

Face Mask Guidance • August 13, 2020

Face coverings required at Mass

The Archdiocese of Baltimore reminds clergy and laity that Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan issued a mandate effective July 31 (still in effect) that everyone over the age of 5 must wear a face covering (that fully covers the nose and mouth and is secured to the person's head) indoors at any location where members of the public are generally permitted, including religious facilities.

All are responsible for the safety of themselves and others in resuming public worship. If a person believes he or she cannot wear a mask due to a legitimate health reason, he or she should not attend Mass at this time. Face coverings are necessary and required. The dispensation from the obligation to attend Mass given by Archbishop Lori due to the pandemic remains in effect.

We remind all of what Archbishop Lori wrote in a June 23 message to the faithful:

“There are many changes that we have to adjust to as we join together in person for Mass. Critically important precautions such as social distancing, sanitizing, and, in particular, wearing face masks are imperative for ensuring the safety of all. Because we know from public health officials how the virus is transmitted, we know the steps we can take to keep ourselves and others safe while we are outside our homes and around other people. We are grateful to you for complying with these measures, which we have asked our pastors to ensure are in place so that everyone can worship safely together.”

Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said July 14: ““We are not defenseless against COVID-19. Cloth face coverings are one of the most powerful weapons we have to slow and stop the spread of the virus – particularly when used universally within a community setting. All Americans have a responsibility to protect themselves, their families, and their communities.”

Announcements:

Parishes can use or adapt these suggested announcements from the pulpit before the beginning of Mass and in bulletins or other communications.

English Announcement:

In order to comply with Governor Hogan's mask mandate, to safeguard the health of our parishioners and community, and to assure the continuance of public Mass, we ask you to wear a face mask when exiting your vehicle upon arrival at our church property, and during your time in our church until you return to your car. Thank you for your patience and cooperation.

Aviso en español:

Con el fin de cumplir con el mandato de máscara del gobernador Hogan, para salvaguardar la salud de nuestros feligreses y la comunidad, y para asegurar la continuación de la misa pública, le

pedimos que use una máscara facial al salir de su vehículo, al llegar a nuestra propiedad de la iglesia, y durante su tiempo en nuestra iglesia hasta que regrese a su automóvil. Gracias por su paciencia y cooperación.

To thank parishioners for their cooperation:

Mass celebrants may use the time for announcements after Communion to thank those present for wearing face coverings or masks to protect the health of all and allow for the continuation of public worship. If the celebrant observes individuals not wearing face coverings, he may also add that compliance by every person present with the governor's face-covering mandate is required in order to continue in-person Masses.

Talking points for those who will not comply:

Pastors may wish to use the following talking points for a one-on-one conversation with someone who wishes to attend Mass but refuses to wear a face covering:

Face masks are necessary and required. If people don't wear a face covering, not only does it jeopardize their own health and the health of others, but it may endanger the continuation of public worship. Even a small group of people who don't comply could jeopardize the availability of Mass for all. If you are not comfortable or are unable to wear a mask, perhaps this is not the time for you to come back to Mass. Please join our Mass via livestream options, and pray for all in our parish.