



Roman Catholic Diocese of Victoria

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MEMO

Date: September 9, 2021
To: Clergy, Parishes, Religious, Parishioners, and Staff
From: Bishop Gary Gordon
Re: Mask mandate, proof of vaccination and worship services

Following the memo and revised Directives issued on August 25, 2021, we received much feedback from members of our Diocese. Based on this, and the continuing high Covid-19 case counts in the Island Health Region, *we will now require face coverings for all people born in 2009 or earlier for all activities in church buildings in the Diocese of Victoria, including worship services.*

The B.C. government has also recently announced that proof of vaccination against Covid-19 will soon be required to access some events, services and businesses. *All worship services are exempt from the requirement for proof of vaccination.* As always, we urge all Catholics who are able to do so to follow the example of Pope Francis, Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI and Bishop Gary and receive the Covid-19 vaccine.

Receptions following worship services, meetings that have a worship component, and essential services are also exempt from the requirement for proof of vaccination. This includes, for example:

- Coffee gatherings immediately after Mass
- Pancake breakfasts immediately after Mass
- Baptism, wedding and funeral receptions immediately after the service
- Parish pastoral or finance council meetings
- CWL, Knights of Columbus, RCIA, catechism and youth group meetings
- NA/AA group meetings and soup kitchens

Proof of vaccination is required for all other uses of church buildings with more than 50 people in attendance. This includes, for example:

- Parish social or fundraising events such as dances, spaghetti dinners, bazaars, etc.
- Hall bookings to external groups

It is the responsibility of the pastor / administrator or their designate to verify proof of vaccination in these situations. The Province has provided information on how to do this at:

<https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/covid-19/vaccine/proof/businesses#verify-bc>

The previous General and Liturgical Directives issued on August 25, 2021 still apply, with the exception of these changes. Any questions about face covering or proof of vaccination or requirements can be directed to the Chancery by emailing chancery@rcdvictoria.org. We thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through the implementation of these new requirements.