



Diocese of Davenport

Office of the Bishop

Effective Immediately

July 30, 2021

To Pastors, Principals, and Chancery Staff:

Current Situation

The pandemic is not over. The current, dominant virus that causes COVID is the Delta variant. It is responsible for 83% of cases in the U.S. and over 96% of infections in our region of the country. It is more infectious. While it took 5-10 minutes of exposure to catch the original virus, exposure times as short as 1 minute can lead to infections with the Delta variant. People fully vaccinated are less likely than unvaccinated persons to become infected or to experience severe symptoms if infected. However, people fully vaccinated can transmit the virus to others.

Hospitals and ICUs in various places across the country are being stretched to their limits. Many of the unvaccinated are children under twelve who are not yet eligible for the vaccine. Although a small percentage of children get severe illness, the children's hospital in Des Moines has been full to capacity, in part due to an increase in COVID cases.

Pope Francis has said that vaccination is not simply a matter of personal health; it is part of our responsibility as Catholics for the common good. The Church also has made it clear that the COVID vaccines are morally acceptable.

CDC Guidelines

In response to the continued spread of the Delta variant, the CDC updated its guidance regarding masking on July 27, 2021: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated-guidance.html>

The CDC recommendation is that fully vaccinated people wear a mask in public indoor settings in counties where there is substantial or high transmission, as defined by the CDC.

The CDC also recommends that unvaccinated people get vaccinated as soon as possible, barring medical reasons.

Diocese of Davenport Protocols

Based on these new CDC guidelines, the Diocese of Davenport has updated its policies and protocols.

In any county experiencing SUBSTANTIAL or HIGH rates of transmission, masks are strongly recommended for all individuals – vaccinated and unvaccinated – taking part in any indoor parish, school or chancery event. This includes but is not limited to liturgies, faith formation sessions, and social activities.

The status of your county can be found at: <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view>. Select the appropriate state and county from the drop-down menus.

In an activity where all participants are KNOWN to be vaccinated, masking is optional.

The diocese continues to urge people to get vaccinated.

The dispensation from participating in Mass continues to be in effect until a date to be determined.

All other protocols remain in place.



Most Rev. Thomas R. Zinkula