



# Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

1 – 4044 Nelthorpe Street, Victoria BC V8X 2A1 – Tel: (250) 479-1331 – Fax: (250) 479-5423 – Web: rcdvictoria.org

## MEMO

**Date:** August 25, 2021  
**To:** Clergy, Parishes, Religious, Parishioners, and Staff  
**From:** Bishop Gary Gordon  
**Re:** BC mask mandate and worship services

---

The B.C. government has announced that effective August 25<sup>th</sup>, face coverings must be worn in all indoor public spaces throughout BC to help slow the transmission of COVID-19. *Worship services are exempt from the provincial mask mandate; however, we strongly recommend that face coverings be worn by all people born in 2009 or earlier during worship services. For all other uses of church buildings (parish social events, meetings of church groups, hall bookings, etc), face coverings must be worn.*

A face covering is defined as a medical or non-medical mask that covers the nose and mouth. Face shields are not a substitute for a mask, as there is an opening below the mouth. As described on the government's website (<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/info/restrictions>), there are a number of conditions under which a person is not required to wear a face covering. These exceptions must be respected, and compassion, good judgement, and pastoral sensitivity are encouraged.

An updated set of General and Liturgical Directives are attached and have been posted online in accordance with the new mask mandate (<https://www.rcdvictoria.org/news/responsetocovid19-0>). We remind all parishes of the key Directives that remain in place, including:

- Parishioners in the Diocese of Victoria remain dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass at a church. Anyone who is sick or not feeling well must stay home.
- Holy Water and Baptismal fonts are to remain empty
- Parishioners are to be reminded not to shake hands or hug each other during the Kiss of Peace, unless they are sitting together as a family unit. Continuing the sign of peace with a gesture, such as bowing, is recommended.
- All people distributing Communion must either stand behind a clear Plexiglas screen or wear a face covering.
- Communion in this Diocese will continue to be distributed on the hand only

As Pope Francis said in his video message on August 17<sup>th</sup>, “Getting vaccinated is a simple yet profound way to care for one another, especially the most vulnerable. I pray to God that each one of us can make his or her own small gesture of love... small gestures for a better future”. All Catholics who are able to do so are encouraged to follow the example of Pope Francis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Bishop Gary and receive the Covid-19 vaccine; widespread vaccination is our path to restriction-free liturgical gatherings, activities, and visits.

Please keep in prayer the many places in our world that do not have the kind of health care system that we do, nor an equitable access to vaccines. Thank you for your prayers and efforts as we work together during these challenging times