Cacho, courtesy Archdiocese of Los Angeles)

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Los Angeles — June 15, 2021
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The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Los Angeles has issued new guidelines for its more than 300 parishes, which, beginning June 19, are set to fully reopen.

In a letter to congregants over the weekend, Archbishop José H. Gomez announced guidelines allowing liturgical celebrations — including weekday and Sunday Masses as well as First Communion, confirmation and baptism services — to take place indoors and without capacity limitations, social distancing and prearranged “reservation systems." The same goes for weddings, quinceañeras and funerals.

Some Catholic churches have hosted socially distanced indoor church services, while other parishes have opted for outdoor Mass.

The Los Angeles Archdiocese estimates it encompasses 4.3 million Catholics.

"Thankfully, we continue to make significant progress in our fight against the pandemic in the three counties of the Archdiocese," Gomez said in the letter. "We can look forward to better days in which we can actively live our faith as the Body of Christ in our parish communities."

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Masks will not be required for fully vaccinated people during indoor and outdoor religious services, according to the new instructions. Meanwhile, unvaccinated people must wear masks when social distancing is not possible during outdoor services, and at all times indoors.

However, the new guidelines state parishes "are not to verify who is and who is not vaccinated." Masks and social distancing are required for employees and volunteers during Mass.

Gomez also announced, as of June 19, he would end the dispensation from obligation to attend Sunday Mass and services on holy days. The dispensation, however, still stands for those who are ill or have underlying health concerns.

These new instructions come just days before a California order on June 15 will officially lift most of the state’s coronavirus rules and apply to the archdiocese's 288 parishes, 30 missions and chapels and 16 Eastern Rite Catholic churches across Los Angeles, Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties.

In February, a U.S. Supreme Court ruling lifted a California ban on indoor church services, and earlier this month, the state agreed to two settlements that block it from imposing new COVID-19 restrictions on houses of worship.