



OFFICE of the BISHOP

May 14, 2021

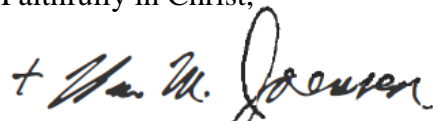
Dear Friends in Christ,

Following recently released CDC recommendations, effective immediately, the Diocese of Des Moines will no longer require masks at liturgies and parish events. Parishioners who are not yet fully vaccinated are strongly encouraged to continue to wear a mask at Mass and other parish activities. Additionally, the Diocese continues to consult with local medical experts to enact other changes in our mitigation practices that will draw us toward a more normal, yet safe, experience of our communal worship.

These changes are a hopeful step in our battle against COVID-19, and yet we should remember that we have not yet fully emerged from this pandemic, and a need for vigilance persists. Other mitigation practices such as washing hands, staying home when sick, and social distancing when appropriate remain important. Let us all—whether vaccinated or not—show solicitude and charity for each other, so that all members of the Body of Christ feel welcome at the Mass and all parish events. Pastors have been encouraged to communicate with those who may desire more caution. **Pastors retain the discretion to continue to offer liturgies with more extensive mitigation practices, such as requiring masks at certain Masses or events.**

The pandemic has caused suffering for all of us in different ways. In God's providence, it has also afforded us an opportunity to show greater care for our neighbor, and to do our part to advance the common good. As we implement these latest changes, let us continue to be mindful of our brothers and sisters, to make spiritual and practical sacrifices for each other, and to pray for a speedy end to the pandemic.

Faithfully in Christ,



Most Rev. William M. Joensen, Ph.D.
Bishop of Des Moines