



Diocese of Fall River
Office of the Bishop
Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.

December 17, 2021

Dear Fathers,

As the number of new daily COVID cases increases and concern over the emerging Omicron grows, we are reminded of the need to provide as safe an environment for worship as possible for our faithful people.

Toward this end, I ask that you please convey to your parishioners in some way that the Diocese of Fall River continues to strongly encourage all parishioners to wear a mask while attending Mass or any other liturgical celebration unless unable because of a medical condition or under the age of 2. This is particularly important for anyone with a weakened immune system; anyone at risk for severe disease because of age or underlying medical condition; or anyone in a household with someone having these conditions or with someone who is unvaccinated.

The recent surge in virus transmission in many places is a clear indication that the pandemic has not passed, and continued vigilance is required. Parishioners are asked to please keep in mind the need for a collective commitment to the overall good of the parish community.

Parishes are also reminded that Mass celebrants, deacons, and all liturgical ministers should wear masks except when they are speaking or singing.

As Masses for the celebration of Christmas usually draw larger numbers, parishes may want to have a supply of masks available, if possible, as some of those attending may not be expecting to need masks. The Diocese of Fall River continues to monitor all Covid-19 advisories and orders by both the CDC and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and will amend diocesan guidelines and directives on an ongoing basis as needed.

Parishes must be mindful of COVID regulations that are specific to their locality and abide by local directives.

Please know that I am grateful for your attention to this important matter in these busy days as you finalize preparations for Christmas.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Edgar M. da Cunha, S.D.V., D.D.
Bishop of Fall River