



DIOCESE OF BUFFALO
OFFICE OF WORSHIP

COVID-19 Update: February 10, 2022 **Diocesan Mask Mandate for Worship Lifted**

On February 9, 2022 New York State announced its mask mandate would be eliminated February 10, 2022 for many indoor settings.

Masks Optional for Worship

At this time, masks are now optional for all participants in liturgies held in Catholic churches and worship spaces located in the Diocese of Buffalo based on prevailing guidance from health officials and/or an individual's doctor or other medical professional.

Masks may continue to be worn at the discretion of the individual. Out of pastoral concern, the safety of others should always be considered when making this choice.

Ministers of the Eucharist should continue to wear masks when distributing Communion for the protection of the vulnerable and those who may not be able to be vaccinated.

As a reminder, parishes in the diocese and affiliated ministries and groups are not authorized to screen for vaccinations.

Good hygiene, cleaning/disinfection of facilities, and prudent precautions still contribute to the common good and overall well-being of our communities.

Holy Water Fonts/Stoups

Holy Water may be reintroduced in fonts and stoups at the discretion of the parish. The water in the fonts should be changed regularly.

Visits to the Sick in Hospitals/Medical Facilities

If you are going to visit a parishioner or loved one in a hospital, nursing home, or other similar setting, be sure to first check the policies of an individual location, as mask mandates may still be in place.

Faith Formation Programs

Faith Formation programs and other parish gatherings can follow their own local guidelines for masks.

Catholic Schools in the Diocese

The Diocese of Buffalo recommends that the Catholic schools in the diocese continue to follow the governor's mask mandate as one part of our COVID mitigation plan which also includes improved ventilation, increased social distancing, and improved sanitation efforts.

When the mask mandate ends, the Diocese is recommending that each school make its own decision regarding masks (at certain times or in certain places, for example, or completely optional).

The Diocesan Department of Catholic Education will continue to monitor developments in concert with the other New York State Catholic superintendents and will provide guidance when the mask rules become optional.