

## **Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany**

December 13, 2021

### **MASK-WEARING PROTOCOLS FOR PARISHES**

Governor Kathy Hochul on Dec. 10 announced a statewide mandate **requiring face masks to be worn by everyone in all indoor public places** unless businesses or venues have implemented a COVID-19 vaccine requirement. Since a vaccine verification requirement would be difficult, if not impossible, for churches to implement, we believe the mask mandate is the most efficient option for parishes of the Diocese of Albany to remain compliant. While we realize that this may not be convenient or comfortable, we want to do all we can to ensure the safety of those who celebrate, assist at, and attend Mass throughout the remainder of the Advent season and the Christmas season that is just around the corner. We thank you for all you have done and continue to do to keep our people safe.

**The mandate, as issued by the New York State Department of Health, is effective today, December 13, 2021, through January 15, 2022, at which time the state will reassess its effectiveness based on COVID-related public health conditions.**

#### **PARISH OFFICES**

- Parish office staff and visitors are required to wear masks at all times except when eating, drinking or alone in an enclosed room.

#### **CHURCHES**

- All parishioners will be asked to wear masks while in church, in accordance with the state mandate that masks be worn in all “public places.” Houses of worship are considered public places per the state’s definition.
- Those who are involved in distributing Holy Communion during Mass are required to wear a mask during this distribution.

#### **ACTION POINTS:**

- Post signs at entrances to church and parish offices (See New York State poster link below)
- Make announcements during Mass and all church activities
- Send out email blast
- Post on website, in bulletin, and social media
- Provide masks at all entrances for those who have forgotten them
- Ensure hand sanitizer is available at entrances and in other key places
- Continue with increased frequency of cleaning of high touch areas

**Helpful Resources:**

New York State Mask Mandate Announcement:

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-hochul-announces-major-action-address-winter-surge-and-prevent-business-disruption>

FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions about the announcement):

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/frequently-asked-questions-proof-full-vaccination-or-mask-requirement-businesses-and-venues>

New York State Poster:

[https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/12/12.13-mask-mandate-poster\\_0.pdf](https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2021/12/12.13-mask-mandate-poster_0.pdf)

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Vicars General or the Office of Prayer and Worship.