



WEARING OF FACE MASKS IN CHURCH

Update to [Archdiocesan Guidelines of 3 June 2020](#)

As you know, the Archdiocese has followed guidance from Alberta's Chief Medical Officer of Health in setting the necessary protocols for keeping people safe in our parishes during the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr. Hinshaw has recommended that face masks be worn in public places, but to date has not issued an order making them mandatory. She has said that she expects to issue updated guidance on the subject of masking in the coming weeks, following her review of evidence from international sources and other jurisdictions.

In the meantime, many municipalities are considering or have passed bylaws on the subject. As of **Saturday, August 1**, the wearing of non-medical masks will be mandatory in public indoor spaces in Edmonton, including churches. (Bylaw 19408)

This will mean a change in practice in our parishes.

During Mass

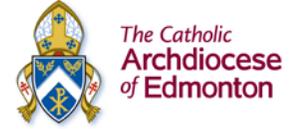
Under Archbishop Smith's direction of May 26, masks were encouraged during Mass but only required for those receiving Communion. Today the Archbishop is directing that masks be worn by all congregants throughout the Mass, with these exceptions:

- Children under the age of 2
- Persons who are unable to manage a mask without assistance
- Those with a mental or physical limitation that makes them unable to wear a mask
- As before, the priest celebrant will not wear a mask during the Liturgy of the Eucharist; he will still be required to wear one before Mass, during the distribution of Holy Communion, and after the final blessing.
- Lectors are permitted to remove their mask when proclaiming/reading at the ambo. They should refrain from touching the microphone.

Since the dispensation from the Sunday Obligation still applies, anyone who has difficulty or issues with wearing a mask may want to consider staying home and staying safe at this time.

During other Activities

All are required to wear masks when inside our church buildings. This includes those coming for committee meetings or parish gatherings, private prayer, baptism or funeral liturgies without Mass, or for meetings with staff or clergy. Visitors should be offered a mask if they do not have one.



Parish staff must wear a mask when in common areas and during any interactions with visitors. A mask is not required when working alone inside an office or working outdoors.

Consistent Practice & Communication

In the interest of consistent practice across the Archdiocese, the Archbishop has directed that this direction be adopted in all parishes, *regardless of whether their local municipality has passed a mask bylaw*. As the province continues to reopen, we have witnessed an increase in the number of infections and so it is important that we redouble our efforts to protect our brothers and sisters in Christ.

We know that volunteers are doing most of the work involved in pandemic protocols, such as greeting and directing Mass attendees, recording contact information, and doing extra cleaning. We are extremely grateful for their faithful efforts. Parishes should use signage, bulletin announcements, and website notices to inform parishioners and visitors that masks are required, as a gesture of charity and compassion for their brothers and sisters. Visitors to the church should be informed of the mask requirement, but we do not expect anyone to police those who refuse to comply. It is impossible to know whether someone has a disability that precludes their wearing a mask; please treat them kindly.

This direction will be reviewed once the Chief Medical Officer of Health updates her guidance or on December 30, whichever comes first.

If your parish requires more masks, please contact Mona at 780-469-1010. For any other questions regarding this direction, please contact Father Paul Kavanagh.

We thank you for your faithful collaboration,

Rev. Adam Lech
Moderator of the Curia

31 July 2020