

2. Instructions for Usage of Masks

As per the CDC, "Masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms." The wearing of masks in all public gatherings remains the best practice in the eyes of state and federal public health authorities and is required in gatherings in the Diocese of Manchester.

(N.B. Numerous letters have come from those who refuse to wear a mask, and also numerous letters have come from families who arrived at their church and, at the sight of many not wearing masks, have felt the need to return home and not attend Mass. This presents a sad and pressing reality that continues.)

Those readily exempted from wearing a mask and therefore must maintain distancing from non-family members are:

Children younger than five years old

Persons, adults or children who:

- Endure a medical condition
- Have a disability or difficulty putting on or taking off a mask/facial covering without assistance
- Have trouble breathing and would be further impaired by facial covering
- Are deaf or hard of hearing (this also includes anyone accompanying/assisting that person)
- For whom the covering of the face is psychologically difficult or traumatizing
- For whom wearing a mask may be difficult due to sensory or behavioral issues

Priests while celebrating Mass may not wear a mask (this is in accordance with directives from the Sacred Congregation for Divine Worship and the Sacraments).

Priests MUST, however, wear a mask **when distributing Holy Communion**.

Priests then remove the mask until the Dismissal.

Persons proclaiming the Readings or leading the General Intercessions remove the mask.

Masks are to be worn (except for the above mentioned cases) and 6-foot distancing is to be maintained on outdoor areas of church property (including parking lots and walkways).

Parishioners should be asked not to congregate inside or outside the church building before or after Mass.