

Memo:

To: Parish and Archdiocesan Staff and Clergy
From: Archbishop Hundt
Date: August 20, 2020
Re: COVID-19: Masks and Distanced Gatherings

Dear Parish and Archdiocesan Staff and Clergy:

Recently the Chief Medical Officer of Health issued a ***Special Measures Order (Masks)*** and the Province published ***COVID-19 Guidance for Distanced Gatherings***. The regulations and changes presented in these documents come into effect on Monday August 24, 2020 and may have an effect on some of the policies and procedures presently in place for our worship services and our parish and diocesan offices and facilities.

Special Measures Order (Masks) mandates that masks that cover the nose and mouth must be worn in public indoor settings including: a place of worship; a funeral home; the common areas of an office building; and a professional's private office where physical distancing cannot be maintained or physical barriers are not in place. Among those who are exempted from this requirement are: children under the age of 5; people with physical or mental health conditions; and people seated in a place where activities or services of a religious nature are offered provided physical distancing of two metres can be achieved between individuals or bubbles and provided they wear a mask when moving around.

COVID-19 Guidance for Distanced Gatherings increases from 50 to 100 people the maximum number of people allowed at faith gatherings, weddings and funerals in facilities large enough to allow for the required physical distancing.

For Places of Worship the above changes mean:

- Masks will need to be worn by everyone entering and moving around in our churches, although while in "physically distanced seating" masks may be removed (this also applies to the celebrant at the altar, the reader at the ambo and the cantor at the podium).
- Churches large enough to allow for the required social distancing may have up to a maximum of 100 people present for worship services (in which case they may need to involve more volunteers as ushers and a second person distributing Holy Communion).

For Parish and Diocesan Offices and Facilities the above changes mean:

- Masks will need to be worn by everyone entering and moving around in our offices and facilities, although masks may be removed when protected by a physical barrier or in a private office or in "physically distanced seating".
- Facilities large enough to allow for the required social distancing may have up to a maximum of 100 people at events **run by a recognized business or organization**. (Events run by individuals and "unrecognized" groups are limited to a maximum of 50 people at an event.)
- For contact tracing purposes, records must be kept for two weeks of all people entering parish offices and facilities.

Hoping this information is of assistance to you, I remain,

Yours in Christ,
+Peter Hundt