



A MESSAGE FROM CARDINAL THOMAS COLLINS

July 3, 2020

In recent days, you may have seen numerous media reports regarding municipalities considering new by-laws requiring the mandatory use of masks in indoor spaces (including places of worship).

City of Toronto – by-law passed June 30 – masks in indoor spaces (including places of worship) become mandatory as of July 7, 2020.

Peel Region – by-laws proposed in Brampton, Mississauga and Caledon expected to take effect as early as July 9, 2020 (including places of worship).

York Region – report on mandating masks will be presented to council on July 9, 2020.

Simcoe Region – mandatory masks being considered but no formal process has been initiated.

Durham Region – mandatory masks being considered but no formal process has been initiated.

If a by-law has been passed in your area, enclosed is a sample announcement that can be shared from the pulpit and through various communication channels with parishioners. Other important points:

- Priests do not need to wear masks in the sanctuary while celebrating Mass but should ensure they are wearing a mask when distributing Holy Communion and any other setting where they are in close proximity (less than 2m/6 ft) to parishioners. Lectors should remove masks to proclaim the Word of God.
- Parishes are not required to distribute masks – some parishes have ordered a small quantity to make available however, there is no obligation to do so.
- Exceptions to the by-law include people who cannot wear a mask for medical reasons (trouble breathing or unable to remove a mask without assistance) and children under two years old. Proof of a medical condition is not required.
- In addition to the announcement provided, we encourage Ministers of Hospitality to kindly and thoughtfully communicate this new requirement to those who may not be aware upon arrival, perhaps welcoming the faithful just outside the doors of the church. While it is impossible to force someone to wear a mask, this measure is being undertaken to care for our neighbour and to minimize the spread of Covid-19.
- Masks are not mandated in church offices at this time although their use is recommended for those who will be in close proximity to others in a work setting.

Thank you for your continued co-operation as we work to foster a safe environment for all.

+ Thomas Card. Collins

