

November 14-15, 2020

Lector announcement at all Masses:

Today, we would like to thank all of you for being so faithful and for following the State and Diocesan guidelines concerning the wearing of masks and other protocols regarding the Coronavirus.

The Bishop, however, has gone a step further and asks that every parish and mission in our diocese read his letter the wearing of masks in church:

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a major disruption in our lives. While the number of cases in our diocese rises sharply, I want to give you a brief update. Four of the priests in our diocese are now under quarantine. The likely place where one of these priests caught the virus was in a church where some of the people in Mass were not wearing masks. The other three priests are quarantining due to contact with the one who was infected in the Mass.

Our clergy and volunteers are on the front line in contact with the public every day. Our protocols allow them to carry out their ministries more safely. If you refuse to wear a mask in church, you are putting people at risk, and you are not being fair to our clergy and volunteers. Fewer clergy would mean a reduction in the availability of the sacraments for our people.

In our diocese, we expect people to wear masks or cloth face coverings when they come to church because this provides a layer of protection against the possibility that one could unknowingly be infected with the coronavirus and spread it to others through the air.

When churches follow our protocols of wearing masks, maintaining safe social distancing, keeping hands clean, and avoiding handshaking, it has been very effective in preventing transmission of the virus.

Wearing a face mask over the nose and mouth is not very enjoyable, yet it serves a valuable purpose for the sake of public health and in respect for the precious gift of human life. Out of love for our brothers and sisters, we accept some personal inconveniences to protect others from harm. To wear a mask for one hour in church is a very small sacrifice in comparison to the ultimate sacrifice made by Jesus Christ on the Cross.

Thank you for your cooperation with the coronavirus policies of our diocese. Let us work and pray together in a spirit of patience and love.