



HIS LOVE IS FROM AGE TO AGE

Diocese of Edmundston

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PRESS RELEASE

To the parish priests and administrators,

Yesterday, Premier Blaine Higgs announced additional health measures to contain the latest pandemic wave that is affecting our province. These measures are effective today.

To comply with these new government guidelines, here are the additional measures added to our protocol already in place in our parishes:

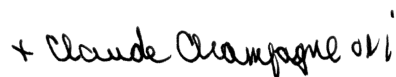
- Anyone who attends church will now have to wear a mask. Otherwise, we cannot let them come in. **People always need to wear the mask throughout the Eucharistic celebration.**
- As a courtesy and to avoid disappointment, each church should have available several single-use masks offered to the faithful who have forgotten to bring one or who are unaware of this new directive.
- People always need to wear the mask as soon as they enter the church (i.e., while going to sit in the pews, going to communion, and leaving the church).
- People need to wear a full mask. The transparent shield worn by some extraordinary ministers of communion, or volunteers at the door is no longer acceptable.
- “People attending churches/places of worship will be required to wear a mask. Maintaining two metres of physical distancing also continues to apply. Performers or officiants who are performing activities that require vocalization like talking or singing at a faith gathering, wedding, funeral, social event, etc. are exempt from wearing a mask but they should stay four metres away from others during their performance. Parishioners must wear masks while singing. It should be noted that singing during a pandemic is a high-risk activity. The chance of expelling drops of liquid that could contain COVID-19 increases during singing, shouting, cheering or playing wind instruments. Having a group of people singing increases the number of these small droplets. Additional risk factors include longer durations of more than 30 minutes and group singing within indoor settings.” The choir loft, where possible, is perhaps the best place for acoustics and to insure sanitary measures.
- As for the presiding priest and the reader, they do not have to wear a mask while assuming their liturgical function. The faithful need to hear and understand them. They are already at a suitable distance from the faithful. The presider remains in the sanctuary throughout the entire celebration unless he gives communion. The priest should wear a mass entering the church and going to the sacristy to follow the same rule that applies to anyone in a public place and to set an example.

Parish offices,

Anyone who comes to the parish office will need to wear a mask, as will the secretary or staff member who receives the person. Single-use masks should be available for those who have forgotten their own or are not aware of these new guidelines. The secretary does not have to wear a mask continuously while doing her work unless there are people in her presence.

These are the new directives in addition to the protocol already in use in our parishes and offices.

Let us hope that these guidelines will help contain this new wave and reassure all the faithful who come to celebrate with us the Lord's Day or other celebrations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Claude Champagne O.M.I." with a small apostrophe above the 'i'.

+ Claude Champagne, O.M.I.
Bishop of Edmundston