

## **The Diocese of Alexandria's COVID-19 Response Team issues a statement regarding Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards' mask mandate**

On Monday, Aug. 2, Gov. John Bel Edwards temporarily reinstated Louisiana's statewide mask mandate indoors for all people age five and older. This temporary mandate will stay in place until September 1, but may be extended if necessary.

The Diocese of Alexandria (DOA) COVID-19 Response Team would like to highlight some of the points from this executive order. Again, the entirety of the order can be read at the link above.

- 1) The indoor mask mandate applies to all SCHOOLS K-12 and that includes our Catholic Schools.
- 2) The indoor mask mandate applies to all individuals REGARDLESS OF VACCINATION STATUS.
- 3) Face masks should be worn properly to cover the wearer's mouth and nose indoors at all times UNLESS A PERSON IS IN THEIR OWN HOME.

The order contains some exceptions to the mandate, the DOA COVID-19 Response Team would like to point out one of these exceptions that would pertain to gathering for Mass: Those individuals (pastor or readers) who are giving a speech (example: homily) for a broadcast or to an audience (congregation) may remove their masks during the speech for that purpose.

The Louisiana Department of Health (LDH) has published updated recommendations for large gatherings. The DOA COVID-19 Response

Team would like to highlight several of these recommendations pertaining to gathering for Mass:

- 1) The LDH recommends limiting the size of indoor gatherings (therefore, your pastor may—or may not—reinstate some social distancing requirements during Mass).
- 2) The LDH recommends that gathering spaces should be staged to accommodate at least six feet of distance between guests (therefore, your pastor may—or may not—mark off pews to remain empty while Mass is being celebrated, in order to maintain social distancing).

The COVID-19 response team would like to highlight some of the LDH guidance regarding exposure to COVID-19:

All individuals should take a COVID-19 test immediately after a known or suspected exposure to COVID-19 and take the following actions:

- 1) If POSITIVE they should isolate immediately
- 2) If NEGATIVE they should retest again between five and seven days post-exposure. At this time, the Center for Disease Control and the LDH advises that fully vaccinated individuals who are not experiencing COVID symptoms do not need to quarantine following an exposure to COVID-19.

Isolation for those who test positive typically consists of:

- 1) If symptomatic, at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, while symptoms are improving and at least 24 hours with no fever without using fever-reducing medication.
- 2) If asymptomatic (not experiencing any symptoms), but with a positive test, 10 days from the time the test was performed.

Please remember, COVID-19 vaccines are widely available across the state.