



DIOCESE OF VENICE IN FLORIDA
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

May 14, 2021

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Greetings in the Risen Lord! As Holy Mother Church approaches the Solemnity of Pentecost, it is my prayer that you, the Faithful of the Diocese of Venice, may be filled with the graces of the Holy Spirit.

With this letter, I wish to address the face covering and distancing policy at Mass and Parish gatherings in the Diocese of Venice. As you are aware, on May 13, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provided updated guidance for vaccinated individuals with regards to face masks and distancing. Under the new guidance, those who are fully vaccinated are no longer required to wear masks or physically distance except where required by law.

In accordance with the new CDC guidance and effective immediately, masks and distancing will no longer be required at Mass in the Diocese of Venice. Masks remain encouraged and certainly permitted, particularly for those who are not yet vaccinated. Masks will no longer be required for Parish group activities or other Parish gatherings.

For those who have children in a Catholic School or Parish religious education program, and due to only recent age eligibility for vaccines for some of these age groups, the CDC has said that masking is a key strategy to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in schools. Thus, for the remainder of this academic year, masks will continue to be required. This will be reviewed with the close of the school year.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all try to live in the context of the Pandemic and to be evermore mindful of our brothers and sisters around us who may be vulnerable, for whatever reason.

This opportunity is taken to extend to you the assurances of my continued consideration, as well as my prayers for you and your family.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Frank J. Dewane
Bishop of the Diocese of
Venice in Florida

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