



Welcoming Our Family of Faith Back Home

A Plan to Transition to Public Gatherings at our Liturgical Celebrations

*“We are the children of your Church, and with our Lamps lit,
we come to Church as to the harbor of our salvation.”*

From The Rite of the Coming to the Harbor

What do I need to know about wearing a face covering or mask while attending Divine Liturgy at OLOP during Phase 1?

1. Why do I need to wear a face covering?

- The Baker-Polito Administration issued an Order requiring face coverings in public places where social distancing is not possible to protect residents and slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus effective May 6, 2020;
- COVID-19 is spread mainly by person to person contact and the best means of slowing the spread of the virus is by practicing social distancing and by minimizing personal contact;
- Not everyone who has COVID-19 is symptomatic. Wearing a face covering reduces the chance of transmitting the virus to another person and vice versa.

2. What does wearing a face covering or mask do?

- Wearing a face covering is one of several measures we can take to prevent the spread of the virus. The other measures include: maintaining a distance of 6 feet from other people; frequently washing your hands and using hand sanitizer; and staying home if you are not well;
- Because so many people who have COVID-19 show no symptoms, wearing cloth face coverings or a mask reduces the chance of transmitting the virus. This is especially true when someone with COVID-19 comes within 6 feet of you, which is considered “close contact,” the range that increases transmitting infection through acts like sneezing or coughing;
- A mask or face covering helps reduce the amount of droplets that you emit when you are speaking, singing, breathing, or exhaling. Reducing the number of droplets reduces the chance that you will spread the virus that causes infections.
- Masks and face coverings don’t replace social distancing, but they do help. That is why it’s important to stay more than 6 feet away from others.

3. Does my child have to wear a mask or face covering at Divine Liturgy?

- Children under the age of 2 should **not** wear face coverings or masks. Face covering use by children 2 years of age and up to the age of 5 are encouraged, but should be at the discretion of the child’s parent or guardian at this time. Parents and guardians should ensure that the mask fits snugly and does not obstruct a child’s ability to breathe.

4. Do I have to wear a mask or face covering when I receive Communion?

- During Phase 1, Communion will only be distributed in hand. You must wear your mask or face covering while you are in line for Communion and while Fr. Vince is placing the host in your hand. You can then step to the side, remove your mask or face covering and place the host on your tongue. You must then wear your mask or face covering again.

5. Will Fr. Vince be wearing a mask or face covering?

- Fr. Vince is not required to wear a facial covering while celebrating Mass, but may do so if he feels more comfortable doing so. He will wear a mask during distribution of Communion.

6. Is there a penalty if I don't wear a mask or face covering while at Divine Liturgy?

- If you can not wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition, please explain this to an Usher when you arrive at Divine Liturgy. Pursuant to the Commonwealth guideline, we advise that if you can't wear a mask or face covering due to a medical condition that you may want to seriously consider not attending Divine Liturgy in person during Phase 1. OLOP will continue to Live Stream Divine Liturgies during Phase 1.
- Pursuant to Governor Baker's Order, the Department of Public Health and the New Bedford Board of Health are authorized to enforce the face covering order and, if necessary, with the assistance of State or municipal police. Violation may result in a civil fine of up to \$300 per violation.

7. I would like to wear my own mask or face covering. Is that allowed?

- You may wear your own mask or face covering provided it complies with the Commonwealth requirements for masks or face coverings. Further information can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/news/wear-a-mask-in-public>.
- If you don't have your own mask or face covering, the Ushers will give you a mask before you enter the Church.

We will be updating this Frequently Asked Question Handout as the Commonwealth updates their Order and Guidelines.

Thank you for your cooperation and understanding. Please contact Fr. Vince at (508) 996-8934 if you have any questions or comments.

Our Lady of Purgatory, Pray for us.

Dated: May 26, 2020