



Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston

Chancery Office

**Statement of the Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
Response to Governor Abbott's Executive Order
March 5, 2021**

Earlier this week, Governor Abbott issued an executive order to be effective March 10, 2021, allowing all Texas businesses to reopen at 100%. The order also ends the statewide mask mandate, but strongly encourages the wearing of face coverings when it is not feasible to maintain social distancing from another person not of the same household. Private businesses, including churches, are allowed the discretion to determine whether face coverings will remain mandatory.

Over the last few days, Archdiocesan officials have engaged in a series of consultations regarding the order, which included input from clergy and medical professionals. Recognizing the needs of this local Church, **in particular the need to protect the most vulnerable among us**, we have determined that all of our current COVID-19 protocols will remain in place until further notice, including the requirement for face coverings at Mass and other liturgical celebrations.

The Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese have implemented protocols that have proven effective in minimizing the spread of COVID-19 to its students, families, faculty and staff. Since this spring 2021 semester will soon come to a close, these protocols will also remain in place through the end of this academic year.

We are monitoring the increased level of vaccinations and the number of new COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations in our area and remain hopeful these metrics will continue to trend favorably so that the virus will soon be contained.