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OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## MEMORANDUM

January 11, 2022

**TO: All Clergy, Religious, Seminarians, Principals, Diocesan Staff, Religious Education Directors**

**FROM: Bishop Oscar A. Solis**

**WHAT: Diocese Updates on Covid-19 Guidelines**

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As the United States and Utah experience a sudden increase in coronavirus infections with the omicron variant, hospitalizations are increasing, and there is a sense of urgency for us to help curb the spread of the omicron variant and contribute to the health, safety and well-being of our community.

In consultation with the deans, I have issued the following updated guidelines for all churches, missions, diocesan and parish offices and Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

Common sense and scientific data continue to show that vaccination, use of masks or facial coverings, and hygiene practices help protect us from severe illness, which results in fewer people missing work and school, as well as lowers the risk of hospitalization. Hence, we need to exercise extreme caution and take our sacred responsibility of protecting the health and lives of others by observing CDC and state health directives and diocesan guidelines responsibly.

The following guidelines and procedures will take effect starting on January 10 and are effective through February 1 or until further notice.

- Masks or effective facial coverings are to be worn in all common and public areas, especially when around other people, to help minimize the number of people getting sick. Masks are to be made available to parishioners, students and the public, if possible.

- Employees alone in their workspace do not have to wear a mask. However, those who share workspace with multiple parishioners or employees must wear a mask.

- Large public gatherings are to be avoided as much as possible until the surge subsides. The practice of physical distancing should be re-instated if necessary.

- Observe hygiene by sanitizing physical spaces as needed and the frequent washing of hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds as needed. Have hand sanitizers available at the entrance of the church and offices.

- Re-evaluate the use of holy water fonts and the practice of distributing Holy Communion on the tongue for safety and health reasons and to curb the spread of the virus.

- Observe the CDC/Utah Coronavirus guidelines, which are summarized below.

**A. Diocesan employees who test positive for COVID-19** or have been in close contact with someone infected by the virus must contact their supervisor to report and provide a list of all people with whom they have had close contact.

**B. If tested positive for COVID-19:**

- Isolation is required for all who test positive for COVID-19 regardless of whether they are vaccinated or unvaccinated. They must stay at home for five days from the day of the test, even if they do not have symptoms or feel sick.
- After five days, if symptoms have improved (fever-free for at least 24 hours), the employee may return to work, but must wear a mask around others for another five days.
- After the five-day isolation, the employee must provide a negative test result and a written record of the test before returning to work.

**C. Those exposed to COVID-19 and not up to date on COVID-19 vaccinations:**

- Must quarantine for at least five days;
- Wear a well-fitted mask around others in the home;
- Even if showing no symptoms, be tested at least five days after the last contact with someone infected with COVID-19.
- If symptoms develop, isolate immediately and get tested, and remain at home until a negative test result is received.

**D. Those exposed to COVID-19 and are up to date with vaccinations:**

For people 18 years and older:

- No need to quarantine at home and can participate in activities outside the house, unless symptoms develop;
- Wear mask for 10 days after exposure;
- A test five days after exposure is recommended to ensure you are not positive and spreading the virus to others.

For people younger than 18 years who have received two doses of Pfizer or Moderna:

- No need to quarantine at home and can continue to go to school, work, and participate in activities outside your house, unless symptoms develop;
- Wear a mask for 10 days after exposure;
- A test five days after exposure is recommended to ensure you are not positive and spreading the virus to others.

For people younger than 18 years who have not received two doses of Pfizer or Moderna, or if unvaccinated:

- Remain at home for five days from the day of exposure to COVID-19;
- If no symptoms develop after five days, participation in activities outside the house is allowed if a mask is worn;
- A mask must be worn in public and around other people for 10 days after exposure;
- Students may attend school if they wear a mask for 10 days after their exposure;
- A test five days after exposure is recommended to ensure you are not positive and spreading the virus to others.