



MEMORANDUM

To: All Parishes & Clergy
From: Cardinal Thomas Collins
Date: July 3, 2020
Re: Mandatory Masks – New By-laws impacting places of worship

In recent days, you may have seen numerous media reports regarding municipalities considering new by-laws requiring the mandatory use of masks in indoor spaces (including places of worship).

City of Toronto – by-law passed June 30 – masks in indoor spaces (including places of worship) become mandatory as of July 7, 2020.

Peel Region – by-laws proposed in Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon expected to take effect as early as July 9, 2020 (including places of worship).

York Region – report on mandating masks will be presented to council on July 9, 2020.

Simcoe Region – mandatory masks being considered but no formal process has been initiated.

Durham Region – mandatory masks being considered but no formal process has been initiated.

If a by-law has been passed in your area, enclosed is a sample announcement that can be shared from the pulpit and through various communication channels with parishioners. Other important points:

- Priests do not need to wear masks in the sanctuary while celebrating Mass but should ensure they are wearing a mask when distributing Holy Communion and any other setting where they are in close proximity (less than 2m/6 ft) to parishioners. Lectors should remove masks to proclaim the Word of God.
- Parishes are not required to distribute masks – some parishes have ordered a small quantity to make available however, there is no obligation to do so.
- Exceptions to the by-law include people who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons (trouble breathing or unable to remove a mask without assistance) and children under two years old. Proof of a medical condition is not required.
- In addition to the announcement provided, we encourage Ministers of Hospitality to kindly and thoughtfully communicate this new requirement to those who may not be aware upon arrival, perhaps welcoming the faithful just outside the doors of the church. While it is impossible to force someone to wear a mask, this measure is being undertaken to care for our neighbour and to minimize the spread of Covid-19.
- Masks are not mandated in church offices at this time although their use is recommended for those who will be in close proximity to others in a work setting.

Thank you for your continued co-operation as we work to foster a safe environment for all.



Archdiocese
of Toronto

Catholic Pastoral Centre
1155 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1W2
T 416.934.0606
www.archtoronto.org

Sample Announcement re Mandatory Use of Masks
(for pulpit use and through parish communication channels)

Notice to Parishioners – New By-Law Requires Mandatory Use of Masks at Church

I want to thank all of you for your co-operation and kindness as we have returned to church over these past weeks. It has been so great to see parishioners once again and I thank everyone who has been so helpful in this re-opening stage, especially our wonderful volunteers. Thank you!

As you may have heard in recent days, a new by-law has been passed that makes the use of masks or face coverings inside all public places mandatory. This includes churches and our own parish. I would ask that all those coming to church bring a mask or face covering and wear it upon entering the church.

I recognize that this may be an inconvenience yet I know that we are all committed to caring for our neighbour and those around us. While a number of restrictions have been lifted in recent days, we are still in the middle of a pandemic and need to take the appropriate steps to minimize any potential spread of Covid-19. So while the Archdiocese of Toronto had highly recommended wearing a mask while in church and I know that most of you have been doing so, it is now a by-law that we must follow.

Thank you in advance for your co-operation as we do all that we can to take care of one another and keep our community safe and healthy.