



DIOCESE OF HAMILTON

700 King Street West, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada L8P 1C7

OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

MEMORANDUM

To: Pastors, Associates, Deacons and Pastoral Ministers

From: Monsignor Murray J. Kroetsch
Chancellor

Date: 4 December 2020

RE: UPDATED COVID-19 PROTOCOLS

Recent developments involving COVID-19 and issues pertaining to universal compliance of Ontario's Catholic parishes with all appropriate measures have prompted the ACBO to update the initial *WorshipSafe* directives dated June 1, 2020, upon which our Diocesan directives are based. This update is based on the advice the ACBO has received from their medical consultant, Dr. Cook, their legal advisors and those involved in dealing with government.

Please note the following expanded and revised directives to be implemented immediately in the Diocese of Hamilton.

- 1. Mask Wearing Within Two Metres.** All clergy are to wear face masks at all times when within two metres (six feet) of parishioners. The clergy and church volunteers are to enforce the same rule upon parishioners;
- 2. Reception of Holy Communion Mask Protocol.** A mask is worn by both the minister of Holy Communion and recipient when within two metres (six feet) of one another. The communicant is to wear the mask when receiving the Sacred Host from the priest or Extraordinary Minister of Communion. After stepping aside (six feet) they are to remove their mask momentarily to consume the Eucharist. Replacing their mask, they return to their place. At this time Communion may only be received in the hand.
- 3. Pew Cleaning.** A lessened standard for pew cleaning whereby only frequently touched areas will require wipe-down is now in place. Only pews that need to be used again within one hour need to be wiped down, by running a sanitized cloth along the tops and sides of each pew.
- 4. Mask Exemptions.** As confirmed by legal counsel, a priest may require that those seeking an exemption from wearing a mask bring evidence of same, that when seated that they be placed in a designated area, and that masks be worn in order to receive Communion. The exemption may be provided by a physician or other medical professional.