



DIOCÈSE DE HEARST-MOOSONEE DIOCESE

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Date: February 16, 2021

To: Priests and parishes

From: Deacon Jean Beausoleil, Chancellor

Re: Update of WorshipSafe Guidelines for the Diocese of Hearst-Moosonee

Recent developments involving COVID-19 pertaining to compliance in Ontario's Catholic parishes with all appropriate measures have prompted the ACBO's COVID-19 working group to update the initial WorshipSafe directives dated June 1, 2020.

Here is the revised version of "Return to Church – WorshipSafe Guidelines" document dated February 16, 2021, which is being promulgated today. Parishes are expected to adapt to the changed guidelines over the next two weeks.

Highlights of the revised Return to Church - WorshipSafe Guidelines include:

1. **Mask Wearing Within Two Metres.** A Diocesan requirement that clergy with Diocesan faculties wear face masks at all times when within two metres (six feet) of parishioners, and that they and church volunteers require the same from parishioners;
2. **Reception of Holy Communion Mask Protocol.** Adoption of a common reception of Holy Communion protocol, whereby a mask is worn by both the minister of Holy Communion and recipient when within two metres (six feet) of one another.
3. Upon the strong recommendation of medical authorities, Holy Communion is received only in the hand at this time. (Since each communicant has the right to receive Holy Communion either on the tongue or in the hand, the traditional practice of the option of receiving on the tongue will be restored as soon as the public health situation allows for that);
4. **Contact Tracing Record Keeping.** A requirement that contact tracing sheets be maintained and stored.

Rationale for Revision:

The timing of this update appears appropriate following the peak of "phase two" and the return of large religious gatherings in churches.

Need for Vigilance:

We thank parishes for their efforts to implement the full scope of the measures outlined in the Return to Church – WorshipSafe Guidelines. We will need to be vigilant because the virus continues to circulate and more contagious variants of COVID-19 have been found in Ontario.

