



Office of the Bishop  
Diocese of Saint Cloud

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July 23, 2020

Dear Pastor,

Gov. Tim Walz issued an executive order on Wednesday that mandates the wearing of masks starting Saturday, July 25, in all public indoor spaces and businesses, unless a person is alone. This includes churches, non-public schools and parish offices/public spaces.

I have attached the order to this email. With regard to public liturgies, the new executive order **requires** that people coming to Mass wear a mask upon entering the church, during Mass, and when exiting the building. The mask should be removed only for the reception of Communion. The order grants some exemptions from the mandate, including for young children and people with special medical conditions. Please make arrangements to have face masks on hand for those who arrive at church without them. No one (except those exempted) should enter a church or other parish-related public space without wearing one.

As before, the celebrant and other ministers must wear face coverings during processions, the recessional and distribution of Holy Communion. However, I am now allowing priests and deacons to wear face coverings throughout the Mass, if they choose. Priests and deacons must wear face coverings when greeting people before and after Mass, whether inside or outside.

I have adjusted our diocese's liturgical protocols to reflect these changes, and I've made other slight revisions. **Please read the revised protocols (attached) carefully and completely.** While I believe we have generally been doing a good job as a diocese in following the protocols up to this point, I am still receiving reports of guidelines not always being followed.

Here are helpful links that further explain the new executive order and its requirements:

- "Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations under Executive Order 20-81"  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html>
- "Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings"  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html>

An additional note for pastors in the City of St. Cloud: the city mask ordinance passed earlier this week ends when the statewide order goes into effect.

I support the requirement to wear face coverings because they are an effective means of protecting the health and safety of parishioners and community neighbors as the statewide process of reopening continues and more people return to Mass and parish activities. Along with hand-washing and physical distancing, it is among the simplest ways to limit the spread of the coronavirus, including by those who are asymptomatic or pre-symptomatic. I encourage you to explain the importance of wearing masks to your parishioners and to be good role models in your own use of them when interacting with the public. Please update your previous reopening plan to align with the requirements of this new executive order.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+Donald J. Kettler  
Bishop of Saint Cloud