




*Office of Archbishop Alexander Sample*

**MEMO**

**From:** Archbishop Alexander K. Sample + 

**Date:** May 14, 2021

**To:** Pastors and Administrators

**Cc:** Principals, Business Managers, etc

**Re:** New Masking & Distancing Policy

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The Governor announced yesterday that fully vaccinated Oregonians no longer need to wear masks or social distance in most public spaces, following a new guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Effective immediately, churches in western Oregon can allow fully vaccinated people to attend Masses and faith gatherings without wearing masks or social distancing. Pastors will still need to set aside space in churches for those who are not fully vaccinated and are still required, or choose, to wear masks and maintain 6 feet of distance between households. The faithful should be instructed that the eased restrictions will be implemented on the honor system. Those who present themselves without masks to attend church, are affirming they are fully vaccinated. One is fully vaccinated when at least two weeks have passed from the second shot of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines or one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine. No verification of full vaccination is required. Those who are not fully vaccinated are still to be equally welcomed and encouraged to attend Masses and gatherings.

I trust pastors and pastoral administrators to implement the new policy as best they can, and I encourage them to continue to work with their parish leadership to make the necessary changes and adjustments. I also understand that it may be challenging to make adjustments in time for this weekend's Masses.

I recommend that priests and ministers who are fully vaccinated still wear masks during distribution of Holy Communion at Mass, but this is not a requirement. I also recommend that all greeters and ushers continue to wear masks. I entrust each pastor with the discretion to determine the policy for his parish.

Please continue to accommodate those with medical conditions that prevent mask-wearing (who are not fully vaccinated) in a separate space such as a cry room or choir loft.

If you have any questions, please contact Todd Cooper, chair of my COVID-19 Response Team at: c503-348-1508.

Thank you for all your good work on behalf of Christ and his people here in western Oregon. You remain in my heart and in my prayers.