



September 17, 2021
St. Robert Bellarmine

Further Update on Covid-19 Protocols for the Diocese of Prince Albert

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The text of the Public Health Order from yesterday, September 16, 2021, is now available and clarifies a few details that were unavailable regarding mandatory masking. Section 4 (c) of the document deals with exceptions to the masking mandate. I will summarize them in point form for the sake of clarity as they apply to our celebrations in the Diocese of Prince Albert.

1. “Worship leaders” may remove masks in their churches when distanced 3 metres from others. (A worship leader is understood in the health order as one who leads a service, ceremony, or other public event while speaking from a podium, lectern, platform, stage, desk or other standing or seating area dedicated to speaking, but only when the individual can maintain a distance of 3 metres from others. The priest, deacon, and lay presider would fall into the category of worship leader. The chair, altar, and ambo would fall into this category of space where masks can be removed if the minister is 3 metres away from others.)
2. Choirs or bands providing music for a liturgy must remain masked. (Those playing wood or brass instruments may be unmasked but must be 3 metres from others. The order is not clear about cantors or soloists so, for the time being, a cantor should remain masked.)
3. The congregation remains masked. People may lower their masks briefly and carefully in order to receive Holy Communion.
4. A person in the privacy of his/her office in a parish may remove the mask when alone. When another person enters the space, all should be masked.
5. People who are exempt from wearing a mask are: children aged two and under; children aged 3 – 12 who are not responsibly able to wear a face covering; individuals who cannot wear a face covering due to a particular medical condition, individuals with cognitive impairment, intellectual disability, or severe mental health condition and are unable to understand the requirement.

I believe that these details clarify the other guidelines that I issued yesterday and are what we were expecting. The province envisages this health order remaining in effect until at least October 20 or when the Chief Medical Health Officer determines otherwise (i.e. either sooner or later). Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely in Christ,

Stephen A. Hero

✠ Most Rev. Stephen A. Hero
Bishop of Prince Albert